

Delivery Guaranteed

by Calvin Knox, 1927-1987

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There aren't many free-lance space-ferry operators who can claim that they carried a log cabin half way from Mars to Ganymede, and then had the log cabin carry them the rest of the way. I can, though you can bet your last tarnished megabuck that I didn't do it willingly. It was quite a trip. I left Mars not only with a log cabin on board, but a genuine muzzle-loading antique cannon, a goodly supply of cannonballs therefrom, and various other miscellaneous antiques—as well as the Curator of Historical Collections from the Ganymede Museum. There was also a stowaway on board, much to his surprise and mine—he wasn't listed in the cargo vouchers.

Let me make one thing clear: I wasn't keen on carrying any such cargo. But my free-lance ferry operator's charter is quite explicit that way, unfortunately. A ferry operator is required to hire his ship to any person of law-abiding character who will meet the (government-fixed) rates, and whose cargo to be transported neither

exceeds the ship's weight allowance nor is considered contraband by any System law.

In short, I'm available to just about all comers. By the terms of my charter I've been compelled to ferry five hundred marmosets to Pluto, forced to haul ten tons of Venusian guano to Callisto, constrained to deliver fifty crates of fertilized frogs' eggs from Earth to a research station orbiting Neptune. In the latter case I made the trip twice for the same fee, thanks to the delivery guaranteed clause in the contract; the first time out my radiation shields slipped up for a few seconds, not causing me any particular genetic hardships but playing merry hell with those frog's eggs. When a bunch of four-headed tadpoles began to hatch, they served notice on me that they were not accepting delivery and would pay no fee—and, what's more, would sue if I didn't bring another load of potential frogs up from Earth, and be damned well careful about the shielding this time.

So I hauled another fifty crates of frogs' eggs, this time without mishap, and collected my fee. But I've never been happy about carrying livestock again.

This new offer wasn't livestock. I got the call while I was laying over on Mars after a trip up from Luna with a few colonists and their gear. I had submitted my name to the Transport Registry, informing them that I was on call and waiting for employment—but I was in no hurry. I still had a couple of hundred megabucks left from the last job, and I didn't mind a vacation.

The call came on the third day of my Martian layover. "Collect call for Mr. Sam Diamond, from the Transport Registry. Do you accept?"

"Yes," I muttered, and \$30,000 more was chalked to my phone bill. A dollar doesn't last hardly any time at all in these days of system-wide hyperinflation.

"Sam?" a deep voice said. It was Mike Cooper of the Transport people.

"Who else would it be at this end of your collect call?" I growled. "And why can't you people pay for a phone call once in a while?"

"You know the law, Sam," Cooper said cheerfully. "I've got a job for you."

"That's nice. Another load of marmosets?"

"Nothing live this time, Sam, except your passenger. She's Miss Vanderweghe of the Ganymede Museum. Curator of Historical Collections. She wants someone to ferry her back to Ganymede with some historical relics she's picked up along the way."

"The Washington Monument?" I asked. "The Great Pyramid of Khufu? We could tow it alongside the ship, lashed down with twine—"

"Knock it off," Cooper said, unamused. "What she's got are souvenirs of the Venusian Insurrection. The log cabin that served as Macintyre's headquarters, the cannon used to drive back the Bluecoats, and a few smaller knickknacks along those lines."

"Hold it," I said. "You can't fit a log cabin into my ship. And if it's going to be a tow job, I want the Delivery Guaranteed clause stricken out of the contract. And how much does the damn cannon weigh? I've got a weight ceiling, you know."

"I know. Her entire cargo is less than eight tons, cannon and all. It's well within your tonnage restrictions. And as for the log cabin, it doesn't need to be towed. She's agreed to take it apart for shipping, and reassemble it when it gets to Ganymede."

The layover had been nice while it lasted. I said, "I was looking for some rest, Mike. Isn't there some angle I can use to wiggle out of this cargo?"

"None."

