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Title: Shadow World

Date of first publication: 1939

Author: Ray Cummings

Date first posted: Aug. 4, 2013

Date last updated: Aug. 4, 2013

Faded Page eBook #20130810

This eBook was produced by: Delphine Lettau, Mary Meehan & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <http://www.pgdpCanada.net>

**THRILLING
WONDER
STORIES**



The Magazine of Prophetic Fiction

SHADOW WORLD

By RAY CUMMINGS

Author of "The Great Adventure," "The Thing from Mars," etc.

Thrilling Tales of Wonder

Vol. XIV, No. 3

December 1939

The big laboratory of research physics of the Technological Institute at Washington was tensely silent.

"Are you ready?" Dr. Steele asked.

"Yes," Tom Jarvis said.

Beside him he saw young Peter Hantzen gripping the motion picture machine which they were taking with them; and he heard Hantzen also murmur acquiescence. Every nerve within Jarvis was taut as he waited for the signal from the grim Dr. Steele—the signal which would start him and Hantzen simultaneously upon the weird transition into the unknown realm of the fourth dimension. Would there be living things in that co-existing realm? Would Jarvis and Hantzen ever reach it? Or would the strange electronic current now plunge them to death? Was this merely a suicide venture?

Like a man drowning, the thoughts flashed in a whirl through Jarvis' mind. It might be suicide, yet he was glad he was making this attempt. The safety of his Anglo-Saxon nation depended on it. A large quantity of radiumite was needed, at once. It could not be produced on Earth.

Dr. Steele's newly discovered apparatus had been able to draw small quantities of radiumite from the unknown, co-existing realm of the fourth dimension—the shadow world which no one had ever seen, much less tried to enter. More radiumite was drastically needed now; and Jarvis and Hantzen had volunteered to try and secure it.

"Ready! Go!"

Dr. Steele's grim command struck into Jarvis' whirling thoughts. Simultaneously, Jarvis and Hantzen pressed the switch levers of the mechanisms encircling their waists.

Jarvis felt a sudden weird shock that made all his senses reel, as the transition began.

In the realm of the fourth dimension, Xeen pressed forward from the dim recess and adjusted the discs of the sensory-clarifiers on his bulging chest so that he could become better aware of the speaker's words.

This was a serious and very mysterious situation.

Many things, of course, were a mystery to Xeen. That was merely due to his lack of personal knowledge. But here was something that nobody—not even the leaders of great science—could explain. Xeen had hardly believed that in his great world, at the scientific height to which it had now developed, there remained anything really unknown.

The big room was dim. The time of rest and replenishment of brain and body was almost here, and the glow of phosphorescent radiation from the walls of the room was waning. Through the window ovals, he could see darkness descending upon the big cubical area of the city outside.

He turned the current of the discs on his chest up another notch, to sharpen his senses and keep him thoroughly awake.

Trapped in Another Realm,
Tom Jarvis Discovers That
Substance and Its Counterpart
Mimic Each Other!

"What it could possibly mean we do not know," one of the scientific-thinkers was saying. "We have studied it and there seems no answer."

There were several of the scientific-thinkers in the center of the room. They were all much older than Xeen. The grayness of the passage of time was upon them so that they were pallid in the waning radiation. They had opened the vault-pit where the abcilene was stored. The vault was in the center of the room and the group of aged entities stood over it. The pale green-yellow radiation from the great store of abcilene bars struck upward with a weird shafting glow.

Xeen knew what a desperate thing it would be if anything went wrong with the store of abcilene. It was a vital substance which replenished the brain processes; motivated the life, really, of every entity. It was very difficult to find the crude substance of which abcilene was composed; and more than half the workers gave all their time to its slow, arduous manufacture. Everyone needed constantly his allotted portion. The store of it here had to be maintained as the means of existence while more was being refined; if it ever gave out, every living thing in the great nation of Xalites would eventually wilt into the unconsciousness of eternity.

"It is going!" the aged scientific-thinker was saying. "Nobody—nothing is taking it. But you can see it going now before our eyes!"

Again Xeen, with several others of the younger workers who labored here in the abcilene vaults, pressed forward. And now he found Zogg beside him.

"What can it mean?" Zogg asked softly.

Xeen could see the gleaming stacks of glowing rods of abcilene now, as he and Zogg peered down into the vault. The rods were no longer than the prehensile fingers of Xeen's tenuous hand—abcilene rods that at stated intervals you pressed into the spinal opening behind your head, where the fluids would dissolve it to replenish your vitality.

