

**THRILLING**

# **WONDER**

**STORIES**

**15¢**

WINTER  
ISSUE

A THRILLING  
PUBLICATION

## **A GOD NAMED KROO**

*An Amazing Novel*  
By **HENRY KUTTNER**

**SPACE COMMAND**  
*An Interplanetary  
Novelet*  
By **ROBERT ARTHUR**

**THE INVISIBLE  
ARMY**  
*A Fantastic Novelet*  
By **ROSS ROCKLYNNE**



mycomicsho

**\* A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook \***

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please contact a <https://www.fadedpage.com> administrator before proceeding. Thousands more FREE eBooks are available at <https://www.fadedpage.com>.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. IF THE BOOK IS UNDER COPYRIGHT IN YOUR COUNTRY, DO NOT DOWNLOAD OR REDISTRIBUTE THIS FILE.

*Title:* Trophy

*Date of first publication:* 1944

*Author:* Henry Kuttner (as Scott Morgan) (1914-1958)

*Date first posted:* Apr. 12, 2021

*Date last updated:* Apr. 12, 2021

Faded Page eBook #20210430

This eBook was produced by: Alex White & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>

This file was produced from images generously made available by Internet Archive/American Libraries.



Suddenly, out of empty air, there appeared a tall, slim girl

## TROPHY

By

Henry Kuttner

Writing under the pseudonym Scott Morgan

First published *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, Winter 1944.

*Major Satura, Cruel Jap Surgeon, is Pitted Against a Marine and a Visitor from Space!*

Major Satura was a logical man. As a representative of the Japanese Empire, he had for years been following the supremely logical instructions of his warlords—as a medical student in Vienna, an intern in New York, and a practicing surgeon in the important centers of the world. Also, as ordered, he had kept his eyes open, and Tokio had received plenty of valuable inside dope from handsome Major Satura.

Even now, marooned on this South Pacific islet somewhere between New Guinea and the Carolines, he was handsome, in the enigmatic, sleek fashion so many women had found attractive. During the night he had managed to shave in the darkness, though he had no mirror, and he reflected with some satisfaction that the Yank corporal, who alone was left alive of the American bomber crew, would be looking like an ape. A decadent race, the whites. Even the Germans—but Major Satura closed his mind to that forbidden thought. It wasn't his business. The warlords made their own plans.

He had been marooned here for two days now, and something rather inexplicable had happened. It had its beginning last night, when the Yank plane had swung into view above the sunset horizon, and, at Satura's orders, his men had raised a distress signal. If all had gone well, the plane would have landed on the beach, the crew would have emerged, and been shot down from ambush. Unluckily, there had been an unexpected development.

An aircraft of some strange type—it resembled a stubby torpedo, traveling low and incredibly fast—had flashed into view as the plane was leveling off. German? Perhaps. At any rate, it had been following the American ship. And it roared down over the island like a bellowing thunderbolt, raising a hurricane of blasting wind that caught the heeling Yank plane and cracked it up in the surf, a crumpled, hopeless wreck.

After that, the torpedo aircraft had simply disappeared. Perhaps it had landed on the other side of the island. Satura did not know, but he allowed for the possibility. There was danger in the Pacific these days—there would be danger, until Japan had crushed her enemies and assumed the dictatorship of the Orient that the Emperor demanded.

---

There had been a fight. The Yanks were more belligerent, even after that crackup, than anyone could have expected. They came inshore to be greeted with a withering rain of bullets from the underbrush—but, most illogically, they did not stop. They kept coming, the ones who were still alive. It was close work, bayonet and pistol, and, in the end, the white beach was bloodstained from more than a dozen corpses.

Major Satura was not one of these. He went away, biding his time till he could control the situation. Since only two Americans were left alive, and one of these was dying, it should not take too long. Yet the Yank corporal was armed, and—it did not pay to take chances. A trap, an ambush. . . .

