I first read this story when I was in Junior High School back in the 1970’s. The school library had a chrome-plated wire-frame arrangement where paper-books could be displayed. There were numerous Robert Heinlein books there, as well as collections of short stories, and works by Fredrick Pohl, and Arthur C. Clark. My favorites, give my age, were the youth-directed simplistic narratives generated by Robert Heinlein.
OVER 11½ MILLION ROBERT A. HEINLEIN BOOKS IN PRINT!

ROBERT A.
HEINLEIN

THE MENACE FROM EARTH
This is a nice little story, and it remains an enjoyable read. Heinlein introduces the reader to the idea that science fiction is not a world of B-grade monsters and flying-saucers, but rather a normal day-to-day life that can and (perhaps) will, take place in exotic locations.

All during the 1950’s and the 1960’s, popular media expounded upon the ideas of “space monsters” and horrible creatures that lived in the depths of space. As a child during that time, we would watch “Space Cadet” and “Fireball XL-5” and imagine what it would be like to battle these hideous creatures.

It was shows like “Space Cadet” that inspired me to study Aerospace Engineering, and desire to fly planes.
My name is Holly Jones and I’m fifteen. I’m very intelligent but it doesn’t show, because I look like an underdone angel. Insipid.

I was born right here in Luna City, which seems to surprise Earthside types. Actually, I’m third generation; my grandparents pioneered in Site One, where the Memorial is. I live with my parents in Artemis Apartments, the new co-op in Pressure Five, eight hundred feet down near City Hall. But I’m not there much; I’m too busy.

Mornings I attend Tech High and afternoons I study or go flying with Jeff Hardesty—he’s my partner—or whenever a tourist ship is in I guide groundhogs. This day the Gripsholm grounded at noon so I went straight from school to American Express.

The first gaggle of tourists was trickling in from Quarantine but I didn’t push forward as Mr. Dorcas, the manager, knows I’m the best. Guiding is just temporary (I’m really a spaceship designer), but if you’re doing a job you ought to do it well.

Mr. Dorcas spotted me. “Holly! Here, please. Miss Brentwood, Holly Jones will be your guide.”
“Holly,’” she repeated. “What a quaint name. Are you really a guide, dear?”

I’m tolerant of groundhogs—some of my best friends are from Earth. As Daddy says, being born on Luna is luck, not judgment, and most people Earthside are stuck there. After all, Jesus and Guatama Buddha and Dr. Einstein were all groundhogs.

But they can be irritating. If high school kids weren’t guides, whom could they hire? “My license says so,” I said briskly and looked her over the way she was looking me over.

Her face was sort of familiar and I thought perhaps I had seen her picture in those society things you see in Earthside magazines—one of the rich play-girls we get too many of. She was almost loathsomely lovely . . . nylon skin, soft, wavy, silver-blond hair, basic specs about 35-24-34 and enough this and that to make me feel like a matchstick drawing, a low, intimate voice and everything necessary to make plainer females think about pacts with the Devil. But I did not feel apprehensive; she was a groundhog and groundhogs don’t count.

“All city guides are girls,” Mr. Dorcas explained. “Holly is very competent.”

“Oh, I’m sure,” she answered quickly and went into tourist routine number one: surprise that a guide was needed just to find her hotel, amazement at no taxicabs, same for no porters, and raised eyebrows at the prospect of two girls walking alone through “an underground city.”
Mr. Dorcas was patient, ending with: “Miss Brentwood, Luna City is the only metropolis in the Solar System where a woman is really safe—no dark alleys, no deserted neighborhoods, no criminal element.”

I didn’t listen; I just held out my tariff card for Mr. Dorcas to stamp and picked up her bags. Guides shouldn’t carry bags and most tourists are delighted to experience the fact that their thirty-pound allowance weighs only five pounds. But I wanted to get her moving.

We were in the tunnel outside and me with a foot on the slidebelt when she stopped. “I forgot! I want a city map.”

“None available.”

“Really?”

“There’s only one. That’s why you need a guide.”

“But why don’t they supply them? Or would that throw you guides out of work?”

See? “You think guiding is makework? Miss Brentwood, labor is so scarce they’d hire monkeys if they could.”

“Then why not print maps?”
“Because Luna City isn’t flat like—” I almost said, “—groundhog cities,” but I caught myself.

“—like Earthside cities,” I went on. “All you saw from space was the meteor shield. Underneath it spreads out and goes down for miles in a dozen pressure zones.”

“Yes, I know, but why not a map for each level?”

Groundhogs always say, “Yes, I know, but—”

“I can show you the one city map. It’s a stereo tank twenty feet high and even so all you see clearly are big things like the Hall of the Mountain King and hydroponics farms and the Bats’ Cave.”

“ ‘The Bat’s Cave,’ ” she repeated. “That’s where they fly, isn’t it?”

