

NEGAVIT

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(conclusion)

Even Roonif Pardock came to the trial. Through his precognition he knew, of course, what was going to happen, but he wouldn't tell us. I assumed that it was not to be too disastrous, or he would not have walked all that way. He was smiling, almost urbane, and his eyes glittered with arcane wisdom.

The night before, I had bribed a guard at the prison (a small building seldom used now in our advanced society) and gone in to talk with Emarin, the visitor from Laudinor. It was true that he cut a splendid, almost majestic figure: superlative health, flashing teeth and eyes, red cheeks, and the posture of a god.

"I understand that you are the product of an exclusively meat diet," I said.

"Yes. And you, I believe," he replied politely, "consume only Negavit, a non-living but highly nourishing food."

"Correct."

I sat down and relaxed, measuring him cautiously from the corner of my eye. Yes, he was an ultra-confident person: an aura, an effulgence of virtue and potency radiated from him, filling the room.

Grayson and Nocerne had already gotten to him, and he was ready at the trial to hurl forth his emanations, his vibrancy of protest and challenge, to precipitate revolt. How to get him on our side?

"Is Laudinor," I asked, "a spiritually contented planet, as we are here?"

"Yes, we had a cleansing as you did. Ours was not the atomic bomb and earthquakes



Jim Barber, Animals: 4419
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and slipping of the earth axis; it was a maelstrom of meteorites and fire. It wiped out all but a few thousand; we have now learned, like you, to live the simple, humble, non-technological life."

"Then you understand our philosophy;" I said, "why we feel so strongly that Nature, not human culture, organization, government authority, bureaucracy, is the great teacher, and why we insist on the equal sacredness of all that lives, even the inorganic."

"I do indeed."

Emarin nodded. He hooked his big, competent hands around his knees and leaned back, rocking pleasantly to induce peacefulness and reverie. The emanation of power and authority was overwhelming; I could see how he could arouse a whole population.

"Then how," I inquired, "can you base your existence on the butchery of animals, an excess of cruelty that even the Old Era did not indulge in?"

"But do you know what kind of animals these are?" he asked.

"What difference does that make?"

"A great deal. They are meat, it is true, but they are all cast-offs, friction spots in the latest spirit-mind ray-wave who

did moral wrong--bodies, outward forms condemned, whose souls are being restored elsewhere. They are entities from whom the vital energy has gone. They are, literally, dead, when we slaughter them."

"Does Nocerne know this?"

"No."

"And when you kill them, they do not feel pain?"

"None at all. We would not be permitted to survive in the galaxy if we caused pain on such a scale. Only the mortal Earthlings of long ago were that obtuse, callous, barbaric."

I was aghast.

"Actually, then," I said, "one could say that what you are using for food is a sort of walking Negavit, the non-living tissue we depend on."

"Precisely."

I stood up.

"Merciful Father! Then you do not differ with us fundamentally."

"Not in the least."

"Then how do you plan to help Nocerne and Grayson overthrow our society?" I paused and gazed straight into Emarin's eyes. "Because I know, from the guards, that that is exactly what you have plotted."

Emarin stood up, too. He was completely unruffled. His composure reminded me of Hovar, and of the Master.

"But did it never occur to you," the Laudinorian asked, "that I might be deceiving, duping these conspirators into revealing their hand? Perhaps I have a plan as much as they do. Perhaps I have another sponsor, far more spiritually developed than your Nocerne and Grayson, who sensed what is transpiring and who wishes to implicate and eliminate the reactionaries, the threats to the growing Kingdom of Divine Life."

I was thrilled at the words.

"Compassionate Christ!" I exclaimed.

"It would be too wonderful to be possible. Then you were apprised of it by the Bright-Interval Angels, who wish to speed our next planetary emigration?"

"Yes. The evolutionary apex will be reached soon. And many of us guides are employing new ways to help you mortals accelerate your maturity and fend off any lapse or set-back--like this treachery of Grayson and Nocerne.