Imperturbably the Major hid himself well among the *pandanus* leaves, well inshore, and spent the night grooming himself as though he were in his own luxurious apartment in Tokio. He spent an equal amount of time cleaning his gun. His bayonet he slid inside his tunic, a vague plan moving within his brain. He felt cheerful enough, for he had a great trust in his brain, that perfectly-adjusted colloid mechanism that had made him one of the most successful surgeons and spies in the Emperor's service.

Nevertheless Satura worried a little. It was rather odd that a pile of gold coins should be lying in the middle of one of the jungle trails. He had stumbled over that shining hoard in the night, and the bright tropical moonlight had revealed it to him with astounding clarity. For it was so obviously a mirage—

And yet it was not. The coins were real enough, and legal tender—English sovereigns, glittering like the dreams of a Midas. A uselessly expensive booby trap, Satura had thought. Too expensive. And there was no point in the thing. Had the Yank corporal planted the money? There had not been time. If not, then who had? Satura did not know, but he skirted the

treasure carefully, far too wary to expose himself to danger until he was satisfied that the danger no longer existed. A grenade might be under the gold. It was, definitely, odd.

Crouching under a breadfruit tree, the Major massaged his long, slender fingers, while the chill of the night died before the sun rising in a blaze of pearl-crimson beyond the forest. He thought again of the torpedo ship of the night before. Had it landed? Was that the answer? And, if so, friend or foe? Satura's strong hand slipped into his blouse and caressed the steel of the bayonet.

Presently he decided to investigate the beach of last night's battle. A half hour's careful reconnoitering showed him that the corporal was gone, and a count of the bodies told him that he had one enemy left alive. The Major's impassive face shadowed. The man might be lurking anywhere, trying to kill him!

Not that Satura had any illusions about the sanctity of human life, or the Japanese race. As a surgeon, bodies were bodies, no matter what the race. And Yanks and Japs bled the same color. It was Satura's desire that he should not be the one to prove that obvious axiom.

So he found a clean handkerchief—it was typical of the man that he had one—and raised it on a stick, tying his gun atop the improvised flag of truce. Americans were sentimental. He knew the Yank corporal would not shoot him down without a parley, though no doubt the man would be suspicious. Planning well in advance, Satura took the bayonet from his blouse and hid it under a fallen *pandanus*-leaf near the pile of gold he had found on the inshore trail. But he did not touch the gold—not logical Major Satura.

Instead, he walked out on the beach and yelled *Kamerad* in several different languages. And, by this time, he had bandaged his right arm, after gashing it slightly to provide blood, and put it in a sling. Which took care of everything.

It did not quite take care of Corporal Phil Jarnegan's desire to step on Japs. He had been in the Pacific for quite some time now, discovering that the slant-eyed little yellow men were curiously unmoral, and that, to them, the end always justified the means. As Pearl Harbor, and certain executions in Tokio had testified. Not that those Tokio killings had been any surprise. It should not have taken that to make people realize that the Japs were not fighting according to international law. But it was another item in the long bill that was adding up, and would reach a grim total when it was finally presented for payment.

---

So Corporal Jarnegan, being merely a big, tough lug who was in the war to kill Japs, came out of the jungle with his automatic leveled at Satura, and his middle finger trembling on the trigger. He had lost the index finger in New Guinea, but it had not damaged his marksmanship. He looked at the Major, and the Major looked at him, and death trembled in the hot tropical air between the two. There were witnesses, but they did not move or speak.

"I have a flag of truce," Satura said suddenly, his eyes on the gun. He pronounced his I's almost perfectly, which was unusual for a Japanese.

Jarnegan did not answer, but his grey eyes got a little wider.

"You will respect a truce, Corporal," Satura said. "I am unarmed. My gun—"

"I see it," Jarnegan growled. "Had a bellyful of fighting last night, eh? You—" He expressed himself in a few well-chosen expletives.

Meanwhile the Major had been examining his opponent, and felt heartened. The American was obviously not too intelligent. It should be easy to outwit this opponent. And since the corporal had not shot yet, he was not going to. That was elementary psychology in any language.

“The fortunes of war,” Satura smiled. “I am not responsible. I am a surgeon, Corporal, as you can see by my insignia. My mission is one of healing.”

