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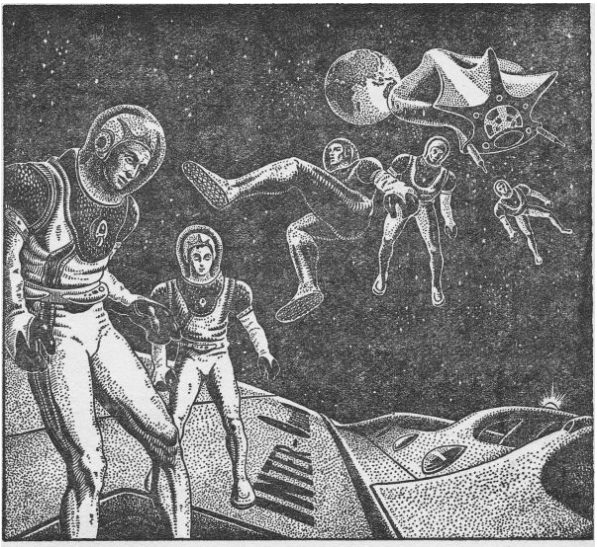

The space suits which Hubert had invented worked perfectly

THE SIMPLE LIFE

By
RAY CUMMINGS

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When Earth life grows too complicated for Professor Hubert Blaine and his pretty wife Dora, they flee into outer space!

Professor Hubert Blaine leaned back in his pneumatic pivot-ball desk chair and contemplated the inescapable fact that the world was going to the dogs. That was his considered opinion. Nor had he reached it hastily. Thinking about it now, he realized that very possibly it had grown within him throughout all his thirty-five years of life. The world was going to the dogs and there was nothing anybody could do about it. In fact, there didn't seem to be anybody but himself who realized it, or cared.

And, he contemplated bitterly, it was so unnecessary. As someone had once said, good old Mother Earth was fine. There was nothing at all the matter with the world, it was the people in it that caused the trouble. Life was getting too full of too many things. Too complex. Everybody was working like blazes, struggling to reduce everything to complexity.

Professor Hubert Blaine sighed, ran impatient fingers through his sparse sandy hair and adjusted his old fashioned rimless spectacles as he gazed frowningly through his plastic window at the city ramps crowded with hustling, feverish pedestrians. Life was no good any more, and Professor Blaine, having only this one life to live, was bitter about it.

Once things had been fine. Up until not so very long ago either. Only ninety-five years ago, at the turn of the century, they had had what was called the gaslight era. He remembered his grandfather telling about it, and it seemed very nice. A little hectic compared to George Washington's time maybe, but certainly nothing like now.

In the gaslight era, a horse and carriage got you where you were going fast enough, but not any more. Nothing got you there fast enough. The accent was on speed, and more speed.

Why?

On Professor Hubert Blaine's desk, here in the busy Government Research Laboratory, a buzzer sounded. The little Inter-lab televizor lighted with the image of the call-girl's face.

"The time is seven P.M., Professor."

"Eh? Oh, yes. Thank you."

He disconnected hastily, grabbed his hat, dashed for the lab-roof where his 'copter was racked. In eight minutes he was due home. Dora would expect him even a minute or two sooner than that, because by the time he shaved, bathed, and they allowed their usual sixteen minutes for dinner, they would be late flying to Stamford for the regular Friday night card game with the Holloways.

Fortunately the wind was in Professor Blaine's favor tonight, and the southern Westchester towerman, whom he had sweetened with a nice tip only last week, let him use the crowded northbound lower level so that he gained a full minute. He was really a little ahead of time as

he set his 'copter down in the community garden of his suburban home and grabbed the ascending escalator to the tenth floor balcony outside their apartment.

Dora was waiting for him on the balcony. Professor Blaine's wife was twenty-five, slim and pretty, with fluffy blond hair. Her short skirt and trim bodice of glistening blue nylene were extremely becoming. Her face was flushed in the warmth of the summer evening. Professor Blaine gazed at her appreciatively.