"But—"

"There isn't another free ferry in town tonight. She wants to leave tonight. So you're the boy, Sam. The job is yours."

I opened my mouth. I closed it again. Ferries are considered public services, under the law. The only way I could get a vacation that was sure to last was to apply for one in advance, and I hadn't done that.

"Okay," I said wearily. "When do I sign the contract?"

"Miss Vanderweghe is at my office now," Cooper said. "How soon can you get here?"

* * * * *

I was in a surly mood as I rode downtown to Cooper's place. For the thousandth time I resented the casual way he could pluck me out of some relaxation and make me take a job. I wasn't looking forward to catering to the whims of some dried-up old museum curator all the way out to Ganymede. And I wasn't too pleased with the notion of carrying relics of the Venusian Insurrection.

The Insurrection had caused quite a fuss, a hundred years back. Bunch of Venusian colonists decided they didn't like Earth's rule—the taxation-without-representation bit, though their squawk was unjustified—and set up a wildcat independent government, improvising their equipment out of whatever they could grab. A chap name of Macintyre was in charge; the insurrectionists holed up in the jungle and held off the attacking loyalists for a couple of weeks. Then the Venusian local government appealed to Earth, a regiment of Bluecoats was shipped to Venus, and inside of a week Macintyre was a prisoner and the Insurrection ended. But some diehard Venusians still venerated the insurrectionists, and there had been a few murders and ambushes every year since the overthrow of Macintyre. I could have done without carrying Venusian cargo.

I was going to say as much to Cooper, too, in hopes that some clause of my charter would get me out of the assignment and back on vacation. But I didn't get a chance. I went storming into Cooper's office.

There was a girl sitting in the chair to the left of his desk. She was about twenty-five, well built in most every way possible, with glossy, short-cropped hair and an attractive face.

Cooper stood up and said, "Sam, I'd like you to meet Miss Erna Vanderweghe of Ganymede. Miss Vanderweghe, this is Sam Diamond, one of the best ferry men there is. He'll get you to Ganymede in style."

"I'm sure of that," she said, smiling.

"Hello," I said, gulping.

I didn't bother raising a fuss about the political implications of my cargo. I didn't grouse about weight limits, space problems aboard ship, accommodation difficulties, or anything else. I reached for the contract—it was the standard printed form, with the variables typed in by Cooper—and signed it.

"I'd like to leave tonight," she said.

“Sure. My ship’s at the spaceport. Can you have your cargo delivered there by—oh, say, 1700 hours? That way we can blast off by 2100.”

“I’ll try. Will you be able to help me get my goods out of storage and down to the spaceport?”

I started to say that I’d be delighted to, but Cooper cut in sharply, as I knew he would. “I’m sorry, Miss Vanderweghe, but Sam’s contract and charter prohibit him from any landside cargo-handling except within the actual bounds of the spaceport. You’ll have to use a local carrier for getting your stuff to the ship, I’m afraid. If you want me to, I’ll arrange for transportation—”

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My mood was considerably different as I returned to the Deimos to check out. My tub would need five days for the journey between Mars and Ganymede. Now, conditions aboard my ship allow for a certain amount of passenger privacy, but not a devil of a lot. Log cabin or no log cabin, I was going to enjoy the proximity of Miss Erna Vanderweghe. I could think of worse troubles than having to spend five days in the same small ferry with her, and only a log cabin and a cannon for chaperones.

I was grinning as I walked over to the desk to let them know I was pulling out. Nat, the desk clerk, interpreted the grin logically enough, but wrongly.

“You talked them out of giving you the job, eh, Sam? How’d you work it?”

“Huh? Oh—no, I took the job. I’m checking out of here at 1800 hours.”

“You *took* it? But you look *happy!*”

“I am,” I said with a mysterious expression. I started to saunter away, but Nat called me back.

“You had a visitor a little while ago, Mr. Cooper. He wanted me to let him into your room to wait for you, but naturally I wouldn’t do it.”