“Yes, that’s where we fly.”

“Oh, I want to see it!”

“OK. It first . . . or the city map?”
She decided to go to her hotel first. The regular route to the Zurich is to slide up and west through Gray’s Tunnel past the Martian Embassy, get off at the Mormon Temple, and take a pressure lock down to Diana Boulevard. But I know all the shortcuts; we got off at Macy-Gimbel Upper to go down their personnel hoist. I thought she would enjoy it.

But when I told her to grab a hand grip as it dropped past her, she peered down the shaft and edged back. “You’re joking.”

I was about to take her back the regular way when a neighbor of ours came down the hoist. I said, “Hello, Mrs. Greenberg,” and she called back, “Hi, Holly. How are your folks?”

Susie Greenberg is more than plump. She was hanging by one hand with young David tucked in her other arm and holding the *Daily Lunatic*, reading as she dropped. Miss Brentwood stared, bit her lip, and said, “How do I do it?”

I said, “Oh, use both hands; I’ll take the bags.” I tied the handles together with my hanky and went first.

She was shaking when we got to the bottom. “Goodness, Holly, how do you stand it? Don’t you get homesick?”

Tourist question number six . . . I said, “I’ve been to Earth,” and let it drop. Two years ago Mother made me visit my aunt in Omaha and I was miserable—hot and cold and dirty and beset by creepy-crawlies. I weighed a ton and I ached and my aunt was always chivvying me to go outdoors and exercise when all I wanted was to crawl into a tub and be quietly wretched. And I had hay fever. Probably you’ve never heard of hay fever—you don’t die but
you wish you could.

I was supposed to go to a girls’ boarding school but I phoned Daddy and told him I was desperate and he let me come home. What groundhogs can’t understand is that they live in savagery. But groundhogs are groundhogs and loonies are loonies and never the twain shall meet.

Like all the best hotels the Zurich is in Pressure One on the west side so that it can have a view of Earth. I helped Miss Brentwood register with the roboclerk and found her room; it had its own port. She went straight to it, began staring at Earth and going ooh! and ahh!

I glanced past her and saw that it was a few minutes past thirteen; sunset sliced straight down the tip of India—early enough to snag another client. “Will that be all, Miss Brentwood?”

Instead of answering she said in an awed voice, “Holly, isn’t that the most beautiful sight you ever saw?”

“It’s nice,” I agreed. The view on that side is monotonous except for Earth hanging in the sky—but Earth is what tourists always look at even though they’ve just left it. Still, Earth is pretty. The changing weather is interesting if you don’t have to be in it. Did you ever endure a summer in Omaha?

“It’s gorgeous,” she whispered.
“Sure,” I agreed. “Do you want to go somewhere? Or will you sign my card?”

“What? Excuse me, I was daydreaming. No, not right now—yes, I do! Holly, I want to go out there! I must! Is there time? How much longer will it be light?”

“Huh? It’s two days to sunset.”

She looked startled. “How quaint. Holly, can you get us space suits? I’ve got to go outside.”

I didn’t wince—I’m used to tourist talk. I suppose a pressure suit looked like a space suit to them. I simply said, “We girls aren’t licensed outside. But I can phone a friend.”

Jeff Hardesty is my partner in spaceship designing, so I throw business his way. Jeff is eighteen and already in Goddard Institute, but I’m pushing hard to catch up so that we can set up offices for our firm: “Jones & Hardesty, Spaceship Engineers.” I’m very bright in mathematics, which is everything in space engineering, so I’ll get my degree pretty fast. Meanwhile we design ships anyhow.

I didn’t tell Miss Brentwood this, as tourists think a girl my age can’t possibly be a spaceship designer.

Jeff has arranged his classes to let him guide on Tuesdays and Thursdays; he waits at West City Lock and studies between clients. I reached him on
the lockmaster’s phone. Jeff grinned and said, “Hi, Scale Model.”

“Hi, Penalty Weight. Free to take a client?”

“Well, I was supposed to guide a family party, but they’re late.”

“Cancel them. Miss Brentwood . . . step into pickup, please. This is Mr. Hardesty.”

Jeff’s eyes widened and I felt uneasy. But it did not occur to me that Jeff could be attracted by a groundhog . . . even though it is conceded that men are robot slaves of their body chemistry in such matters. I knew she was exceptionally decorative, but it was unthinkable that Jeff could be captivated by any groundhog, no matter how well designed. They don’t speak our language!

I am not romantic about Jeff; we are simply partners. But anything that affects Jones & Hardesty affects me.

When we joined him at West Lock he almost stepped on his tongue in a disgusting display of adolescent rut. I was ashamed of him and, for the first time, apprehensive. Why are males so childish?