The big vault-pit was a glowing blur of phosphorescent sheen, but presently the normal rectification of Xeen's eye-lenses made it possible for him to see the details of the nearer stacks of rods very clearly. As though a molecular blast of thermatic pressure had struck, he saw where one of the stacks had melted away. And even as he stared, the rest of it was dissolving—turning wraithlike so that the vault-wall was visible through it.

Then it melted into nothingness and was gone!

One of the young entities beside Xeen and Zogg suddenly cried:

"Can this be some trick of the accursed Moloko aggressors? Something their science has developed? Are the accursed Moloko entities stealing our abcilene? Why, if they can do that, then soon indeed they will make us their slaves!"

The spoken-thoughts made a little wave of muttered anger pass over the group of young Xalites. But there was horror in it—the horror of helplessness as one contemplates the awesome actuality of danger. The idea made Xeen shudder, with a little quivering tremble over all his sensory nerve-fibres.

Here in Xeen's world, there were only two important branches of people—the Xalites, to which Xeen belonged, and the Molokos, whose place of abode was beyond the great glowing hills of the Divide. The Xalites were willing always to be friends; to help with mutual effort in the advancement of their world; to collaborate in the conquest of Nature's secrets so that everyone—Xalites and Molokos alike, might exist more pleasantly and labor less.

But the Molokos, during the last life-span, would not have it like that. Especially more recently, when a fairly young Moloko leader called Tor had arisen with ideas of selfish aggression which would sacrifice everything and everyone to enhance his power and his personal vanity. He did not really dare attack the Xalites, but he often threatened it.

"It must be Tor who is doing this," one of the aged Xalite-thinkers said. "The damnable Tor. He has spies everywhere among us Xalites."

And someone else said: "That is true. Who can know but that perhaps some accursed Moloko spy is among our workers, even here in the abcilene-vaults? A spy who has found some way of doing this."

It seemed incredible. In the dim eerie light of the vault-room, there was no one to see the faint smile that parted young Zogg's mouth, as he pressed against Xeen and peered into the vault. It was a smile of ironic contempt; and his bulging

eye-lenses were gleaming with a strange glow. Zogg was not quite so young as the youthful Xeen. But the light of the vaults never showed that in reality he was older than he seemed.

Zogg was staring now silently down into the vault. The weird melting of another stack of the abcilene rods had begun. The top layer was turning translucent, transparent, then dissolving away. Gone!

"How queer that is," Zogg said. "Who could be doing that, Xeen?"

Xeen could only stare with a fascinated, alarmed awe. He was so absorbed, he did not notice that presently Zogg moved away. No one noticed Zogg—everyone was too interested in the vault-pit.

"Is it continuous like that?" someone else asked. "If this keeps on, all our abcilene will soon be gone."

It was not continuous, one of the aged thinkers was explaining. It occurred only at regular intervals. A little would go. Then for a long time nothing would happen. Then a little more of the precious abcilene would melt and vanish. Everything possible had been done to stop it. And the cause still was unknown. Tor could not be doing it, however. That was not reasonable. Neither Tor nor any of his people were really advanced thinkers. Most of their knowledge had been derived from the Xalites. But the accursed Molokos would profit—if they found out what was happening.

"We must take every precaution for secrecy," the Xalite leader warned. "Tor must not find this out. We have not lost much abcilene yet. We will find a way to stop this accursed thing."

No one in the vault-room noticed that over in the shadows of the distant corner Zogg was crouching, with that faint ironic smile still on his face. Then, furtively so that no one would observe him, he adjusted his audion-discs for long-range transmission.

"This is Zogg," he murmured softly. "I want Molokos Leading-thinker M2." Then to the Molokos leader he swiftly gave details of what he had just learned and seen of the disappearance of the abcilene.

"I give you congratulations," Zogg chuckled, as he finished. "We will soon demand obedience from these Xalites and they will be powerless to resist us. Tell me, how are you accomplishing it, M2?"

But the voice in distant Moloko vibrated in Zogg's audions with a puzzled note.

"Zogg," the voice said, "we know nothing of these happenings."

It was puzzling that the Molokos were not causing it, but Zogg continued to chuckle. The Molokos would take advantage of it, whatever the cause.

Then presently Zogg was back beside Xeen.

"It has stopped for now," Xeen said softly. "You should have seen it go, Zogg. It was horrible."

To Xeen had come a great despairing fear. But with the vigor of youth, he thrust it away. All the young workers here were muttering that they would fight if the Molokos wanted to make war.