“Visitor? Did he leave his name?”

“He’s still here. Sitting right over there, next to the potted palm tree.”

Frowning, I walked toward him. He was a thin, hunched-up little man with the sallow look of a Venusian colonist. He was busily reading some cheap dime-novel sort of magazine as I approached.

“Hello,” I said affably. “I’m Sam Diamond. You wanted to see me?”

“You’re ferrying Erna Vanderweghe to Ganymede tonight, aren’t you?” His voice was thinly whining, nasty sounding, mean.

“I make a practice of keeping my business to myself,” I told him. “If you’re interested in hiring a ferry, you’d better go to the Transport Registry. I’m booked.”

“I know you are. And I know who you’re carrying. And I know *what* you’re carrying.”

“Look here, friend, I—”

“You’re carrying General Macintyre’s cabin, and other priceless relics of the Venusian Republic—and all stolen goods!” His eyes had a fanatic gleam about them. I realized who he was as soon as he used the expression “Venusian Republic.” Only an insurrectionist-sympathizer would refer to the rebel group that way.

“I’m not going to discuss business affairs with you,” I said. “My cargo has been officially cleared.”

“It was stolen by that woman! Purchased with filthy dollars and taken from Venus by stealth!”

I started to walk away. I hate having some loudmouthed fanatic rant at me. But he followed, clutching at my elbows, and said in his best conspiratorial tone, “I warn you, Diamond—cancel that contract or you’ll suffer! Those relics must return to Venus!”

Whirling around, I disengaged his hands from my arm and snapped, “I couldn’t cancel a contract if I wanted to—and I don’t want to. Get out of here or I’ll have you juggled, whoever you are.”

“Remember the warning—”

“Go on! Shoo! Scat!”

He slinked out of the lobby. Shaking my head, I went upstairs to pack. Damned idiotic cloak-and-dagger morons, I thought. Creeping around hissing warnings and leaving threatening notes, and in general trying to keep alive an underground movement that never had any real reason for existing from the start. It wasn’t as if Earth had oppressed the Venusian colonists. The benefits flowed all in one direction, from Earth to Venus, and everyone on Venus knew it except for Macintyre’s little bunch of ultranationalistic glory-hounds. Nobody on Venus wanted independence less than the colonists themselves, who had dandy tax exemptions and benefits from the mother world.

I forgot all about the threats by the time I was through packing my meager belongings and had grabbed a meal at the hotel restaurant. Around 1800 hours I went down to the spaceport to see what was happening there. The mechanics had already wheeled my ferry out of the storage hangars; she was out on the field getting checked over for blastoff. Erna Vanderweghe and her cargo had arrived, too. She was standing at the edge of the field, supervising the unloading of her stuff from the van of a local carrier.

The log cabin had been taken apart. It consisted of a stack of stout logs, the longest of them some sixteen feet long and the rest tapering down.

“You think you’re going to be able to put that cabin back the way it was?” I asked.

“Oh, certainly. I’ve got each log numbered to correspond with a diagram I’ve made. The reassembling shouldn’t be any trouble at all,” she said, smiling sweetly.

I eyed the other stuff—several crates, a few smaller packages, and a cannon, not very big. “Where’d you get all these things?” I asked.

She shrugged prettily. “I bought them on Venus. Most of them were the property of descendants of the insurrectionists; they were quite happy to sell. There weren’t any ferries available on Venus, so I took a commercial liner on the shuttle from Venus to Mars. They said I’d be able to get a ferry here.”

“And you did,” I said. “In five days we’ll be landing on Ganymede.”

“I can’t wait to get there—to set up my exhibit!”

I frowned. “Tell me something, Miss Vanderweghe. Just how did you manage to—ah—make such an early start in the museum business?”

She grinned. “My father and grandfather were museum curators. I just come by it naturally, I suppose. And I was just about the only colonist on Ganymede who was halfway interested in having the job!”