"Every night you're more beautiful," he said as he kissed her.

"Am I?" Her embrace was warm, but brief. "Oh, Hubert! The most wonderful thing—Clarice just called me. She says, if we can make it fast and arrive maybe ten minutes ahead of time, we'll have a full hour at the game. See, Janice called her a half hour ago."

"Janice?" he said.

"Sure. You remember Janice Kenton. She divorced her husband last week."

"Oh," he said. "Up in Boston."

"Yes." Dora was shoving him into the apartment, helping him off with his jacket. "Hurry, darling. I've got your bath water running. My goodness, you do need a shave. Please don't be disappointed, but I decided I just wouldn't have time to cook us anything tonight, so I ordered some synthetic stuff from the public supply company. It'll be—"

A buzzer at the living room panel of automatic tubes sounded. The synthetic stuff already was arriving.

"What about Janice?" Professor Blaine asked. Dora had shoved him into the bathroom by now.

"She's having friends in to celebrate her divorce," Dora said. "So when we get through the card game, Clarice and Tom are flying us up there, and Janice says after the celebration, see, she's just having four men in for a few drinks, then maybe we can go to a new place that opens at midnight in Boston, for dancing."

Professor Blaine came out of the bathroom and sat down abruptly in the little glass swing seat of the living room.

"I'm not going!" he said.

"Not—*what*!"

"Not going," he said.

Dora stared with widening baby blue eyes. "Not—not going to Boston!" she exclaimed.

"Not going to Boston," he said. He didn't say it nastily, just firmly. "Not going to Stamford. Not going anywhere." He stretched his feet out on the glistening rug. It was very nice to have time to stretch your feet out "Not going anywhere," he repeated. "Not until eight-seventeen tomorrow morning, when I return to the lab."

"Oh, Hubert!"

He crossed his ankles and wiggled his feet luxuriously. And then he grinned. He had a nice, warming grin. He was a big, rangy fellow, a little bookish-looking, but not too much.

"So you'd better get busy, Dora, and put through a lot of calls and tell everybody nothing doing."

"Oh, Hubert!"

"And throw that synthetic stuff away." He cast a look of repugnance to where his prospective evening meal which lay in its shiny greased cylinder, by the pneumatic tube.

"But Hubert dear, what'll I tell everybody? We're not sick."

"Tell them maybe we would be, if we went," he said. Then he reached out, caught at his wife and drew her to his lap. Dora was naturally startled, because this was the wrong time of

the twenty-four hour day for things like that. But by natural instinct she was the cuddling type. Despite her surprise, she cuddled, and he kissed her again. In fact, several times.

"Oh, Hubert, dear."

"And besides," he said, "I've lots of things I want to explain to you tonight. Things I've been thinking of a long time."

"Oh," she said. "Something important?"

"Very," he said. "Very important. Things that life has forced me to realize, even before we were married."

That hadn't been very long. Dora and Hubert had, in fact, just returned from their honeymoon last week. It had been a hectic honeymoon, what with Dora's televized calls to so many friends. She and Hubert had no immediate family, which perhaps was in a way fortunate as friends were bad enough. So many friends flew in to whoop things up, no matter where in the world Dora and Hubert went. That was the matter with the world now. It had shrunk because no place on it was further than a few hours from any other place.

"So after dinner we'll have a nice long talk," Hubert added with another kiss. "By the way, you'd better put through some local calls and see if you can get some regular food sent us. There ought to be plenty around, in some of the markets. And then cook us a nice regular meal. I've never forgotten that one you cooked me the night we got engaged." Hubert had the instincts of a diplomat, and he exhaled elaborately. "Ah, that was superb!"

"Oh, Hubert, darling." She cuddled closer. "I'll have it all ready by eight o'clock."

"Or eight-thirty," he said. "Or if it's late and we don't get it till quarter of nine, I don't give a hang."