“You rank these men,” Jarnegan growled, not moving. His eyes indicated the bodies on the beach. “You were in command. Ambush, eh?”

“The commanding officer is dead. I left him a few hours ago, inland. He was wounded in the fight.”

Jarnegan said something rude. “What was that screwy ship that upset us?” he demanded. “One of yours?”

“No. I do not know. It had no wings. A new type. I had thought it might be an enemy, an Allied ship. Ah, it is uncomfortable standing here, with the sun in my eyes. May I—will you respect the truce?”

“Truce, bunk! I know you monkeys.” Jarnegan came forward. “Put your hands up. First throw that gun away. That’s it. Now let’s see that automatic up your sleeve.”

“I’m unarmed.”

“Let’s see.” There was a swift search. The Major had spoken the truth, since it suited his devious purposes. He was unarmed, except for his safety razor and a small pair of scissors in his tiny first-aid kit.

Jarnegan pocketed the Jap’s gun. “Yeah,” he said. “So you’re my prisoner. We’re both prisoners. No way off this island, is there?”

“I know of none.”

“There’ll be one of our planes over in a week or so, if not sooner. We were sending our position by radio. Only the air got jammed an hour before we cracked up; so it’ll take time for the boys to find us. When they do, monkey, you’ll find yourself locked up for the duration.”

Satura shrugged. “I am a surgeon, not a fighter,” he said, and was quite correct. There is a difference between a fighter and a killer. “Meantime,” he added, “did you leave a booby trap in the jungle for me?” At Jarnegan’s stare of surprise he went on quickly, describing the golden pile. “I do not know how it came there. It was placed on the trail recently. The coins were shining, not dusty.”

“If you think I’m falling for a yarn like that,” the corporal said, “you’re a bigger dope than you look.”

“As you like. I only thought that other ship, last night, it may have landed somewhere on the island.”

“It’s not such a big island. If it landed, we can find it.”

“Its crew may find us first. And they may be allies—of one of us.”

Jarnegan thought that over. His forehead wrinkled in concentration. “Okay,” he said, at last. “I still think you’re a lying lizard, but I’ve gotta look around the island anyhow. So come along. Stay in front of me, if you don’t want a bullet in your belly.” For a moment a savage fury showed in the Yank’s hard face. It was gone instantly, but Satura had decided that he could afford to take no chances with this man. Only trickery—ambush—planned killing—would help.

And it was already planned.

So they went inland, along the trail, and there was the pile of gold. Jarnegan stopped, his eyes narrowing, his hand on his gun-butt. Satura paused too, ahead of the corporal, and shrugged significantly. “I did not lie, you see,” he said quietly. “We are not alone on this island.”

“Of all the crazy things,” Jarnegan muttered. “Dumping bullion here! I don’t get it. Booby trap, eh?”

“It may be—” Satura stopped. Ice crawled down his spine, a shuddering chill that tore through the tropical heat and struck deep into him. For the pile of gold—vanished.

---

In its place was, briefly, nothing.

And then—something. That something sprang out of empty air, so vividly clear and real that it was difficult to realize the miraculous manner of her coming. It was a girl, tall, slim, with a form like Aphrodite of the Shell, her whole body a symphony of smooth flowing lines that were graceful, and attractive almost beyond earthly allure.

A girl—*empty!*

For her eyes were like mirrors, blank shining colorless eyes, shadowed by dark lashes. Midnight ringlets fell about her rounded shoulders. Her arms were stretched out—

But her eyes were not human. No sorcery, no unearthly science, could breathe a soul into that lovely mirage.

Satura saw it first. He understood women, and his mind, though not comprehending the nature or purpose of the miracle, seized on the opportunity for which he had been waiting. One enemy is better than two. And almost at his feet, where he had stopped, was the *pandanus*-leaf under which his bayonet was hidden.

He dropped to his knees. Jarnegan’s gaze flicked to him, saw no danger, and went back to the girl. The American’s hand still rested on his gunbutt, but he was undecided—waiting, puzzled and baffled. Satura did not wait. The bayonet was hidden behind him now, and he rose to his feet, edging away, as though terrified of the apparition.