I chuckled softly and said, "When Cooper told me I was ferrying a museum curator, I pictured a dried-up old spinster who'd nag me all the way to Ganymede. I couldn't have been wronger."

"Disappointed?"

"Not very much," I said.

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We had the ship loaded inside of an hour, everything stowed neatly away in the hold and Miss Vanderweghe's personal luggage strapped down in the passenger compartment. Since there wasn't any reason for hanging around longer, I recomputed my takeoff orbit and called the control center for authorization to blast off at 2000 hours, an hour ahead of schedule.

They were agreeable, and at 1955 hours the field sirens started to scream, warning people of an impending blast. Miss Vanderweghe—Erna—was aft, in her acceleration cradle, as I jabbed the keys that would activate the autopilot and take us up.

I started to punch the keys. The computer board started to click. There was nothing left for me to do but strap myself in and wait for brennschluss. A blastoff from Mars is no great problem in astronautics.

As the automatic took over, I flipped my seat back, converting it into an acceleration cradle, and relaxed. It seemed to me that the takeoff was a little on the bumpy side, as if I'd figured the ship's mass wrong by one or two hundred pounds. But I didn't worry about the discrepancy. I just shut my eyes and waited while the extra gees bore down on me. The sanest thing for a man to do during blastoff is to go to sleep, and that's what I did.

I woke up half an hour or so later to discover that the engines had cut out, the ship was safely in flight, and that a bloody and battered figure was bent over my controls, energetically ruining them with crowbar and shears.

I blinked. Then the fog in my head cleared and I got out of my cradle. The stowaway turned around. He was quite a mess. The capillaries of his face had popped during the brief moments of top acceleration, and fine purplish lines now wriggled over his cheeks and nose, giving him a grade-A rum blossom, and bloodshot eyes to go with it. He had some choice bruises that he must have acquired while rattling around during blastoff, and his nose had been bleeding all over his shirt. It was the little Venusian fanatic who had threatened me at the hotel.

"How the hell did you get aboard?" I demanded.

"Slipped through the security checkers... but the ship took off ahead of schedule. I did not expect to be on board when blastoff came."

"Sorry to have fouled up your plans," I told him.

"But I regained consciousness in time. Your ship is ruined! You refused to heed my warning, and now you will never reach Ganymede alive. So perish all enemies of the Venusian Republic! So perish those who have desecrated our noble shrines!"

He was practically foaming at the mouth. I started toward him. He swung the crowbar and might have bashed my head in if he had known how to handle himself under nograv conditions, but he didn't, and the only result of his exertion was to send himself drifting toward the roof of the cabin. I yanked on his leg as it

went past me and dragged him down. The crowbar dropped from his numb hand. I caught it and poked him across the head with it.

There isn't any hesitation in a spaceman's mind when he finds a stowaway. Fuel is a precious thing, and so is air and food; stowaways simply aren't allowed to live. I didn't feel any qualms about what I did next, but all the same I was glad that Erna Vanderweghe wasn't awake and watching me while I went about it.

I slipped into my breathing-helmet and sealed off the cabin. Opening the airlock, I carried the unconscious Venusian out the hatch and gave him a good push, imparting enough momentum to send him out on an orbit of his own. The compensating reaction pushed me back into the airlock. I closed the hatch. The Venusian must have died instantly, without ever knowing what was happening to him.

Then I had a look-see to determine just how much damage the stowaway had been able to do before I woke up and caught him.

It was plenty.

All our communication equipment was gone, but permanently. The radio was a gutted ruin. The computer was smashed. Two auxiliary fuel tanks had been jettisoned. We were hopelessly off course in asteroid country, and the odds on reaching Ganymede looked mighty slim. By the time I finished making course corrections, we'd be down to our reserve fuel supply. Ganymede was about 350 million miles ahead of us. I didn't see how we were going to travel more than a tenth that distance before air and food troubles set in, and we weren't carrying enough fuel now for a safe landing even if we lived to reach Ganymede.