That next hour while Hubert sat with outstretched legs, doing nothing, was glorious. Life had forced him into sudden rebellion, and so far all was well. The evening meal was hot, savory, wonderful, and it took eighteen minutes longer than normal to eat it. After eating, they sat together on the tiny terrace-balcony outside the living room. It was a wonderful summer night. You could see a little ribbon of blue sky between the out-jutting wings of the big apartment building. Hubert counted nine stars, which was a record.

Dora, naturally, was puzzled. "Something important," she said, after she had watched Hubert while he was counting the stars aloud and smoking thoughtfully. "What was it, Hubert?"

"Listen," he said. "At long last I've been inescapably forced to the conclusion that modern life has become idiotic. Besides, I don't like it. And in addition, it's dangerous."

"Dangerous, Hubert? Why, Clarice was telling me, somebody told her the latest statistics on 'copter accidents—"

He waved that away. And then he plunged into the science of it. Modern progress was building, in fact already had built, a civilization beyond the safe capabilities of the human body to live it. Even way back in '47, some fifty years ago, one of the great leaders of the medical profession had warned of it. Life had speeded up into such complexity that the physical makeup of man could not keep pace with it. After all, physically, man was changing not very much—not in the span of a hundred years or so.

A distinct danger was looming, the danger that man would build a world, an inexorable way of life, in which he couldn't survive.

"You see," Hubert was saying, "as that physician back in 'Forty-Seven remarked, we're fooling ourselves. We think we're training ourselves to the noise and the rush, the eating of

meals standing up, and food that's no good. We think we're hardened by practise to the strain of high-speed modern existence. But we're not. If that was true in 'Forty-Seven, imagine the damage done since."

He warmed to his subject. Under the stress of emergency the adrenal glands pour out additional adrenalin, and anyone can rise to surprising endurance, as a temporary thing. Nature made it that way, so that man, imperiled, could extricate himself and survive the emergency.

But modern life now draws on adrenalin, not as a temporary measure, but a permanent need. The result is a damage to the nervous system. Not a small, temporary damage which nature can repair, but a permanent deterioration. An irreparable deterioration.

"In other words," Hubert was saying, "man's nervous system is breaking down. And it's inheritable, so that in each generation we are worse off. Then science springs into the breach with sedatives. Bigger and better sedatives. That's the slogan. And psychiatry."

Hubert remembered reading about the post-war period of 'Forty-Six to 'Sixty. Someone had said, "What this country needs is a good five-cent psychiatrist." Then had come the wave of calling for psychiatrists to fix you up.

"It's nothing at all but the nerve-strain of life," Hubert said. "And they had the atom bomb to worry about then, which made it worse. We're used to that now, only minor wars, so that now we think less about killing each other. Instead, we're all very busy killing ourselves. It would be ironic, wouldn't it, if mankind finally succeeded in building a civilization too complicated for the human body to endure?"

Dora was staring at her husband wide-eyed. "Oh, Hubert," she said when he paused for breath. "Oh, Hubert, darling, I just love you when you talk like that. It sounds so important, so learned."

Dora, indeed, was not an Independent Thinker. And she adored Hubert. Everything that Hubert ever said, even if she couldn't understand it, had to be right. She cuddled closer.

"It's terrible, isn't it?" she said. "Hubert, honey, whatever are you going to do about it?"

Hubert knew what he was going to do about it. The thing had been vaguely in his mind for a long time, and now he had decided to start doing it at once. But he knew he was right when he concluded that Dora had absorbed enough scientific thinking for one evening. In fact, there wasn't any need to shock her by telling her anything in advance of its actual accomplishment.

"Besides," he said, "even if we were willing to go on making nervous wrecks of ourselves, it's no fun." He kissed her again. "It isn't, is it?" he said.

"No, it isn't. I mean, yes it is fun being kissed, darling. Is that what you mean?"

He skipped it. He was counting the stars again in the ribbon of sky between the wings of the building. "Only nine," he said.