“Shoot it,” he whispered. “You have a gun. Shoot it, Corporal. Quick! Don’t wait—it’s dangerous. Can’t you see that?”

“No,” Jarnegan said. “It’s a girl.” His voice was harshly uneasy. Loudly he said, “Who the devil are you, anyhow? Better talk up quick. Know what a gun is?”

“She may not know,” Satura said. “But she will learn, now, what a bayonet is.”

On the word he struck. The sharp steel drove in smoothly in Satura’s strong, deft hands, and the breath went out of Jarnegan with a prolonged groan of pain. He tried to swing his automatic around, but the major’s hand chopped down in a vicious blow at his wrist. Then Jarnegan was down, coughing blood.

He kicked up at Satura’s body. The bayonet thrust had been at an awkward angle, and had disabled but not killed the Yank. He was still alive, far too much so for the major’s satisfaction.

Ju jutsu helped. There was a free-for-all, ending when Satura managed to grip the bayonet and twist it in the wound. Jarnegan collapsed. Satura expelled his breath in a long sigh of relief and hastily stripped his victim of weapons. The bayonet had torn free, and blood was seeping from the corporal’s back.

Satura backed up, leveling his own automatic, and keeping an eye on the girl, who had neither moved nor spoken. When he got about ten feet away, Jarnegan came to life, with the incredible vitality one grew to expect from these bull-headed Yanks, and struggled up, trying to rush the major. Satura fired. His bullet hit the mark.

“You—yellow—”

*Crack!* went the automatic again. But Jarnegan, badly wounded, had lurched aside, and this time the slug missed. Before Satura could fire again, the corporal had flung himself

headlong into the forest walling the trail, and was gone. In that thick jungle it would be easy to follow the trail he was audibly breaking, but Satura narrowed his eyes and lifted his gun, fanning out the shots so that they covered a wide arc. He heard a muffled cry and the sound of a fall.

Only then did he follow, cautiously.

He did not find Jarnegan. He found a blood-stained trail leading into the green gloom, and he decided not to follow. As a trained surgeon, he knew that the Yank had been mortally wounded, and there was no sense in risking his own life unnecessarily. So, smiling in a pleased fashion, he went back to investigate the mirage.

The girl had gone.

In her place was a complete short-wave sending apparatus.

Major Satura, wondering what the dickens was going on, thought grim thoughts about booby traps, and demolished the short-wave with a few bullets. He did not dare use it himself, but he did not want Jarnegan to find it before the corporal died.

Leaving the wreckage, he returned to the beach and collected the weapons, throwing most of them far out to sea, but saving plenty of ammunition in case of need. On his last trip to the water's edge, he was surprised, on returning, to find a Zero on the beach behind him.

---

Nobody was in the plane, and its presence was highly improbable. Satura's dark face grew more impassive than ever. He raised his gun carefully, sighting, but not firing. A less intelligent man might have been frightened. Perhaps Satura was, physically, but he knew the value of fear-propaganda, and the necessity of keeping tight control over his nerves.

Logic—ruthlessness—against these, nothing could stand. Provided that an intelligent, trained brain lay in back of those acquired traits.

The major raised an eyebrow at the too-inviting plane, skirted it warily, and dived into the jungle. A few feet along the trail he noticed a branch he had not seen before. Light glinted there on metal. An automatic pistol. . . .

It was logical for it to be there. One of the Yanks must have dropped it last night. So, logical as ever, Major Satura came forward, bent over, and picked up the weapon—

His hand went through it. It had no tangible existence. He jerked back, taking alarm too late, and simultaneously a wrenching, jarring shock shook every atom of his body. Blazing light blinded him. He felt swift vertigo, a giddy rocking in which gravity was lost and the winds of darkness were tearing at the essence of his soul itself, shaking it perilously, and then the nightmare metamorphosis had passed, leaving no trace.

But he was no longer in the jungle.