"But that wasn't the only reason I came. I ran across one of your own associates along the star routes."

"Hovar!" I cried.

"Yes. He urged me to hurry."

"And at the trial, then . . ."

Emarin smiled again, a winsome, innocently marvelous, a celestial smile.

"I shall bear witness to my meat-eating," he said. "The sanctioned meat of the rejected creature, the non-suffering, unliving, and beyond pain--akin to your Negavit. We would never permit ourselves to kill the sentient for food. And we will never allow debased, throwback traitors like your Grayson and Nocerne to remain a part of society. They cannot be exculpated here; they will be exiled for a long rehabilitation Dark Span."

Joy was welling from my heart, almost choking me.

"That supernal power you reveal, then," I said, "that emanation of such rapid, stunning frequency, you will use it, as you told Nocerne?"

"I will use it to convince your society of the strength I derive from meat, true, but then . . ." And he raised an open palm in victory. "then I will declare what the meat is, a non-sentient but ambulatory Negavit, the discarded desire-bodies of marginal lives from which spirit and mind have departed, bodies economically and providentially adapted to the flesh needs of our human world."

"And the impact of your vibrations, your luminosity, the effect upon the near and distant citizens who will, of course, catch your words and soul force through telepathy training--what will be the broad reaction?"

Emarin bowed his head; his glance was almost sportive, roguish.

"You will have to wait to see," he replied. "After all, we are still mortals enough to want a dramatic climax to every brutal conspiracy and every evil ambition."

"Yes." I gripped his arm. "And I must face my own weaknesses and sins. Since learning of their plot I have, I must admit, been guilty of those Prime Errors of complacency and cynicism, condescension and conceit. Now you have pumped back the redeeming blood to my spirit; now I shall have faith in the victory of ingenuousness and simplicity, the incorruptible sources of Nature, and Unaria's devoutness, maturity, and clarity of soul."

I followed Ratiche in past the guards. Roonif Pardock, who was seated at the rear of the courtroom, nodded to me as I passed. I could see the aura of blue about his body; I could feel the warmth from his spiritual frequency, and it exalted me at once.

The trial went swiftly. Ratiche and I presented the case for Unaria, and Nocerne, who had a few days before publicly offered to defend Grayson, since the community always supplied counsel in state cases, put up a stout argument for the accused.

"We are supposed to be the freest society that ever existed!" he cried. "And we cannot even permit a single man to propose a return to a theory held by nearly all the world at one time. Does that speak well for our security of mind? Does that augur strongly the individuality, the absolute sacredness of personal rights, the Perfect Kingdom we boast of creating?"

He paused and glanced around the courtroom defiantly. There was not a sound. Ratiche got up again and continued the attack upon Grayson's degenerate heresy. I could see that he was making an impact on judge and audience.

Agra, who had come in late and squeezed in beside me, pressed my arm, and I gazed into her eyes. The smile we exchanged was long and deep.

"A conviction is certain," I said.

Then Nocerne rose, and as he talked, he walked majestically along the front row of listeners, swinging around now and then to address an emphatic phrase to the judge. Unaria had long ago abandoned all juries, which had been found unwieldy and subject to prejudice. Decisions were made by the judge in consultation with the panel of other judges that sat throughout the audience to avoid any impression of special authority, status, or prestige. No one considered him/herself more qualified to pass sentence than anybody else in Unaria. A judge was actually a sort of chairperson--someone was needed to conduct proceedings--and the other judges on the panel were simply leaders in public affairs from distant villages who could have very little knowledge of the accused.

Because of its informality, it was not like a jury. No voting was required, and the presiding judge merely came to his or her own conclusion after talking with the others, usually for about half an hour. No objection was ever raised to the verdict, which was not necessarily a reflection of the consensus view. It might very well, in fact, be the opposite; a minority viewpoint might be issued as the decision, because Unaria had a genuine respect for dissident, minority attitudes, and sought to encourage them as much as possible. Actually, the non-conformist was held in higher esteem than the orthodox citizen, and majorities were always shading off rapidly to the coloration of maverick, splinter opinions.