He sounded very bitter. . . .

In the Government Research Laboratories, where Professor Hubert Blaine was in charge of one of the important divisions in the branch of Industrial Research, they were sorry when he demanded to be laid off without pay for an indefinite period. Fortunately Hubert was rich, both in cash and Government credits, and he could afford this impending nervous breakdown which he pleaded was upon him.

"Well, you have been pretty busy," his haggard boss told him. "Knock off and have a good time for a while. Look, why don't you get a bigger 'copter, Hubert? Take another trip—sort of a second honeymoon. In a bigger craft you could take some friends too."

"Thanks." Hubert shuddered. "Thanks, thanks a lot."

"That's what I'm planning to do," his boss said enthusiastically. "On my vacation in October I only get fourteen days, though I ought to have seventeen, with what we really have to do."

"Thanks," Hubert said. "I see what you mean."

Dora too, was bothered when Hubert said he wasn't feeling well.

"But I'll be home every evening," Hubert said. "Almost every evening anyway. I just have to be alone for a while in the daytime. Don't you worry. Worry just uses up more adrenalin."

"All right, Hubert."

"I'll get it done quick as I can," Hubert said as he kissed her good-by, that first day of his vacation.

His remark was puzzling, but Dora didn't question him.

It took Hubert more than a year to complete his task, and it cost him a great deal of time and money, but that didn't bother him at all. Professor Hubert Blaine was a very-learned, very clever scientist. His father had been an even greater one, perhaps, and often Hubert contemplated wryly that he and his father had done their bit in creating this monstrous modern world. And now Hubert was drawing upon it all—discoveries which his father had made; scientific principles which he and his father had secretly worked out, and which they had never finished because of the press of other work. What they had planned wasn't really needed by the world. Not now, not yet. Plenty had been written about it for a hundred years past, but no serious scientists had really cared to progress in that direction.

But Hubert was progressing now. His secret project was intended just for himself and Dora. She would be thrilled, or at least, he hoped so. And then came the big day, the exciting day, when he was ready to take Dora and show her the finished product of his labors, his genius.

"Something I've been working on," he said. "Something important to us. We'll take the 'copter this evening and I'll show you."

"I knew you've been working, not resting," she said. "You look so tired, Hubert dear, and I've missed you so much."

There had been weeks at a time when he had not come home.

"It's finished," he said. "I won't be away from you any more, Dora."

Then that evening, in the pale October moonlight, they flew far up into the mountains, and at last he and Dora stood muffled in their gleaming gray greatcoats, on a ramp of the rocky crags, and he watched her face as her eyes widened and she stared at the thing he had built.

It lay there in its scaffolding at the bottom of its launching chute, a glistening oval pancake object of fifty feet or so, with vents and portals and tiny rows of bullseye windows—a blunt-nosed craft, fantailed, with the pancake shape at its bulging middle.

"What is it?" Dora murmured.

"Our spaceship," Hubert said. "We're going on a trip."

It was like viewing some new and intricately wonderful model of 'copter and telling her that they were going to Antarctica. Only more so.

"A trip?" Dora murmured. "Just you and I? I've missed you so much, Hubert." Dora loved to travel. "Where are we going, Hubert? Somewhere off the Earth? How wonderful! I've read of things like that, but nobody ever did it before, did they? I must call Clarice at once. Won't

she be envious? And she was boasting just the other night that she and Tom have been almost everywhere on Earth. I must call her at once."

"You'll do nothing of the kind," Hubert said. "Understand that! Nothing of the kind! You'll say nothing about this."

"Oh. All right, Hubert darling, if you say so."

"It's our secret," he said. "We'll sneak away, find some nice quiet little place on some other world where we can rest up for a while. We'll just say nothing. I don't want people messing into this affair, trying to make it intricate."

"Just like a second honeymoon," she murmured. "Oh, Hubert, how romantic? Where are we going? How long will we be gone?"