The trap had been sprung. The ambush had succeeded. The snare had worked. Automatic out, Satura stared around, lips skinned back from his teeth, the emotionless mask shattered for once. This was not logic—it was—was sorcery.

He held that thought for only a moment. After that, common sense came to his aid. There were walls around him; he stood in a bare, shining chamber about seven feet square, and there was a door set in one wall, though without any keyhole that Satura could discover. And the room was perfectly bare and featureless. Walls, ceiling and floor were of a dull grayish metal that sent out a pale, shadowless glow.

A prison?

He waited, with mounting impatience, for the Enemy to manifest himself, but nothing happened. At last the Major holstered his gun and took a few slow steps toward the door,



testing the floor with his toe.

He was reminded, somehow, of a trapline, set in advance, while the trapper returns to his cabin and makes his rounds only at intervals. Was the Enemy absent, then? It seemed possible. At least, Satura hoped so. It would give him a little more time to investigate this perilous mystery.

The door was complicated. Few men could have fathomed the mystery of the lock. But Satura had a mind above the average in its capabilities, and his hands were surgeon's hands, trained and accurate to a hair's breadth. He had some tools with him, in his first-aid kit, and he improvised others. He worked on that door for five hours, while sweat streamed down his flat cheeks and soaked his tunic. Each hour, he allowed himself a five-minute pause for a brief rest. No more than that.

One must take advantage of a reprieve. And this was merely a reprieve; a temporary stay; Satura was certain of that. His deft fingers flew. More and more, as he worked, he became convinced of something shockingly unlikely. The mind that had contrived this lock was not an earthly mind—or, if it was, it certainly was not human. For the principles of the lock's construction followed intricate patterns of rhythm and pressure that were not based on ordinary laws of physics. As though the door, and its lock, had been made to resist physical conditions—such as abnormal pressure—which do not exist on this planet, save in the great deeps of the ocean, or in the upper stratosphere.

And as he worked, he theorized. But he had little enough to work with; a few vague, unsatisfactory clues, and they added up to nothing in particular. Despite his hard-held stoicism, Satura felt a mounting tension coiling within him like a tight spring. If the door did not yield soon—

But it yielded at last, vanishing like a burst bubble, leaving no trace of its existence in the square portal. A force-field, perhaps. That did not matter. The important thing now was to get the blazes out of here, the Major decided, lapsing into expressive American vernacular.

---

Through the portal he could see little. The lighted walls of his prison sent glowing paths across that cryptic threshold, and gradually his eyes became accustomed to the gloom. Nothing stirred. Neither sound nor motion existed in the next room—for it was a room, Satura realized now, though its geometry was distorted—either in actuality or by the semi-darkness.

It lay in still, strange Gothic darkness. Yet it was possessed of a curious familiarity to Satura; he had the inexplicable feeling that he had seen it before. But, that, of course, was impossible.

He took a few steps forward and paused, waiting. The dusty fan of light spread behind him, throwing his gigantic shadow on the farther wall. That wall was curved, Satura saw, but there were planes and angles in its construction that he could sense if not glimpse.

Transparent cylinders, of varying sizes, floated unsupported, except for pencil-thin beams of light at either end. They swung from these horizontal light-threads like hammocks. And a platform, fitted with unfamiliar apparatus, brought home to the Major a fact he should have realized before.

This was an operating room.

He glanced around quickly. There was another door, open this time, and he hurried through it with scarcely a pause to investigate. He was, of course, still armed, but he had no assurance that his bullets would avail against the—the—Hunter.

A Hunter from the stars. An explorer, alien, inhuman, seeking his quarry in the distant depths of ultimate space, searching the worlds for his quarry—his trophies that hung, mounted, in the enormous chamber Satura had just entered. Tall it was, and correspondingly wide, and the dark gloom made it seem far larger. From the gray shadows things out of nightmare emerged slowly into view—the trophies of the Hunter, mounted, preserved, incredibly lifelike, upon the bare walls.