But in the case of Grayson, who, in the minds of most, was a threat to the whole existence of Unaria, since his revolt was aimed at the sine qua non of our society, the foundation of compassion--in his case there did not seem to be any shift of audience sympathy to his side, at least as far as Agra and I could determine--that is, not until Emarin took the stand.

Nocerne introduced him with smug pomposity and vindictiveness.

"If you people of Unaria have not yet learned how pathetic, how backward you are and how desperately you need to revive the former ideas of progress, meat eating, and scientific investigation with living, whole organisms, if you've failed to grow up to the stature and wisdom of Grayson, then here is a visitor from a distant planet who may shock you into maturity."

He motioned to a guard, who brought in Emarin. There was an audible intake of breath as the full force of the Laudinorian's magnetism, radiant soul-power, struck into hearts and spirits. They had never experienced so much refulgence of the Christ consciousness outside of the master himself.

"Now," cried Nocerne, "this supreme species from Laudinor lives entirely on meat. His faculties are centuries ahead of ours; his closeness to Christ and fusion with Divine Oneness are unimaginably beyond Unaria's. Can you see now why we must restore knowledge, grandeur, strength to the withering life of our State, why we must revitalize our wasted confidence with all the excitement, incentive, and dedication which only uninhibited research can create, research with any and all means and methods, including animals.

"We destroyed the very fibre of the will to advance, to evolve, when we excluded such essentials from the plans for this new world. Now we must go back and begin over."

Emarin was standing tall, noble, quiet. His body aura, pale lavender and quivering, almost flickering, was vividly apparent to all in the courtroom.

"And do you need unerring proof?" Nocerne suddenly shouted. "Then listen to that! Turn in your ESP receptor to the sounds coming from all around Unaria."

And as we all touched the tiny cell worn under our clothing at the center of the chest--a device which increased, supercharged our psychic powers--natural but trained from childhood, developed systematically--as we did so, we all became acutely conscious of the sound of footfalls, hundreds of them, thousands, coming from every side of our community, along all the roads for fifty miles around.

"Hear them!" cried Nocerne. "They are all spellbound by this incomparable genius; they are walking toward him, rhapsodically entranced. Never in human history has an influence been so sublime, so pure, so omnipotent. He is truly a god; he is inscrutably, unspeakably exalting; and it is because he is Emarin, the Meat-Eater. He knows no other food, and all our citizens from vast distances are swept up, inflamed, inspired by that soul force, that uttermost ESP-super-



consciousness. They are his willing subjects; they move toward this source of all virtue and life to surrender self, to hail him as absolute and immaculate ruler, now and forever."

"Blasphemy!" Agra muttered to me.

And I exclaimed aloud: "Blasphemy! Only Christ is perfection. Before we are God again, we must learn humility for many eras to come!"

"Hear the tread of all those feet!" shouted Nocerne. "They are your answer. They sense the sacred, inviolable fire and strength of this person, and they are your answer. They confer sacrament and deity upon this new force beating upon their hearts and souls."

Here Nocerne raised both fists raptly, dementedly.

"They come to dethrone the decadent, the putrid odor of cowardice and maudlin, puritan sham, and the mockery of sentimental emptiness, of senility and gradual suicide. They will overthrow this foul tyranny and build the dominion of the Meat-Eater again, the Researcher, the Believer in Technocracy and

Progress! And Emarin will be our God!"

And in a transport of exultance, of triumphant taunting, Nocerne, with both arms made a broad gesture of contemptuous dismissal at the crowd.

Then Ratiche was replying but could not be heard above the hubbub, and then I was thrusting forward in the confusion, and Agra gripped my arm, and her voice dragged me back: "Doan!"