Hubert himself was a little vague on that. But the destination could come later.

Then presently the *Starbrite* was carefully provisioned for a long trip if need be, and with extras for any undue emergency. Hubert had provided several devices also for making synthetic foods, including the latest developements in growing of yeast-spores as a rich source of protein. Hubert himself was an expert on that, for it had been, for the past few years, a considerable part of his routine work at the Government Research Laboratories.

And the *Starbrite's* rocket engines were ready. The myriad mechanisms which Hubert and his father had worked out in principle, were here in practical form at last. The heating system against the absolute-zero cold of Interplanetary space was a miracle of efficiency. Hubert was proud of that heating system. He displayed it to Dora with enthusiasm.

"Hubert, you're wonderful," Dora said.

But Dora wisely didn't try to comprehend all the intricacies of the necessities of life which Hubert had installed. She didn't know about the tiny quantities of basic chemicals, out of which other chemicals could be made for the making of water or the air renewers, pressure controls and so many other things. But the miraculously little compact washing machine, the starchers, and the tiny electronic iron, those indeed she could appreciate.

"Pretty neat, eh Dora?"

"Hubert, you think of everything."

The start, that clear, moonlit November night, was thrilling. They had sneaked away together, from their little tenth floor Westchester apartment, ignoring three or four buzzers which were calling them, and had flown the 'copter to Hubert's hideout in the Northern Mountains. Then they had hidden the 'copter, climbed into the waiting *Starbrite* and were off.

The start, as they slid upward with the jets roaring behind them, was a wonderful sensation. It was too bad they blacked out before they reached the stratosphere. Hubert hadn't anticipated that anything like that would happen. A little miscalculation. Whatever it was, it happened, and when Hubert came to himself he was on the grid-floor, with Dora beside him. Dora had just regained consciousness, and she was horribly worried because he hadn't.

"Hubert, are you all right now?"

But they weren't either of them all right. Hubert became aware of that, as soon as he became aware of anything. He was too hot. So was Dora. Both of them lay panting, bathed in perspiration.

"Dora," he gasped. "Dora, there's something wrong. It's too hot in here."

The Max.-Min. thermometer stood at 112° F. It had been 126° F., but now it had receded. Of course! The starting acceleration had been greater than he figured, and this heat was caused by the atmospheric friction. But they were well past that now, so that the temperature was

lowering. Soon Hubert's heating system would have to be turned on, to protect them from the coldness of space.

He explained it all to the panting Dora. They were already some ten thousand miles from the Earth's surface, a trajectory so that they were partially rounding the Earth, so to speak, counterwise to its orbital rotation. Through one of the bullseye windows to which they staggered they could see the Earth down there now, a monstrous dull-red globe, edged with silver-sunlight on the mountains down one side, and much of its northern hemisphere patched and mottled with winter clouds.

Everywhere else was the dark black firmament of Interplanetary Space, strewn with glittering stars. The stars gave Hubert a very singularly peculiar satisfaction. Not just nine stars, but billions.

"We're all right now, Dora."

She listened to his explanation, and nodded. "Of course, Hubert." She wiped her streaming forehead with a section of her flowing sleeve. "Of course, we're—all right."

But her faith in her husband's infallibility certainly was being put to a most horrible test. Because the thermometer didn't continue to recede. Far from it, for as Hubert stared, unbelieving, the damnable mercury rose. 113° F. 114° F. Hubert shuddered, covered his eyes, and when he next looked, it was 119°. Then 120°.

Of what use was a heating system here? Dora may have thought of that, but she didn't mention it.

Then like a brilliant meteor flashing out of the abyss of empty space, Hubert understood the trouble. For a hundred years, scientific writers, theorizing on Space-travel, had planned to guard against the deadening cold of interplanetary space, that absolute zero of frigidity. Hubert's father had thought of it like that, and so, naturally, had Hubert. "The best laid plans of mice and men!" The words of the famous poet came to Hubert with a stab of irony. All that sort of reasoning was totally wrong.