Miss Brentwood didn’t seem to mind his behavior. Jeff is a big hulk; suited up for outside he looks like a Frost giant from Das Rheingold; she smiled up at him and thanked him for changing his schedule. He looked even sillier and told her it was a pleasure.
I keep my pressure suit at West Lock so that when I switch a client to Jeff he can invite me to come along for the walk. This time he hardly spoke to me after that platinum menace was in sight. But I helped her pick out a suit and took her into the dressing room and fitted it. Those rental suits take careful adjusting or they will pinch you in tender places once out in vacuum . . . besides those things about them that one girl ought to explain to another.

When I came out with her, not wearing my own, Jeff didn’t even ask why I hadn’t suited up—he took her arm and started toward the lock. I had to butt in to get her to sign my tariff card.

The days that followed were the longest in my life. I saw Jeff only once . . . on the slidebelt in Diana boulevard, going the other way. She was with him.

Though I saw him but once, I knew what was going on. He was cutting classes and three nights running he took her to the Earthview Room of the Duncan Hines. None of my business!—I hope she had more luck teaching him to dance than I had. Jeff is a free citizen and if he wanted to make an utter fool of himself neglecting school and losing sleep over an upholstered groundhog that was his business.

But he should not have neglected the firm’s business!

Jones & Hardesty had a tremendous backlog because we were designing Star-ship Prometheus. This project we had been slaving over for a year, flying not more than twice a week in order to devote time to it—and that’s a sacrifice.
Of course you can’t build a starship today, because of the power plant. But Daddy thinks that there will soon be a technological break-through and mass-conversion power plants will be built—which means starships. Daddy ought to know—he’s Luna Chief Engineer for Space Lanes and Fermi Lecturer at Goddard Institute. So Jeff and I are designing a self-supporting interstellar ship on that assumption: quarters, auxiliaries, surgery, labs—everything.

Daddy thinks it’s just practice but Mother knows better—Mother is a mathematical chemist for General Synthetics of Luna and is nearly as smart as I am. She realizes that Jones & Hardesty plans to be ready with a finished proposal while other designers are still floundering.

Which was why I was furious with Jeff for wasting time over this creature. We had been working every possible chance. Jeff would show up after dinner, we would finish our homework, then get down to real work, the Prometheus . . . checking each other’s computations, fighting bitterly over details, and having a wonderful time. But the very day I introduced him to Ariel Brentwood, he failed to appear. I had finished my lessons and was wondering whether to start or wait for him—we were making a radical change in power plant shielding—when his mother phoned me. “Jeff asked me to call you, dear. He’s having dinner with a tourist client and can’t come over.”

Mrs. Hardesty was watching me so I looked puzzled and said, “Jeff thought I was expecting him? He has his dates mixed.” I don’t think she believed me; she agreed too quickly.

All that week I was slowly convinced against my will that Jones & Hardesty was being liquidated. Jeff didn’t break any more dates—how can you break a date that hasn’t been made?—but we always went flying Thursday afternoons unless one of us was guiding. He didn’t call. Oh, I know where he was; he took her iceskating in Fingal’s Cave.
I stayed home and worked on the *Prometheus*, recalculating masses and moment arms for hydroponics and stores on the basis of the shielding change. But I made mistakes and twice I had to look up logarithms instead of remembering . . . I was so used to wrangling with Jeff over everything that I just couldn’t function.

Presently I looked at the name plate of the sheet I was revising. “Jones & Hardesty” it read, like all the rest. I said to myself, “Holly Jones, quit bluffing; this may be The End. You knew that someday Jeff would fall for somebody.”

“Of course . . . but not a *groundhog*.”

“But he *did*. What kind of an engineer are you if you can’t face facts? She’s beautiful and rich—she’ll get her father to give him a job Earthside. You hear me? Earthside! So you look for another partner . . . or go into business on your own.”

I erased “Jones & Hardesty” and lettered “Jones & Company” and stared at it. Then I started to erase that, too—but it smeared; I had dripped a tear on it. Which was ridiculous!

The following Tuesday both Daddy and Mother were home for lunch which was unusual as Daddy lunches at the spaceport. Now Daddy can’t even see you unless you’re a spaceship but that day he picked to notice that I had dialed only a salad and hadn’t finished it. “That plate is about eight hundred calories short,” he said, peering at it. “You can’t boost without fuel—aren’t you well?”
“Quite well, thank you,” I answered with dignity.

“Mmm . . . now that I think back, you’ve been moping for several days. Maybe you need a checkup.” He looked at Mother.

“I do not either need a checkup!” I had not been moping—doesn’t a woman have a right not to chatter?

But I hate to have doctors poking at me so I added, “It happens I’m eating lightly because I’m going flying this afternoon. But if you insist, I’ll order pot roast and potatoes and sleep instead!”

“Easy, punkin’,” he answered gently. “I didn’t mean to intrude. Get yourself a snack when you’re through . . . and say hello to Jeff for me.”