Suddenly in the eerie light of the vault-room, a cry went up. Xeen saw the weird thing, as soon as anyone else did, and he gripped Zogg excitedly by the arm as all the crowding young workers shoved back to avoid the shimmering shadowy thing that suddenly appeared in their midst. At first it showed like a little blob of phosphorescent light. It seemed below the solid flooring of the room, to one side of the vault-pit—a wraithlike blob down there, as though you were looking through the solid floor and still could see it.

Xeen, like the others, stared blankly. The shimmering blob down there had parted now into two blobs. Details were coming to them—form and color. Now they had floated upward, emerging from within the solid floor so that they stood level. They were slender upright things. Taller than Xeen. Then with a shock he realized that they were living beings! Weird, horrible looking things. But they had the vague appearance of a thinking-entity.

There were two legs, queerly thick and straight. The arms were thick, stiff-looking. A long upright thick narrow body, with a chest that barely bulged. A small round head, with things fastened in it in a tangle, like a shock of tiny short wires, bristling on a dynamo dome. And the faces were weird. A flexible, whitish covering. But there was a mouth, a protruding nose, and two eye-lenses, not bulging, but back in the face, with wires in a tangled little line over each of

them.

"Xeen! Zogg! Quickly! Get the bar-cage!"

Xeen came to himself to realize that one of the leaders was wildly calling to him and Zogg. The two upright beings had materialized now so that seemingly they were nearing complete solidity. They were on the floor level evidently trying to walk. With them was some sort of inert thing—a mechanism perhaps. They dropped it, as they staggered, both of them stricken as though about to fall.

"Xeen! Put the bar-cage around them!" the Xalite leader urgently ordered.

A large cubical bar-cage—used as Xalite punishment when occasionally a youthful worker transgressed the law—stood in a corner of the room. Xeen and Zogg rushed to it, shoved it toward the upright beings. They were, fortunately, still wraithlike, tenuous and the solid bars of the cage passed through them.

Then Xeen and Zogg held the cage steady, with the two weird beings materializing within it. Sounds were coming from their mouths now. They stood clinging together as though stricken with some horrible lethargy. Then they staggered and fell; lay inert, captives within the cage.

"They're still alive," Xeen said. "See the body movements?"

"Yes," Zogg agreed. "They are very strange. From whence could they come?"

Xeen couldn't answer that. None of the aged leaders could guess. The time of rest was now half over. Xalite guards paced the vault room. The cage and its two inert weird beings had been taken outside; and Xeen and Zogg were put on watch. These were the beings, doubtless from some weird, unknown realm, who must have been stealing the abcilene.

The queer mechanism that the two beings had brought with them, lay here now beside Xeen—a three-legged thing, with a cubical box on top. The box had a single crooked arm. It seemed to have a lens-eye in front of the box, deeply buried. And another big lens-eye fastened outside. But the thing had no sign of life. It was wholly inert, built of strange materials. Xeen propped it up on its three legs and it stood quiet, as he examined it curiously.

Then again, for a long time, they waited. They could see now that the bodies of the unconscious beings were wrapped in flexible material that altered the shape, so that you could not tell what exactly was underneath. But the face and the hands were uncovered.

"Look! They are moving!" Zogg said suddenly.

Within the cage the two beings were recovering consciousness. They stared out through the bars as they sat up; then they staggered to their feet. Xeen and Zogg had jumped erect also. Unquestionably the two weird beings could see them. They stared. From their mouths came sounds. Then they rushed at the bars of the cage, futilely rattled them.

One of them held something in his hand. It spat yellow light and heat. It roared and a little pellet struck against Xeen's bulging chest and was repelled by the instinctive magnetic-refraction of his nerve-fibres.

"Stop raging," Xeen said. "We will not hurt you."

Could the beings understand him? They stood gripping each other now. Xeen realized that the thing one of them was holding was supposed to be a weapon, and the being was astonished and dismayed that the little pellet it seemed to have flung at him had not hurt him.

"Can you talk?" Xeen said, more gently.

Yes, it seemed that they could talk. They were muttering to each other. Queer, guttural words—not liquid and musical like the flowing speech of the Xalites, or even the gruffer intonation of the Molokos. Some weird language wholly unintelligible. But was it quite that? Xeen had always been taught that sounds from one living thing to another, must inevitably convey their intended meaning. And these strange beings—no matter from whence they had come—were here now, a part of this world, subject to its natural laws.