Space is a vacuum. A perfect vacuum, surrounding the tiny *Starbrite* with a completely perfect insulation! No heat, absolutely none, could escape from this tiny interior! The heat of their own bodies, the friction of their movements—the heat of the moving parts of their ship's mechanisms; the ventilating system, the air renewers; the heat generated by any chemical reactions of anything Hubert might do here in the making of synthetic foods—all of it was penned in here, inescapably.

And above all, there was the heat of the ship's engines!

124° F. No, it was 125° now! He and Dora were slowly roasting to death, here in this oven so perfectly insulated by the vacuum of Space. Not roasting so slowly either, because already it was 129° F.

"Hubert, what are we going to do?" Dora gasped, when he had explained it to her.

"I'll have to shut off the motors," he said. "Nothing else to do."

The motors were the great preponderance of the heat, of course. For the rest, he was sure he could rig up some device with the chemicals on hand, to give a measure of refrigeration. Enough to reduce this temperature—with the motors permanently off—to at least a comfortable range. . . .

The mechanics of Interplanetary Space are very marvelous, consisting of a nicety of balance which everything so automatically secures and so eternally maintains. With the motors off forever, the little *Starbrite* hurtled onward at a velocity which now was constant. A hypobolic trajectory, partially rounding the Earth.

Now the Earth's gravitational pull was slowly converting the trajectory into a parabola. For what could have been a week of Earth-time, Hubert gloomily calculated it. Their orbit was a parabola, but it was closing. And then, with a balancing of their centrifugal force against the gravitational pull, at last they reached an ellipse. An elliptical orbit, almost, but not quite a circle, with the gravitational center of the Earth at one of its two foci.

Like an infinitesimally tiny satellite, the *Starbrite* was doomed forever to encircle its mother planet!

That is to say—unless Hubert did something. But what? For a month of Earth-time he pondered it, day and night so to speak. They were marooned here. They couldn't go on to their planned destination, and they couldn't go back home.

"Hubert, you've just got to get us out of here!" Dora said.

It was peculiarly unfortunate, because little Drago was due to arrive in only 114 days now. . . .

He was a cute little baby, perfectly healthy, and his arrival caused no trouble, because the one thing Dora knew a lot about was obstetrics. He was a nice baby, and it was immediately apparent that he was exceedingly intelligent, probably with a scientific bent, but Hubert couldn't give that as much enthusiastic thought as he would have liked, because he was still very busy getting them out of here and back to Earth.

After all, as Dora said, a child needs more than you could give it on the *Starbrite*. Drago's birthright entitled him to decide for himself, when he was old enough, just what sort of life he wanted to live.

Hubert was doing his best to get them back home. He had made a little progress, but not much. He had devised a heliograph, so that in the hours when the sunlight was on the ship, he could flash his tiny beam, in the Morse-Heaton code, and hope that someone down on Earth would see it.

H-E-L-P G-E-T U-S O-U-T O-F H-E-R-E

Patiently he flashed it. "Get us out of here."

And then at last came the answer—a little beam from Earth, flashing up:

"How Can We Get You Out of There? How Did You Get There?"

It seemed an intricate job, answering that last question. Patiently, hour after hour, day after day, Hubert flashed down the intricate details of the principles involved in the building of the *Starbrite* so that they could build another ship to come to the rescue. He told them all his secrets, everything, with particular stress on the need for eliminating heat hazards.

There was so much to tell, indeed, that Hubert wasn't half through it when Drago arrived. But doggedly Hubert kept right on until there was completely nothing left that he could think of to explain. It was a slow process, sending all that in the Morse-Heaton code, letter by letter. Drago was going on five years old when Hubert finished.

"And I hope they have the brains to understand it," he told Dora when he had completed the job.

In between times, when the helio from here couldn't be operated, or clouds obscured the Earth's reception, Hubert worked to educate Drago. At five, Drago was very precocious. An Independent Thinker, like his father.