I simply answered, “OK,” and asked to be excused; I was humiliated by the assumption that I couldn’t fly without Mr. Jefferson Hardesty but did not wish to discuss it.

Daddy called after me, “Don’t be late for dinner,” and Mother said, “Now, Jacob—” and to me, “Fly until you’re tired, dear; you haven’t been getting much exercise. I’ll leave your dinner in the warmer. Anything you’d like?”

“No, whatever you dial for yourself.” I just wasn’t interested in food, which isn’t like me. As I headed for Bats’ Cave I wondered if I had caught something. But my cheeks didn’t feel warm and my stomach wasn’t upset even if I wasn’t hungry.
Then I had a horrible thought. Could it be that I was jealous? Me?

It was unthinkable. I am not romantic; I am a career woman. Jeff had been my partner and pal, and under my guidance he could have become a great spaceship designer, but our relationship was straightforward . . . a mutual respect for each other’s abilities, with never any of that lovey-dovey stuff. A career woman can’t afford such things—why look at all the professional time Mother had lost over having me!

No, I couldn’t be jealous; I was simply worried sick because my partner had become involved with a groundhog. Jeff isn’t bright about women and, besides, he’s never been to Earth and has illusions about it. If she lured him Earthside, Jones & Hardesty was finished.

And somehow “Jones & Company” wasn’t a substitute: the Prometheus might never be built.

I was at Bats’ Cave when I reached this dismal conclusion. I didn’t feel like flying but I went to the locker room and got my wings anyhow.

Most of the stuff written about Bats’ Cave gives a wrong impression. It’s the air storage tank for the city, just like all the colonies have—the place where the scavenger pumps, deep down, deliver the air until it’s needed. We just happen to be lucky enough to have one big enough to fly in. But it never was built, or anything like that; it’s just a big volcanic bubble, two miles across, and if it had broken through, way back when, it would have been a crater.

Tourists sometimes pity us loonies because we have no chance to swim. Well,
I tried it in Omaha and got water up my nose and scared myself silly. Water is for drinking, not playing in; I’ll take flying. I’ve heard groundhogs say, oh yes, they had “flown” many times. But that’s not flying. I did what they talk about, between White Sands and Omaha. I felt awful and got sick. Those things aren’t safe.

I left my shoes and skirt in the locker room and slipped my tail surfaces on my feet, then zipped into my wings and got someone to tighten the shoulder straps. My wings aren’t ready-made condors; they are Storer-Gulls, custom-made for my weight distribution and dimensions. I’ve cost Daddy a pretty penny in wings, outgrowing them so often, but these latest I bought myself with guide fees.

They’re lovely!—titanalloy struts as light and strong as bird bones, tension-compensated wrist-pinion and shoulder joints, natural action in the alula slots, and automatic flap action in stalling. The wing skeleton is dressed in styrene feather-foils with individual quilling of scapulars and primaries. They almost fly themselves.

I folded my wings and went into the lock. While it was cycling I opened my left wing and thumbed the alula control—I had noticed a tendency to sideslip the last time I was airborne. But the alula opened properly and I decided I must have been overcontrolling, easy to do with Storer-Gulls; they’re extremely maneuverable. Then the door showed green and I folded the wing and hurried out, while glancing at the barometer. Seventeen pounds—two more than Earth sea-level and nearly twice what we use in the city; even an ostrich could fly in that. I perked up and felt sorry for all groundhogs, tied down by six times proper weight, who never, never, never could fly.

Not even I could, on Earth. My wing loading is less than a pound per square foot, as wings and all I weigh less than twenty pounds. Earthside that would be over a hundred pounds and I could flap forever and never get off the ground.
I felt so good that I forgot about Jeff and his weakness. I spread my wings, ran a few steps, warped for lift and grabbed air—lifted my feet and was airborne.

I sculled gently and let myself glide toward the air intake at the middle of the floor—the Baby’s Ladder, we call it, because you can ride the updraft clear to the roof, half a mile above, and never move a wing. When I felt it I leaned right, spoiling with right primaries, corrected, and settled in a counterclockwise soaring glide and let it carry me toward the roof.

A couple of hundred feet up, I looked around. The cave was almost empty, not more than two hundred in the air and half that number perched or on the ground—room enough for didoes. So as soon as I was up five hundred feet I leaned out of the updraft and began to beat. Gliding is no effort but flying is as hard work as you care to make it. In gliding I support a mere ten pounds on each arm—shucks, on Earth you work harder than that lying in bed. The lift that keeps you in the air doesn’t take any work; you get it free from the shape of your wings just as long as there is air pouring past them.