"Who are you?" Zogg gruffly demanded.

"Speak to us. We won't harm you," Xeen said encouragingly.

Then one of the beings spoke. At first it blurred. It seemed to war with Xeen's brain-fibres—an alien thing, struggling to get through to his understanding.

"Try again," he said gently.

Was the same phenomenon happening to the two beings in the cage? It seemed so. At the sounds of Xeen's voice, their weird pallid flat faces were wrinkling as though the surface was fluid.

"Don't you understand me now?" Xeen said. "I can almost understand you. Try again. Do you understand?"

"My God, you sound as though you were talking English," one of the weird beings said suddenly. "I'm Tom Jarvis. This man with me is Peter Hantzen. We've come here into the fourth dimension—from our Earth-world. We're Americans. That thing you've got out there won't hurt you. It's just a motion picture machine, which Hantzen here idiotically thought he should bring. What's the matter with you? Doesn't that make sense?"

It was an amazing thing to Xeen—to everyone in Xalite, for that matter. For the periods of more than two times of rest now, all the aged Xalite thinker-entities had been questioning the two weird beings who said they were from a distant realm called Earth-world. Xeen could not understand the details. But his youthful brain-cells absorbed this weird new knowledge eagerly, storing it in his memory. The Xalite thinking-entities agreed that the two weird beings were telling the truth.

They were, it seemed, what they called young men. They came from a co-existing realm—a realm that occupied very much the same space as Xeen's world. But it had different factors. A different vibratory rate, they said, so that it was a wholly different state of matter. They called it a realm of three dimensions, and Xeen's realm, was, to them, the world of the fourth dimension.

"Very strange," Zogg whispered once, to Xeen, as they listened. Zogg was always here, listening with a strange deep-set glow lurking in his bulging eyes. But Xeen did not notice that.

The Earth-world was very big. These two Earth beings named Tom Jarvis and Peter Hantzen, were Americans. They had been born in 1930, as they called it; and their Earth-world time now was 1955. They were part of what was termed the Anglo-American Alliance. It was a big nation now, friendly, without desire to harm its neighbors. But in a place called Middle Europe, an aggressor nation had risen up. It had a single man leader. He was untruthful, unscrupulous, savagely eager to make his nation bigger. Always he was threatening war and killing.

"Why," Xeen whispered, "we can understand that, Zogg. Tor and the accursed Molokos are like that."

Tom Jarvis did most of the talking. His companion, Peter Hantzen, mostly always just sat silent, staring and listening. Xeen had come to feel that he liked this weird-looking Earthman, Jarvis. But about Hantzen he couldn't be sure. And Xeen was puzzled. He knew that he might always delve with thought-transference into the mind of any living thing which was upon a considerably lower intellectual plane than himself. Xalites and Molokos could not read each other's minds. But the things of the forest could hide nothing of their glowering thoughts from the vastly superior intellect of a thinking-entity.

Could Xeen now read the minds of these two Earth-beings? Nobody but Xeen seemed to think of that. But he tried it now. It seemed that he could do it, a little, though everything was blurred and vague. With Tom Jarvis, there seemed nothing but an elaboration of what Jarvis was saying.

But the thoughts of the brooding Peter Hantzen were puzzling. There was something about them very different from those of Jarvis. Thoughts, it seemed to Xeen, that this silent, watchful Peter Hantzen was careful to hide.

Did Zogg notice it? Once, Xeen believed so. It seemed that Zogg very often stared intently at Peter Hantzen.

The scientists of the Anglo-Saxon alliance, Jarvis frankly explained, had found a way to bring the abcilene out of the fourth dimension into their own world. They didn't call it abcilene. To them it was radiumite—a very rare, valuable substance. And they needed it for their war materials. With it they could quickly crush the unscrupulous Dictator of Middle Europe. Without a considerably supply of it now, their modern electronic weapons would be inadequate. They would be helpless.

What they had been getting from Xeen's realm was too small a quantity, coming too slowly. So Jarvis and Hantzen had dared to try the transition of their human bodies. It had knocked them unconscious as they arrived, but they were all right now, and they begged help in getting the abcilene. The safety of their world and millions of people depended on it.

Xeen saw now the tiny apparatus of wire which was fastened around the middle of Jarvis and Hantzen, by which they had changed the vibratory rate of their bodies, flinging out an aura which they called an electro-magnetic field so that any substance within that field would also be transported. They had also a single, grid-like little apparatus, not much bigger than their heads. With it, Jarvis said, they could—now that they were here—alter the vibration-rate of a considerable quantity of abcilene and thrust it into their Earth-world very quickly. And Jarvis was begging that they be allowed to do it.