It was time to wake Miss Vanderweghe and tell her the news, I figured.

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She was lying curled up tight in her acceleration cradle, asleep, with a childlike, trusting expression on her face. I watched her for perhaps five minutes before I woke her. She sat up immediately.

"What—oh. Is everything all right? Did we make a good blastoff?"

"Fine blastoff," I said quietly. "But everything isn't all right." I told her about the stowaway and how thoroughly he had wrecked us.

"Oh—that horrible little man from Venus! I knew he had followed me to Mars—that's why I wanted to leave for Ganymede so soon. He made all sorts of absurd threats, as if the things I had bought were holy relics—"

"They are, in a way. If you worship Macintyre and his fellow rebels, then the stuff you carried away is equivalent to the True Cross, I suppose."

"I'm so sorry I got you into this, Sam."

I shrugged. "It's my own fault all the way. Your Venusian friend approached me at the hotel this afternoon and warned me off, but I didn't listen to him. I had my chance to pull out."

"Where's the stowaway now? Unconscious?"

I shook my head, jerking my thumb toward the single port in her cabin. "He's out there. Without a suit. Stowaways aren't entitled to charity under the space laws."

"Oh," she said quietly, turning pale. "I—see. You—ejected him."

I nodded. Then, to get off what promised to be an unpleasant topic, I said, "We're in real trouble. We're off course and we don't have enough fuel for making corrections—not without jettisoning everything on board, ourselves included."

"I don't mind if the cargo goes. I mean, I'd hate to lose it, but if you have to dump it—"

"Uh-uh. The ship itself is the bulk of our mass. The problem isn't the cargo. If there were only some way of jettisoning the *ship*—"

My mouth sagged open. No, I thought. It wouldn't ever work. It's too fantastic to consider.

"I have an idea," I said. "We *will* jettison the ship. And we'll get to Ganymede."

Luckily our saboteur friend hadn't bothered to rip up my charts. I spent half an hour feverishly thumbing through the volume devoted to asteroid orbits, while Erna hovered over my shoulder, not daring to ask questions but probably wondering just what in blazes I was figuring out.

Pretty soon I had a list of a dozen likely asteroids. I narrowed it down to five, then to three, then to one. I missed the convenience of my computer, but regulations require a pilot to be able to get along without one in a pinch, and I got along.

I computed a course toward the asteroid known as (719)-Albert. Luck was riding with us. (719)-Albert was on the outward swing of his orbit. On the basis of some extremely rough computations I worked out an orbit for our crippled ship that would match Albert's in a couple of hours.

Finally, I looked up at Erna and grinned. "This is known as making a virtue out of necessity," I said. "Want to know what's going on?"

"You bet I do."

I leaned back. "We're on our way to a chunk of rock known as (719)-Albert, which is chugging along not far from here on its way through the asteroid belt. (719)-Albert is a rock about three miles in diameter. Figure that it's half the size of Deimos—and Deimos is about as small as a place can get."

"But why are we going there?" she said, puzzled.

"(719)-Albert has an exceedingly eccentric orbit—and I mean eccentric in its astronomical sense: not a peculiar orbit, just one that's very highly elongated. At perihelion (719)-Albert passes around 20 million miles from the orbit of Earth. At aphelion, which is where he's heading now, he comes within 90 million miles of the orbit of Jupiter. Unless my figures are completely cockeyed, Jupiter is going to be about 150 million miles from Albert about a week from now."

I saw I had lost her completely. She said dimly, "But you said a little while ago that we hardly had enough fuel to take us 50 million miles."

"In the ship," I said. "Yes. But I've got other ideas. We'll land on Albert and abandon the ship. Then we ride pickaback on the asteroid until its closest approach to Jupiter—and blast off without the ship."

"Blast off—*how*?"