Even without an updraft all a level glide takes is gentle sculling with your finger tips to maintain air speed; a feeble old lady could do it. The lift comes from differential air pressures but you don’t have to understand it; you just scull a little and the air supports you, as if you were lying in an utterly perfect bed. Sculling keeps you moving forward just like sculling a rowboat . . . or so I’m told; I’ve never been in a rowboat. I had a chance to in Nebraska but I’m not that foolhardy.

But when you’re really flying, you scull with forearms as well as hands and add power with your shoulder muscles. Instead of only the outer quills of your primaries changing pitch (as in gliding), now your primaries and secondaries clear back to the joint warp sharply on each downbeat and recovery;
they no longer lift, they force you forward—while your weight is carried by your scapulars, up under your armpits.

So you fly faster, or climb, or both, through controlling the angle of attack with your feet—with the tail surfaces you wear on your feet, I mean.

Oh dear, this sounds complicated and isn’t—you just do it. You fly exactly as a bird flies. Baby birds can learn it and they aren’t very bright. Anyhow, it’s easy as breathing after you learn . . . and more fun than you can imagine!

I climbed to the roof with powerful beats, increasing my angle of attack and slotting my alulae for lift without burble—climbing at an angle that would stall most fliers. I’m little but it’s all muscle and I’ve been flying since I was six. Once up there I glided and looked around. Down at the floor near the south wall tourists were trying glide wings—if you call those things “wings.” Along the west wall the visitors’ gallery was loaded with goggling tourists. I wondered if Jeff and his Circe character were there and decided to go down and find out.

So I went into a steep dive and swooped toward the gallery, leveled off and flew very fast along it. I didn’t spot Jeff and his groundhoggess but I wasn’t watching where I was going and over took another flier, almost collided. I glimpsed him just in time to stall and drop under, and fell fifty feet before I got control. Neither of us was in danger as the gallery is two hundred feet up, but I looked silly and it was my own fault; I had violated a safety rule.

There aren’t many rules but they are necessary; the first is that orange wings always have the right of way—they’re beginners. This flier did not have orange wings but I was overtaking. The flier underneath—or being over-
taken—or nearer the wall—or turning counterclockwise, in that order, has the right of way.

I felt foolish and wondered who had seen me, so I went all the way back up, made sure I had clear air, then stooped like a hawk toward the gallery, spilling wings, lifting tail, and letting myself fall like a rock.

I completed my stoop in front of the gallery, lowering and spreading my tail so hard I could feel leg muscles knot and grabbing air with both wings, alulae slotted. I pulled level in an extremely fast glide along the gallery. I could see their eyes pop and thought smugly, “There! That’ll show ‘em!”

When darn if somebody didn’t stoop on me! The blast from a flier braking right over me almost knocked me out of control. I grabbed air and stopped a sideslip, used some shipyard words and looked around to see who had blitzed me. I knew the black-and-gold wing pattern—Mary Muhlenburg, my best girl friend. She swung toward me, pivoting on a wing tip. “Hi, Holly! Scared you, didn’t I?”

“You did not! You better be careful; the flightmaster’ll ground you for a month!”

“Slim chance! He’s down for coffee.”

I flew away, still annoyed, and started to climb. Mary called after me, but I ignored her, thinking, “Mary my girl, I’m going to get over you and fly you right out of the air.”
This was a foolish thought as Mary flies every day and has shoulders and pectoral muscles like Mrs. Hercules. By the time she caught up with me I had cooled off and we flew side by side, still climbing. “Perch?” she called out.

“Perch,” I agreed. Mary has lovely gossip and I could use a breather. We turned toward our usual perch, a ceiling brace for flood lamps—it isn’t supposed to be a perch but the flightmaster hardly ever comes up there.

Mary flew in ahead of me, braked and stalled dead to a perfect landing. I skidded a little but Mary stuck out a wing and steadied me. It isn’t easy to come into a perch, especially when you have to approach level. Two years ago a boy who had just graduated from orange wings tried it . . . knocked off his left alula and primaries on a strut—went fluttering and spinning down two thousand feet and crashed. He could have saved himself—you can come in safely with a badly damaged wing if you spill air with the other and accept the steeper glide, then stall as you land. But this poor kid didn’t know how; he broke his neck, dead as Icarus. I haven’t used that perch since.

We folded our wings and Mary sidled over. “Jeff is looking for you,” she said with a sly grin.

My insides jumped but I answered coolly, “So? I didn’t know he was here.”

“Sure. Down there,” she added, pointing with her left wing. “Spot him?”

Jeff wears striped red and silver, but she was pointing at the tourist glide slope, a mile away. “No.”
“He’s there all right.” She looked at me sidewise. “But I wouldn’t look him up if I were you.”

“Why not? Or for that matter, why should I?” Mary can be exasperating.

“Huh? You always run when he whistles. But he has that Earthside siren in tow again today; you might find it embarrassing.”