"But we can't let them do that," Xeen whispered to the intent, listening Zogg who was beside him. "We'd like to save them, but if they take our abcilene, we will be helpless against the damnable Tor. We would have to depend upon him for our immediate need of our vital substance."

It puzzled Xeen to see the queer look which leaped into Zogg's eyes. But Zogg only said:

"Yes, we cannot let them do that, can we?"

It occurred to Xeen then, that in some queer way, Zogg and that silent, brooding Peter Hantzen were alike.

Xeen led the way toward the hill ahead of them.

"How much further is it?" Peter Hantzen asked.

"I think from the top of that next hill is the correct place," Xeen responded.

"Beyond that dark line of trees," Tom Jarvis said. "Queer looking trees, Xeen. Is that what you'd call them? Everything in your world looks queer to me."

"I could not be sure that is the best place," Zogg said.

"We will do what our leaders told us," Xeen retorted. "From that hill, if we point the Earthmen's mechanism in the direction exactly as our leaders described, we will be aiming truly at the abcilene storage vaults of the Molokos."

Xeen was quivering with excitement. He and Zogg had been chosen by the leaders of the Xalites to put into execution this plan which the leaders had worked out with the Earthmen. Their little grid box of weird intricate mechanisms was capable of disintegrating any abcilene upon which it was directly trained, even at considerable distance. The Xalites certainly could not spare any more of their abcilene. What better idea, then, than to have the Earthmen secure some from the accursed Tor! His people would never suffer; the Xalites would give them what they needed gradually from their manufactured sources. But the Molokos would be just enough behind to leave them at the mercy of the Xalites for their supplies. It would keep them from ever daring any aggressive acts.

It was now midway of the time set. The dark empty landscape, here at the Divide about halfway between the Xalites and Tor's people, brooded with a blank silence. Xeen had carefully led his little party. The hillock to which they had been directed was just ahead. All was going well. Xeen was sure that nothing could go wrong.

"When you aim your little mechanism," Zogg said, "can you be sure you are getting results?"

"You bet," young Jarvis chuckled. "I only have to get an approximate aim, and oscillate it. When it picks up any radiumite—abcilene, as you say—it will glow and hum."

"And the abcilene will emerge directly into your world?" Zogg persisted. "But whereabouts in your world?"

"We have a receiving station for it in a place called Washington," Jarvis explained. "The vibration rate I'll impart to the abcilene will be tuned—synchronized, you might say—so that it cannot emerge except at that receiving station."

They reached the top of the little hill. Xeen, with his directional instruments, took the exact location of the distant Moloko habitations, which were invisible beyond the blank darkness.

"You point it this way," he said eagerly to Jarvis. Then he stood aside near Zogg, gazing at Jarvis, who with Hantzen helping him, was erecting the little mechanism. Nothing could go wrong now. Xeen was thrilling with excitement. Soon

they would return and the leaders would praise him. There was a complement-sex entity who would be very proud of Xeen....

The thing happened very suddenly. In the dimness, Xeen was gazing at Peter Hantzen. And suddenly the Earthman's thoughts were clear. Wicked thoughts! So horribly wicked that Xeen gasped:

"You, Peter Hantzen—you're a bad Earthman! You're thinking that you and Zogg are going to kill this Jarvis man and me!"

He was almost too late. Just an instant before he cried it out, Hantzen had produced his queer little weapon. Xeen saw him spring now at Tom Jarvis.

"What the devil—" Jarvis exclaimed. But he saw the weapon; his queer thick arm knocked it up just as it roared and spat light which went close over Jarvis' head. Then the two men were fighting; they were locked together, rolling on the ground in the darkness.

Xeen didn't see any more of that fight. With an oath, Zogg had sprung at him. It was an illuminating oath—the oath of a Moloko! Xeen went down with every nerve-fibre of him hissing anger at the attacking Zogg. He fell, with Zogg on top of him; but he wound one of his long prehensile arms around Zogg's neck, squeezing hard. Their entwined, angry bodies hissed with showering sparks at the contact. Every atom of the abcilene within them was burning, radiating at white heat. Two luminescent bodies, they rolled and fought.