Then suddenly I became aware of Roonif Pardock, who had worked his way toward the front of the crowd. He raised his hand and his voice, fortified and preternaturally powerful from his special contact with the Highest Sources, rose above the clamor and stilled the entire room.

"There is another frequency demanding our attention!" he cried. "One I have known intimately for long, which nourishes my spirit with the rays of the Farthest Ecstasy. And I can recall him from distant journeys and materialize him for you, here, now!"

His fierce, patriarchal face, stamped with noble force like a Roman coin, was refulgent. His eyes blazed. He pointed toward the open space at the front of the courtroom. And suddenly Hovar was there. He raised both arms, and the crowd was tense, excruciatingly silent.

"I have brought for you another, loftier, more sublime Visitor!" he declared. "But before he steps forth, listen to Emarin again. Emarin!" He turned to the Laudinorian. "Explain to them what the meat is which makes you the superior, contented, powerful, and fulfilled species which you are!"

Slowly Emarin swung his calm, confident gaze here and there across the room, including everyone in its reach, sympathetically, familiarly.

"The meat," he said, "is non-sentient; it is of life which is marginal, abandoned, non-living, and there was no particle of suffering, of feeling of any kind in its death. It died under close care and love of the Master. And its fleshy remains have no consciousness, not even the consciousness of the plant, the tree, the rock."

He paused and studied the judge's face

with intent and level dignity.

"It is," he exclaimed, "no more than what you Unarians have grown to greatness on--a kind of four-footed Negavit. All of you will become in time, if you hold to your compassionate mode of life, as godlike as we Laudinorians."

There was a gasp from the crowd. Grayson turned horribly pale, and Nocerne leaped up in a fury.

"Prove it! Prove it!" he shouted. "It's a criminal lie!"

Hovar's eyes flashed.

"You will have it from the lips of Ultimate Authority!" he cried. "But first, what has happened to the army of supporters for Grayson and Nocerne, the Unarians in revolt who were marching to the courthouse to overthrow our Order of Familiarity and Mercy, our society of rural quiet, contemplation, and simplicity? What do you hear?"

All of us clicked our ESP-receptors for clearer audibility. The sound of the multitude of footsteps, so loud and determined a short while ago, now was hesitant, fading, and as we listened, it dwindled to a whisper and passed away entirely.

"There!" Hovar cried. "You Unarians have perceived the truth again. At a distance the marchers have caught by life-long-educated psychic power my voice and Emarin's, the Holiest Authority, from the greatest, most hallowed Lawgiver of all.

"The rebellion is over. Unaria will press forward to the New Jerusalem, the perfect Kingdom of Christ-Consciousness on Earth."

I felt Agra's arm about me, embracing me warmly and tenderly, and now Hovar pointed to the spot beside Emarin. His eyes darkened: his face became translucent, his whole body transfigured.

"And here is the unquestionable proof: the Second Visitor who was here last only twelve years ago, the Master!"

And as we watched, there he was, so dazzling bright that our eyes were shocked by splinters of pain, and we all bowed our

heads.

"Yes," the pure and powerful voice declared, "I have returned to verify the evidence of Emarin and to sentence Grayson and Nocerne."

I drew Agra close to me and pressed my face into her light, fragrant hair. For a moment it was unbearable even to keep turned toward the Master's countenance. I could feel her clinging to me.

"It's too much; it's too beautiful!" she breathed.

And I heard the Master's voice going on, vibrant, omnipotent, high-flung, and limitless, like the tolling of a bell from a mountain peak: "The breakers of Unaria's Law of Love are condemned to four lifetime cycles of learning, struggle, abnegation, without appreciable relief, and to one lifetime of only moderate relief and constant demonstration of pity, of action on behalf of the weak. By then they may accept the spiritual verities of Unaria."

There was a silence in the courtroom.