“Mary, whatever are you talking about?”

“Huh? Don’t kid me, Holly Jones; you know what I mean.”

“I’m sure I don’t,” I answered with cold dignity.

“Humph! Then you’re the only person in Luna City who doesn’t. Everybody knows you’re crazy about Jeff; everybody knows she’s cut you out . . . and that you are simply simmering with jealousy.”

Mary is my dearest friend but someday I’m going to skin her for a rug. “Mary, that’s preposterously ridiculous! How can you even think such a thing?”

“Look, darling, you don’t have to pretend. I’m for you.” She patted my shoulders with her secondaries.
So I pushed her over backwards. She fell a hundred feet, straightened out, circled and climbed, and came in beside me, still grinning. It gave me time to decide what to say.

“Mary Muhlenburg, in the first place I am not crazy about anyone, least of all Jeff Hardesty. He and I are simply friends. So it’s utterly nonsensical to talk about me being ‘jealous.’ In the second place Miss Brentwood is a lady and doesn’t go around ‘cutting out’ anyone, least of all me. In the third place she is simply a tourist Jeff is guiding—business, nothing more.”

“Sure, sure,” Mary agreed placidly. “I was wrong. Still—” She shrugged her wings and shut up.

“‘Still’ what? Mary, don’t be mealy-mouthed.”

“Mmm . . . I was wondering how you knew I was talking about Ariel Brentwood—since there isn’t anything to it.”

“Why, you mentioned her name.”

“I did not.”

I thought frantically. “Uh, maybe not. But it’s perfectly simple. Miss Brentwood is a client I turned over to Jeff myself, so I assumed that she must be the tourist you meant.”
“So? I don’t recall even saying she was a tourist. But since she is just a tourist you two are splitting, why aren’t you doing the inside guiding while Jeff sticks to outside work? I thought you guides had an agreement?”

“Huh? If he has been guiding her inside the city, I’m not aware of it—”

“You’re the only one who isn’t.”

—and I’m not interested; that’s up to the grievance committee. But Jeff wouldn’t take a fee for inside guiding in any case.”

“Oh, sure!—not one he could bank. Well, Holly, seeing I was wrong, why don’t you give him a hand with her? She wants to learn to glide.”

Butting in on that pair was farthest from my mind. “If Mr. Hardesty wants my help, he will ask me. In the meantime I shall mind my own business . . . a practice I recommend to you!”

“Relax, shipmate,” she answered, unruffled. “I was doing you a favor.”

“Thank you, I don’t need one.”

“So I’ll be on my way—got to practice for the gymkhana.” She leaned forward and dropped off. But she didn’t practice aerobatics; she dived straight for the tourist slope.
I watched her out of sight, then snaked my left hand out the hand slit and got at my hanky—awkward when you are wearing wings but the floodlights had made my eyes water. I wiped them and blew my nose and put my hanky away and wiggled my hand back into place, then checked everything, thumbs, toes, and fingers, preparatory to dropping off.

But I didn’t. I just sat there, wings drooping, and thought. I had to admit that Mary was partly right; Jeff’s head was turned completely . . . over a *groundhog*. So sooner or later he would go Earthside and Jones & Hardesty was finished.

Then I reminded myself that I had been planning to be a spaceship designer like Daddy long before Jeff and I teamed up. I wasn’t dependent on anyone; I could stand alone, like Joan of Arc, or Lise Meitner.

I felt better . . . a cold, stern pride, like Lucifer in *Paradise Lost*.

I recognized the red and silver of Jeff’s wings while he was far off and I thought about slipping quietly away. But Jeff can overtake me if he tries, so I decided, “Holly, don’t be a fool! You have no reason to run . . . just be coolly polite.”

He landed by me but didn’t sidle up. “Hi, Decimal Point.”

“Hi, Zero. Uh, stolen much lately?”

“Just the City Bank but they made me put it back.” He frowned and added,
“Holly, are you mad at me?”

“Why, Jeff, whatever gave you such a silly notion?”

“Uh . . . something Mary the Mouth said.”

“Her? Don’t pay any attention to what she says. Half of it’s always wrong and she doesn’t mean the rest.”

“Yeah, a short circuit between her ears. Then you aren’t mad?”

“Of course not. Why should I be?”

“No reason I know of. I haven’t been around to work on the ship for a few days . . . but I’ve been awfully busy.”

“Think nothing of it. I’ve been terribly busy myself.”

“Uh, that’s fine. Look, Test Sample, do me a favor. Help me out with a friend—a client, that is—well, she’s a friend, too. She wants to learn to use glide wings.”

I pretended to consider it. “Anyone I know?”
“Oh, yes. Fact is, you introduced us. Ariel Brentwood.”

“‘Brentwood’? Jeff, there are so many tourists. Let me think. Tall girl? Blonde? Extremely pretty?”