I smiled triumphantly. "We'll make a raft out of your blessed logs," I said. "Attach one of the ship's rocket engines at the rear, and shove off. Escape velocity from Albert is so low it hardly matters. And since the mass of our raft will only be six or seven hundred pounds—Earthside weight, of course—instead of the thirty

tons or so that this ship weighs, we'll be able to coast to Ganymede with plenty of fuel left to burn."

She was looking at me as if I'd just delivered a lecture in the General Theory of Relativity. Apparently the niceties of space travel just weren't in her line at all. But she smiled and tried to look understanding. "It sounds very clever," she said with an uncertain grin.

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I felt pretty clever about everything myself, three hours later, when we landed on the surface of an asteroid that could only be (719)-Albert. It had taken only one minor course correction to get us here. Which meant that my rule-of-thumb astrogation had been pretty good.

We donned breathing-suits and clambered out of the ship to inspect our landfall. (719)-Albert wasn't very impressive. The landscape was mostly jagged upthrusts of a dark basalt-like rock. But the view was tremendous—a great backdrop of darkness, speckled with stars, and, much closer, the orbiting fragments of other lumps of rock. Albert's horizon was on the foreshortened side, dipping away almost before it began. Gravitational attraction was so meager it hardly counted. A healthy jump was likely to continue indefinitely upward, as I made clear to Erna right at the start. I didn't want her indulging in the usual hijinks that greenhorns are fond of when on a low-gravity planetoid such as this. I could visualize only too well the scene as she vanished into the void as the result of an overenthusiastic leap.

We surveyed our holdings and found that there was enough food for two people for sixteen days—so we would make it with some to spare. The air supply was less abundant, but there was enough so we didn't need to begin worrying just yet.

We set about building the raft.

Erna dragged the logs out of the cargo hold—their weight didn't amount to anything, here, though I had to caution her about throwing them around carelessly; mass and weight aren't synonymous, and those logs were sturdy enough to knock me for a loop regardless of how little they seemed to weigh. She fetched, and I assembled. We used the thirteen longest logs for the body of the raft, and trussed a couple across the bottom, and a couple more at the top. To make blastoff a little easier, we built the raft propped up against a rock outcropping, at a 45° angle.

I unshipped the smallest rocket engine and fastened it securely to the rear of the raft. I strapped down as many fuel tanks as the raft would hold.

Then—chuckling to myself—I asked Erna to help me haul the cannon out.

"The cannon? Whatever for?"

"To mount at the front of the raft."

"Are you figuring on meeting space pirates?"

"I'm figuring on using the cannon as a brake," I told her. We fastened it at the front of the raft, strapped down the supply of cannonballs and powder nearby it. The cannon would make an ideal brake. All we needed was something that would eject mass in a forwardly direction, pushing us back by courtesy of Newton's Third Law. Why waste fuel when cannonballs would achieve the same purpose?

It took us forty-eight standard Earthtime hours to build the raft. I don't know how many thousands of (719)-Albert days that was, but the little asteroid spun on its axis like a yo-yo, and it seemed that the sun was rising or setting every time we took a breath.

After I had bound the last thong around the rocket engine, Erna grinned and dashed into the ship. She returned, a few moments later, waving a red flag with some sort of blue-and-white design on it.

"What's that?"

"The flag that flew over Macintyre's cabin," she explained. "It's a rebel flag, and we're not strictly insurrectionists, but we ought to have some kind of flag on our ship."

I was agreeable, so she mounted the flag just fore of the rocket engine. Then we returned to the ship to wait.

We waited for three days, Earthtime—maybe several centuries by (719)-Albert reckoning. And in case you're wondering how we passed the time on the barren asteroid for three days, just one reasonably virile ferry pilot and one nubile museum curator, the answer is no. We didn't. I have an inflexible rule about making passes at passengers, even when we're stranded on places like (719)-Albert and when the passengers are as pretty as this one is.

That isn't to say I didn't feel temptation. Erna's breathing-suit was of the plastic kind that looked as though it was force-molded to her body. I didn't have to do much imagining. But I staunchly told Satan to get behind me, and—to my own amazement—he did. I resisted temptation and resisted it manfully.