Not many had come from Earth. There was an elephant's head, trunk curled, red eyes blazing; there were huge-clawed paws—no more—that Satura recognized as having once belonged to a mole, the powerful shovel-forefeet that had propelled it underground; there were the rattles of a diamond back; and a few others from this planet. All functional, all logical, all representing the creature's chief claim to evolutionary survival. A mole lives by its paws. An elephant's strong, delicate trunk enables it to survive and feed. And that bladder-like object hanging near by was, probably, the ink-sac of a cuttlefish.

These were sufficiently normal; the rest were not. The Hunter had scoured worlds to get these trophies, Satura thought, his mouth going dry. That greenish, three-eyed, bestial head with its crown of limber tentacles—what planet had once held its tusked ferocity? And that unlikely slab of flesh set with a network of flashing, jewel-like crystals—what purpose had that served?

---

There were others, many others, for the room was huge. Satura did not waste too much time here. He was looking for escape.

No door was locked, he found; only the door that had locked him into his prison. From the trophy room he passed into what seemed to be a sleeping compartment, though the furnishings were not designed for human comfort or habitation. The major had an uneasy feeling that the Hunter might not even be of flesh and blood. Theoretically it was possible for beings of pure force to exist. Or a combination of force and flesh—carbon base and electrical energy.

The engine room, at the nose of the ship. That he was within the torpedo-shaped aircraft he had glimpsed the night before Satura was certain now. The curve of the walls indicated that, as well as the layout of the rooms. The engines—well, they gave Satura a cold, frightened sensation in the pit of his stomach. He tried to touch one, but his hand was halted a few inches from the plastic bar he reached for. Force-field again. Or its equivalent.

Quite by accident he found the door for which he had been searching. It was located high up in the wall, as though the Hunter might have been able to fly up to it, which Satura could not do. He gathered together some curious-looking furniture, stacked it in a pile, and clambered up, his heart pounding. If his captor should return now!

The door was simple enough. A twist, a push, and the valve was open, letting in the warm hibiscus-scented afternoon wind. It was still early; the sun was just past noon. And the tropical forest lay all around. There had been no attempt to conceal or camouflage the ship.

---

It was a long drop to the ground, but Satura took the risk rather than delay. He landed painfully, and for a moment thought his ankle had failed him. But the twinge passed, and he made for the jungle, limping a little. Once he looked back. There was nothing to see; the ship from space lay motionless, a dark titan resting on alien ground.

The Major ran. He had more clues now, and was building up to a definite and unpleasant conclusion. First of all, he knew well that this was an antagonist he could not physically

defeat. His tour of the ship had told him that. Bullets—ridiculous! Only strategy and logic could help him now.

For he was marooned on the island with the Hunter, and he knew that when the Hunter returned, the fantastic scientific powers of the alien being could track him down and capture him without the slightest difficulty. Only the fact that the creature had been absent had saved Satura now.

It added up. Big game hunters collect trophies. If life existed elsewhere in the Solar System, or in other systems, there was no reason why life patterns should follow completely alien lines. Science was based on certain rigid principles. Specimens are required for many purposes. Trophies are collected for two reasons; as specimens, and for sport.

In this particular case, there was specialization. The Hunter had not preserved merely the heads of the creatures he had bagged. On the contrary, he had been thoroughly scientific about it, and preserved only the vital parts—the parts that were vital from the evolutionary viewpoint. A mole's claws, an elephant's trunk, a man's—head.

Satura, ploughing doggedly through the forest, nodded thoughtfully. The head, the brain, was representative of *genus homo*. Undoubtedly the Hunter had been pursuing that Yank plane, trying to bag his prize, when the crack-up had occurred. And after that, the Hunter had simply set his traps automatically and gone off about whatever strange business he might have elsewhere on Earth.

A lesser man, the Major thought, might have yielded to superstitious cowardice. He did not. He was afraid, but that was nothing distressing, it was the danger signal that warned him and kept him alive. Those snares, now, might prove difficult.

One ties a kid goat to capture a tiger, or a crocodile. To lure birds, breadcrumbs will do. But for human beings, more complicated lures are necessary. Gold, women, guns, a means of escape from the island as represented by the plane on the beach.