"It wasn't very nice of you to stick me up here, where I can't see anything, or do anything, or have any fun or anything," Drago said.

"Don't worry, I'll get you back," Hubert assured him.

"Don't look from here like there's all the things goin' on down there that you tell me about," Drago said.

"Oh you'll see—you'll see," Hubert assured him.

Little Drago was seven, tall and straight and handsome, when the rescue ship came. The space suits, which Hubert had invented, and described by helio, worked perfectly to transfer them from the doomed *Starbrite* to the rescue ship. Then they dropped back to Earth. It was a crash landing, not Hubert's fault, because the officious Commander of the Inter-Allied Rescue Commission thought he knew everything, and Hubert's warnings went unheeded. It was a pretty bad crash, and when Hubert and Dora recovered consciousness there was nothing here but wreckage of the rescue ship and nobody alive but themselves and little Drago.

"Well!" Hubert said, when at last he could talk. "That's that."

It was exciting, getting back home—with Drago. Clarice and Tom were thrilled; so were all their other friends, and Drago, being deprived of Earth-life for his first seven years, had to have it made up to him now. He had to be taken everywhere and shown everything.

Hubert was very busy.

He was very busy also with his work at the Government Research Laboratories. There was some talk that Hubert should be put in charge of a Commission to engage in the building of a big Spaceship. But the atom bomb was causing some trouble again, and an International tension was growing. What with that and a number of other things, the Spaceship project was set aside.

Drago was very busy also, with his education which he completed when he was fifteen, and after that, with several scientific problems of his own, which, because he was an Independent Thinker, he had no trouble in creating. Drago loved to be busy. He was soon so busy that Dora and Hubert hardly ever saw him.

"After all, father and mother are pretty old-fashioned, you know," Drago told his girl friend. "We haven't much in common."

It was just about then that Hubert resigned from the Government Labs, and began being away from home a great deal.

"I know what you're doing," Dora said. "But Hubert darling—"

"I am," Hubert said.

They called it *Starbrite Two*. It was quite a bit larger than its predecessor and it had a great many things in it, just for Dora, including a tiny patch of chemicalized loam where you could grow food, and flowers. And it had no heating system.

Hubert was sure of his destination, this time. They headed for the Moon.

"How long will we be gone?" Dora said, as they started. "Let's take a nice trip."

"We will," Hubert assured her.

"And don't let's start so fast, like we did before."

"No," Hubert agreed. "I've got that all figured out."

It was a grand trip, with nothing going wrong at all. They didn't plan to land on the Moon. It looked lonely enough, but too bleak, and the lack of air would make it inconvenient, even for a short visit.

The Moon was a beautiful sight as they rounded it, at an altitude of perhaps five thousand miles—glittering white, with dark mottling on the Mare Imbrium, and the huge crater of Archimedes looming up frowningly beside it. Hubert pointed out all the sights.

"Oh, I just love it," Dora said.

They were in the trajectory of almost an ellipse, rounding the Moon twice so that Dora could see everything, when the engine fuel gave out. The motors went dead.

Certainly there was nothing that Hubert could do about that. With balanced forces, the little *Starbrite Two* swung onward, silently, in its eternal little orbit around the Moon.

"Well," Hubert said. "We're stuck here. Marooned." He looked very grave, but somehow his eyes were twinkling.

"Hubert!" Dora said. "You knew perfectly well the fuel would give out when we got here."

"Could be," Hubert said. He kissed her. Then he kissed her again.

"Oh, my, goodness," Dora said. "Oh, Hubert darling—"

Maybe you have a fair-sized telescope? If you have, take a look at the Moon some clear night. If you look carefully, and long enough, you'll probably see a tiny speck crossing the Moon's face. That's Hubert and Dora. Don't feel sorry for them. They're very happy. They're living the simple life.

[The end of *The Simple Life* by Ray Cummings]