Meanwhile Jupiter swelled bigger and bigger as (719)-Albert plunged madly along its track toward its rendezvous with Jove. If luck rode with us—translated, if my math had been right—we would find Ganymede midway in her seven-plus day orbit round the big planet.

Time came when the mass detectors in my ship informed me that Jupiter had stopped getting closer and was now getting farther away. That meant that (719)-Albert had passed its point of aphelion and was heading back toward Earth. It was time to get moving.

"All aboard," I told Erna. "Make sure everything we're taking is strapped down tight—food, fuel, air tanks, cannonballs, flags."

She checked off as if we were running down meters and gauges at a spaceport. "Food. Fuel. Air tanks. Cannonballs. Flag. All set to blast, Captain."

"Okay. Get yourself flattened out and hang onto the raft while we blast."

Blastoff was a joke. I had computed the escape velocity of (719)-Albert at approximately .0015 miles/sec. We could have shoved off with a good rearward kick.

But we had fuel to burn. "*Allons!*" I cried, slamming the rocket engine into action. A burst of flame hurled us upward into the night. "*A la belle Étoile!*" I shouted. "To the stars!"

The raft soared off into space. Erna laughed with delight. As (719)-Albert slowly sank into the sunset, we plunged forward toward giant Jupiter. The only thing missing was soft music in the background.

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We rode the raft for three days at constant acceleration. Jupiter grew, and grew, and grew, and gleaming Ganymede became visible peeking around the edge of the great planet. Erna became worried when she saw it.

“Shouldn’t we head the raft over toward Ganymede?” she asked. “We’re pointed much too far forward.”

I sighed. “We aren’t going to reach Ganymede for another couple of days,” I said. “We want to head for where Ganymede’s going to be *then*, not where it happens to be right now. Isn’t that obvious?”

“I suppose so,” she said, pouting.

We were right on course. Two days later we were heading downward toward the surface of Ganymede. It was like riding a magic carpet. I controlled our landing with the rockets, while Erna gleefully fired ball after ball to provide the needed deceleration. If Ganymede had had an atmosphere, of course, we’d have been whiffed to cinders in a moment—but there was no atmosphere to contend with. We made a perfect no-point landing, flat on the glistening blue-white ice. Lord knows what we must have looked like approaching from space.

We had landed a hundred miles or so from the nearest entrance to the Ganymede Dome. I was dourly considering the prospect of trekking on foot, but Erna was certain we had been seen, and, sure enough, a snowcrawler manned by three incredulous colonists came out to fetch us. I never saw human eyes bulge the way those six eyes bulged at the sight of our raft.

Part of the service I offer is guaranteed delivery, and so, a couple of weeks later, I rented a ship and made a return journey to (7I9)-Albert to pick up the remaining historical relics we had been forced to leave behind—some tattered uniforms and a few boxes of pamphlets. A week after that, a repair ship was despatched to pick up my ferry, and she was hauled to the dockyard on Ganymede and put back in operating condition at a trifling cost of a few thousand megabucks.

These days I run a ferry service between the colonized moons of Jupiter and Saturn, and Erna is head curator of the Ganymede Museum. But I don’t take kindly toward getting employment, because it means I have to spend time away from home—and Erna. We were married a while back, you see.

It’s a funny thing about General Macintyre’s log cabin. Despite Erna’s careful diagram, the cabin never got put back together. It seems that the people of Ganymede decided it was of no great value to display the cabin of some Venusian rebel when they could be showing an item of much more immediate associations for Ganymedeans.

So they wouldn’t let Erna take the raft apart, and I had to buy myself a new rocket engine. You can see the raft in the museum on Ganymede, any time you happen to be in the neighborhood. If the curator’s around, she won’t mind answering questions. But don’t try to get playful with her. I’m awfully touchy about guys who make passes at my wife.