Radio projection of visual images? Was that how it had been done? Satura did not know; he did not care a great deal. The whole point was that the Hunter could read the minds of humans as easily as men could foresee the reactions of a rabbit. He had not even troubled to attend to the matter himself, probably. Robot apparatus, specially trained and conditioned, might have laid the traps and snatched Satura into the prison cell within the ship. Remembering the operating room, he bared his teeth in a mirthless grin.

But he was Major Satura, not a superstitious, helpless fool like—for example—that Yank corporal. That Yank—

Satura stopped short, his eyes widening. The answer had come to him suddenly, as though by inspiration. It was not inspiration, though; it was merely logic, seen clearly by his keen brain.

Item: the Hunter wanted—must want—the head of a human being as a specimen. There had been none in the ship's trophy room.

Item: It was impossible to escape from the island till help came. The Hunter's science could easily track down his quarry.

Therefore: find another quarry.

Satura struck off at an angle into the forest, much relieved, but knowing that he must work fast. It might be, of course, that the Hunter did not want the complete head, merely the brain. That was a chance he'd have to take. Yet it did not seem likely. The trophies had been complete parts, not butchered organs.

Another head—

Presently he found Jarnegan's blood trail and followed it till he discovered the American soldier, unconscious under thorny bushes, where he had tried to conceal himself. Makeshift, crude bandages were about the corporal's torso, and Satura's lip curled scornfully at sight of such sloppy work. Still, there was no time to waste now.

---

He found wood, kindled a fire, and brought fresh water from a nearby spring, setting it to boil. His first-aid kit came out, and his razor. Complete sterilization was impossible, but at least it would help to take as many precautions as he could.

He stripped Jarnegan and examined the man's wounds. The bayonet gash had already stopped bleeding, and did not look serious. The bullet wound was another matter. The slug was embedded dangerously near the spine.

There in the clearing, in the hot afternoon, Major Satura worked at the task in which he excelled: surgery. He was a master; no one could deny that. And never had he performed an operation under such tremendous difficulties. All the while, his ears were tuned to any strange sound that might mean danger—that the Hunter was returning. Before that happened, he must be ready.

Three hours later he had finished, and was completely exhausted. Corporal Jarnegan was still unconscious, but he would live now, the bullet removed from his back, and his wounds washed aseptically and bandaged. Satura stepped back, expelling his breath in a long sigh, and looked down at the other.

A barbarian. Undoubtedly a barbarian. But he would be the Hunter's trophy, rather than Major Satura, who would survive to serve his Emperor and the Rising Sun. Though there must be certain sacrifices—

Jarnegan was ugly; there was no doubt about that. His feet were large, unlike Satura's small ones, and his gnarled, strong hands, with the right index finger missing, compared unfavorably with the Japanese Major's slim, wiry hands. Ah, well. If it came to a choice—

The Hunter must be aided in his choice. Satura opened his razor, removed a blade, and sterilized it. Then he took a small metal mirror, aseptic material, and a few other items.

Since the Hunter desired a head—he would desire a good specimen, one in good condition. Not—mangled!

Once a little hiss of pain escaped Satura, even though he had managed to administer a local anaesthetic to himself. But the hypodermic was not infallible, and such a monstrous operation was sickening in its masochistic brutality.

Yet it was logical, and the only possible way now. Later, perhaps a plastic surgeon could remedy matters. Oh, undoubtedly! Aside from a few scarcely visible scars, Major Satura would be as handsome as ever.

Meanwhile, he was losing face. . . .

By the time he had finished, he was a gargoyle. Bandages hid all but his eyes. Beneath the bandages were muscles skilfully cut, wounds grotesquely enlarged, his mouth slitted—and worse. With shaking hands the Major lit a cigarette and sat down to wait. It had been even worse than he had expected.

Jarnegan woke up.

He opened his eyes, saw Satura, and let out a steady stream of profanity that continued unbroken for ten minutes by the Major's wristwatch. When he paused, Satura smiled.