"And now you, Roonif Pardock, who, with Hovar, called me here to proclaim justice, because of your extraordinary degree of development, of spiritual maturity, gained from quiet and reflection, conditions of equal love and duty, non-pain, non-suffering in relation to other life, inner clarity and discernment, and utmost compassion shaping an

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environment, I am requesting your company on my return to the Uppermost Sphere, the inner ring of the final apex, the Dome of Completion."

And he held out his hand to Roonif, and as the latter moved toward him, the Master turned, smiling, to Hovar.

"And you, also," he said, "my ingenious ambassador, my Mercury of the Soul, I have assignments for you in the Dominions of Unceasing Light."

And all three vanished, and I saw Rat-iche fall to his knees, his arm across his eyes, and Nocerne and Grayson and the four guards behind the judge, and then the judge himself, and at last Agra and I and all the rest knelt, and in the awesome quiet, from immeasurable distance a bell-like echo came down: "Unaria! Unaria! I am content with you. Land without cruelty, I shall grant you my grace. People of expanding consciousness and communication, of unbounded and passionate kindness, on you I shall confer mercy and the wealth of spiritual attainment."

The End

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BOOKS RECEIVED

Gerald Hausman,
Meditations With Animals
Santa Fe: Bear & Company,
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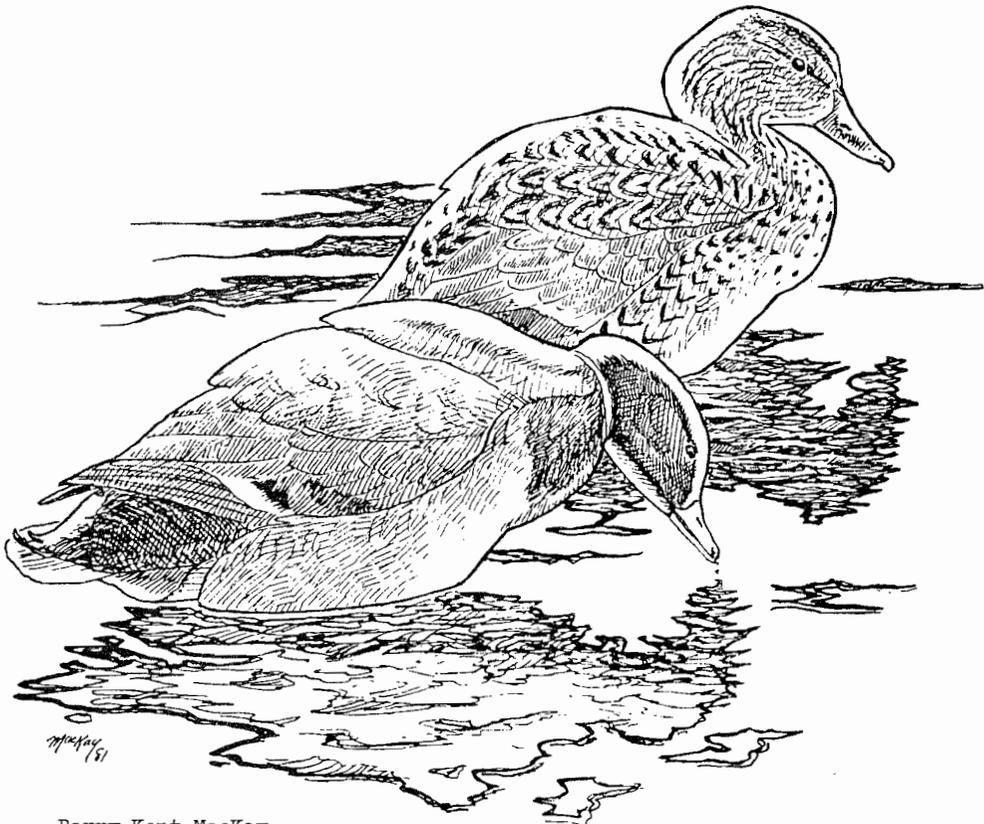
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