He grinned like a goof and I almost pushed him off. “That’s Ariel!”

“I recall her . . . she expected me to carry her bags. But you don’t need help, Jeff. She seemed very clever. Good sense of balance.”

“Oh, yes, sure, all of that. Well, the fact is, I want you two to know each other. She’s . . . well, she’s just wonderful, Holly. A real person all the way through. You’ll love her when you know her better. Uh . . . this seemed like a good chance.”

I felt dizzy. “Why, that’s very thoughtful, Jeff, but I doubt if she wants to know me better. I’m just a servant she hired—you know groundhogs.”

“But she’s not at all like the ordinary groundhog. And she does want to know you better—she told me so!”

After you told her to think so! I muttered. But I had talked myself into a corner. If I had not been hampered by polite upbringing I would have said, “On your way, vacuum skull! I’m not interested in your groundhog girl friends”—but what I did say was, “OK, Jeff,” then gathered the fox to my bosom and dropped off into a glide.
So I taught Ariel Brentwood to “fly.” Look, those so-called wings they let tourists wear have fifty square feet of lift surface, no controls except warp in the primaries, a built-in dihedral to make them stable as a table, and a few meaningless degrees of hinging to let the wearer think that he is “flying” by waving his arms. The tail is rigid, and canted so that if you stall (almost impossible) you land on your feet. All a tourist does is run a few yards, lift up his feet (he can’t avoid it) and slide down a blanket of air. Then he can tell his grandchildren how he flew, really flew, “just like a bird.”

An ape could learn to “fly” that much.

I put myself to the humiliation of strapping on a set of the silly things and had Ariel watch while I swung into the Baby’s Ladder and let it carry me up a hundred feet to show her that you really and truly could “fly” with them. Then I thankfully got rid of them, strapped her into a larger set, and put on my beautiful Storer-Gulls. I had chased Jeff away (two instructors is too many), but when he saw her wing up, he swooped down and landed by us.

I looked up. “You again.”

“Hello, Ariel. Hi, Blip. Say, you’ve got her shoulder straps too tight.”

“Tut, tut,” I said. “One coach at a time, remember? If you want to help, shuck those gaudy fins and put on some gliders . . . then I’ll use you to show how not to. Otherwise get above two hundred feet and stay there; we don’t need any dining-lounge pilots.”
Jeff pouted like a brat but Ariel backed me up. “Do what teacher says, Jeff. That’s a good boy.”

He wouldn’t put on gliders but he didn’t stay clear either. He circled around us, watching, and got bawled out by the flightmaster for cluttering the tourist area.

I admit Ariel was a good pupil. She didn’t even get sore when I suggested that she was rather mature across the hips to balance well; she just said that she had noticed that I had the slimmest behind around there and she envied me. So I quit trying to get her goat, and found myself almost liking her as long as I kept my mind firmly on teaching. She tried hard and learned fast—good reflexes and (despite my dirty crack) good balance. I remarked on it and she admitted diffidently that she had had ballet training.

About mid-afternoon she said, “Could I possibly try real wings?”

“Huh? Gee, Ariel, I don’t think so.”

“Why not?”

There she had me. She had already done all that could be done with those atrocious gliders. If she was to learn more, she had to have real wings. “Ariel, it’s dangerous. It’s not what you’ve been doing, believe me. You might get hurt, even killed.”

“Would you be held responsible?”
“No. You signed a release when you came in.”

“Then I’d like to try it.”

I bit my lip. If she had cracked up without my help, I wouldn’t have shed a tear—but to let her do something too dangerous while she was my pupil . . . well, it smacked of David and Uriah. “Ariel, I can’t stop you . . . but I should put my wings away and not have anything to do with it.”

It was her turn to bite her lip. “If you feel that way, I can’t ask you to coach me. But I still want to. Perhaps Jeff will help me.”

“He probably will,” I blurted out, “if he is as big a fool as I think he is!”

Her company face slipped but she didn’t say anything because just then Jeff stalled in beside us. “What’s the discussion?”

We both tried to tell him and confused him for he got the idea I had suggested it, and started bawling me out. Was I crazy? Was I trying to get Ariel hurt? Didn’t I have any sense?

“Shut up!” I yelled, then added quietly but firmly, “Jefferson Hardesty, you wanted me to teach your girl friend, so I agreed. But don’t butt in and don’t think you can get away with talking to me like that. Now beat it! Take wing. Grab air!”
He swelled up and said slowly, “I absolutely forbid it.”

Silence for five long counts. Then Ariel said quietly, “Come, Holly. Let’s get me some wings.”

“Right, Ariel.”