Then suddenly Zogg's repelling aura was trying to force them apart. Zogg was frightened! Triumph rose in Xeen as he realized it; and he clung, resisting, his arm squeezing Zogg's neck, and all his body tensed to absorb Zogg's radiating strength. Their chest discs touched. The showering sparks now were all sucking energy from Zogg into Xeen! Zogg was weakening fast. His ebbing strength revived Xeen so that he fought harder, and the end quickly came. Zogg fought only a moment longer. Then, like a mechanism with its fuse suddenly removed, he went inert. His body lay insensate. And whatever else there was of him had fled into the eternal unknown.

Xeen shudderingly rose to his feet. He had never killed an entity before. He realized now that it was quite a horrible thing to do ...

"Xeen! Xeen! Where are you? Did he get you?"

From the darkness Tom Jarvis emerged triumphant. Xeen saw the dead figure of Peter Hantzen lying on the ground. Jarvis' face was stained with a red fluid. His flat chest was heaving up and down.

"You got him, Xeen? Good work, boy," he added. "Now, we'll—"

He stopped, and gasped. The little mechanism which he had erected was working! He had set it into operation just before Hantzen had attacked him. And all this time, Xeen knew, it had been dragging abcilene from the Moloko vaults, forcing it out, making it emerge in that place called Washington.

"We did it, Xeen!" Jarvis cried triumphantly. "Why, I guess we've got enough already! We—"

The little mechanism, with a sudden hiss, burst into a roar of light and destroyed itself.

"Ran it even beyond its capacity," Jarvis cried. "All right, Xeen. That's all we need. Let's go back. We—"

He suddenly clapped his hand to his middle and staggered.

"What's the matter?" Xeen gasped. "You are not hurt?"

"That damned Hantzen. In the fight, my transition mechanism was deranged. I'll have to try using it immediately, Xeen. My only chance to get back."

Light was hissing at Jarvis' middle; then it steadied. And now in the darkness, Xeen could see that the Earthman was turning wraithlike.

"Good-by, Xeen—you're a good fellow. Thanks for the help."

The voice was thin, fading. Xeen had a flashing glimpse of Jarvis' face. The queer flat face, with eyes that didn't bulge—

but Xeen had grown to like it.

Then Xeen was alone in the darkness.

"Good-by," he whispered. "I—I like you, Earthman."

He felt very lonely as he trudged back home. Zogg was dead. It had been strangely terrible to kill an entity like oneself. But within Xeen there was also a queer pleasure and pride that he had helped so many people in that other realm they called the Earth-world.

The war on Earth was over. The Anglo-American Alliance had triumphed and peace was assured to the world.

"The War Department's got that fellow Hantzen's record now," young Tom Jarvis said, as he faced the little group of scientists and newscasters in the big Technological laboratory in Washington. "He was a spy from Middle Europe. Pleading to go with me on the pretext of trying to take motion pictures in the fourth dimension! His plot is simple to fathom. A receiving station is comparatively simple to build, and Berlin must have had one ready according to Hantzen's directions. The transition mechanism was another matter—he couldn't learn its principles so easily. But there at the end, he would have killed me, trained the disintegrator, not on the Moloko vaults, but on those of the Xalites, and sent that radiumite to emerge in Berlin by changing the vibration rate."

"Quite a different outcome to the war, if he'd done that," one of the young newscasters commented. "And different in that other realm also."

"I wish I could go back and thank them," Jarvis said. "Particularly a fellow named Xeen. You say it's quite impossible, Dr. Steele?"

"Inexplicably so," the scientist assented gravely. "Our apparatus remains inert." He smiled a little wistfully. "Science faces so many riddles. I'm wondering if Nature only permitted you to go that other time, because our need was so great."

"You say that there was quite a similar situation in the Fourth Dimensional realm?" one of the British newscasters commented. "Even a spy—that fellow named Zogg—just about like Hantzen. I say, that's jolly queer, isn't it?"

It seemed queer indeed to young Tom Jarvis, and it left him with a feeling of awe. Two co-existing realms—the one a shadow of the other. No, it wasn't just like that. To the people of each realm, the other was a shadow, and its own, the reality.

A thing of reality and its shadow always mimic each other.

To the wondering Jarvis came anew the realization of the vast intricacies of living things. All so different, and yet so fundamentally the same, everywhere, from the Beginning to the End.

But it seemed to Jarvis, too, that there was a progression. The good surely must be getting a little better. The evil, perhaps not quite so bad, or at least a little less able to triumph.

And the working of it all—ah, that was the Great Mystery.

[The end of *Shadow World* by Ray Cummings]