"You are ungrateful," he pointed out, speaking painfully through the bandages. "I have saved your life. Or hadn't you noticed?"

Jarnegan snarled. “So what? You’ve got something up your sleeve. Have our guys landed? Figuring on keeping me as a hostage—that it?”

“Don’t talk. You’ll exhaust yourself. You are still weak.”

“The blazes I am!” The American struggled to his feet and stood swaying. He took a step forward.

Satura negligently unholstered his automatic. “A tribute to my medical skill. Yes, you’ll live, Corporal. You lost a good deal of blood, but you’re strong. Strong enough to shave yourself. Do that!”

Jarnegan stared. “Eh? What’s the big idea?”

“I had no time, or I should have shaved you. Now do it yourself or I shall shoot you. There is hot water. No, I am not joking.” The Major’s silky voice hardened. “Do as I say, quickly!”

Corporal Jarnegan blinked, shrugged, and turned to obey. Satura smiled at him.

“The razor will not be much of a weapon against my gun, if that’s in your mind.”

There was no answer. Jarnegan took the metal mirror and scraped away at the stubble on his weathered cheeks.

“You monkey screwball,” he muttered wiping the last of the lather from his chin. “I always knew Japs were crazy. Now I’m sure of it. What’s been going on here, anyhow?”

---

Satura said nothing. He was watching a shimmering point of light that had appeared about ten feet away, in empty air in the clearing. Even in the fading afternoon dusk he made out outlines—of a sort—surrounding the creature, like a tracery or a shadowgraph. Those outlines were not even remotely human, and the eye rebelled at following them.

The Hunter had returned.

As Jarnegan swung around, and as Satura automatically raised his gun, knowing its uselessness, a veil of—nothingness—dropped down upon them. The Major felt the gun drop from his hand, heard it thud on the ground. There was a scuffle. A body hurtled against his legs: Jarnegan, diving for the fallen weapon. Instantly, in the face of this immediate danger, Satura kicked out, but his toe missed its mark.

He grappled with Jarnegan. The corporal had the gun now, and—and—

And Satura felt the American’s body floating away, dissolving, as the world itself was dissolving in the tremendous emptiness that had suddenly opened beneath him. Even at that moment, he had a brief touch of wonder at the efficacy of this mental anaesthetic, and then it took effect. Oblivion swallowed him.

His last conscious thought was one of triumph. He had won, in this duel of wits with a creature far more powerful than himself. He had used logic. . . .

Jarnegan’s head, not his own butchered face, would look down from the shadows of the alien ship’s trophy room.

An hour later Satura opened his eyes and saw a patch of starry sky. He was lying on the beach, near the fringe of jungle. Something had awakened him.

A man was tramping nearby, walking heavily, unafraid, and cursing as he walked. Satura recognized Jarnegan’s voice.

He lay silent, hidden in shadows, till the sound had receded and vanished. His mind churned in wonder and foreboding. What had happened? Had the Hunter rejected both humans—found them both unsuitable for his collection?

Pain stung his bandaged face.

He lifted his head wearily and looked along the length of his body, noting that both guns were in his belt. He must have wrested the automatic from Jarnegan, then, during that last struggle. So the American corporal was unarmed, helpless. And—

Why had the Hunter not taken his trophy?

Not till Satura tried to stand erect did he understand. So great a surgeon was the Hunter, so perfect his healing powers, that there had been no pain. Cauterization was complete and aseptic. The operating room in the alien ship had been used, after all. And the Hunter had collected another trophy—man's most valuable part, from the standpoint of evolution.

Not the brain, for, compared to the mind of the Hunter, human brains were less than those of the apes.

There is only one mammal on Earth that can cross its thumbs over its palm. Because man can do this, he is today the dominant race.

A streak of fire flamed in the night sky, and a thunderclap of wind heralded the passing of the Hunter, in search of new trophies. But there was another hunter on the island now, a merciless avenger who needed no guns to make his kill.

As for Satura's own guns—

Without hands, a man cannot fire an automatic.

[The end of *Trophy* by Henry Kuttner (as Scott Morgan)]