But they don’t rent real wings. Fliers have their own; they have to. However, there are second-hand ones for sale because kids outgrow them, or people shift to custom-made ones, or something. I found Mr. Schultz who keeps the key, and said that Ariel was thinking of buying but I wouldn’t let her without a tryout. After picking over forty-odd pairs I found a set which Johnny Queveras had outgrown but which I knew were all right. Nevertheless I inspected them carefully. I could hardly reach the finger controls but they fitted Ariel.

While I was helping her into the tail surfaces I said, “Ariel? This is still a bad idea.”

“I know. But we can’t let men think they own us.”

“I suppose not.”

“They do own us, of course. But we shouldn’t let them know it.” She was feeling out the tail controls. “The big toes spread them?”
“Yes. But don’t do it. Just keep your feet together and toes pointed. Look, Ariel, you really aren’t ready. Today all you will do is glide, just as you’ve been doing. Promise?”

She looked me in the eye. “I’ll do exactly what you say . . . not even take wing unless you OK it.”

“OK. Ready?”

“I’m ready.”

“All right. Wups! I goofed. They aren’t orange.”

“Does it matter?”

“It sure does.” There followed a weary argument because Mr. Schultz didn’t want to spray them orange for a tryout. Ariel settled it by buying them, then we had to wait a bit while the solvent dried.

We went back to the tourist slope and I let her glide, cautioning her to hold both alulae open with her thumbs for more lift at slow speeds, while barely sculling with her fingers. She did fine, and stumbled in landing only once. Jeff stuck around, cutting figure eights above us, but we ignored him. Presently I taught her to turn in a wide, gentle bank—you can turn those awful glider things but it takes skill; they’re only meant for straight glide.
Finally I landed by her and said, “Had enough?”

“I’ll never have enough! But I’ll unwing if you say.”

“Tired?”

“No.” She glanced over her wing at the Baby’s Ladder; a dozen fliers were going up it, wings motionless, soaring lazily. “I wish I could do that just once. It must be heaven.”

I chewed it over. “Actually, the higher you are, the safer you are.”

“Then why not?”

“Mmm . . . safer provided you know what you’re doing. Going up that draft is just gliding like you’ve been doing. You lie still and let it lift you half a mile high. Then you come down the same way, circling the wall in a gentle glide. But you’re going to be tempted to do something you don’t understand yet—flap your wings, or cut some caper.”

She shook her head solemnly. “I won’t do anything you haven’t taught me.”

I was still worried. “Look, it’s only half a mile up but you cover five miles getting there and more getting down. Half an hour at least. Will your arms take it?”
“I’m sure they will.”

“Well . . . you can start down anytime; you don’t have to go all the way. Flex your arms a little now and then, so they won’t cramp. Just don’t flap your wings.”

“I won’t.”

“OK.” I spread my wings. “Follow me.”

I led her into the updraft, leaned gently right, then back left to start the counterclockwise climb, all the while sculling very slowly so that she could keep up. Once we were in the groove I called out, “Steady as you are!” and cut out suddenly, climbed and took station thirty feet over and behind her. “Ariel?”

“Yes, Holly?”

“I’ll stay over you. Don’t crane your neck; you don’t have to watch me, I have to watch you. You’re doing fine.”

“I feel fine!”

“Wiggle a little. Don’t stiffen up. It’s a long way to the roof. You can scull harder if you want to.”
“Aye aye, Cap’n!”

“Not tired?”

“Heavens, no! Girl, I’m living!” She giggled. “And mama said I’d never be an angel!”

I didn’t answer because red-and-silver wings came charging at me, braked suddenly and settled into a circle between me and Ariel. Jeff’s face was almost as red as his wings. “What the devil do you think you are doing?”

“Orange wings!” I yelled. “Keep clear!”

“Get down out of here! Both of you!”

“Get out from between me and my pupil. You know the rules.”

“Ariel!” Jeff shouted. “Lean out of the circle and glide down. I’ll stay with you.”

“Jeff Hardesty,” I said savagely, “I give you three seconds to get out from between us—then I’m going to report you for violation of Rule One. For the third time—Orange Wings!”
Jeff growled something, dipped his right wing and dropped out of formation. The idiot sideslipped within five feet of Ariel’s wing tip. I should have reported him for that; all the room you can give a beginner is none too much.

I said, “OK, Ariel?”

“OK, Holly. I’m sorry Jeff is angry.”

“He’ll get over it. Tell me if you feel tired.”

“I’m not. I want to go all the way up. How high are we?”

“Four hundred feet, maybe.”

Jeff flew below us a while, then climbed and flew over us . . . probably for the same reason I did: to see better. It suited me to have two of us watching her as long as he didn’t interfere; I was beginning to fret that Ariel might not realize that the way down was going to be as long and tiring as the way up. I was hoping she would cry uncle. I knew I could glide until forced down by starvation. But a beginner gets tense.

Jeff stayed generally over us, sweeping back and forth—he’s too active to glide very long—while Ariel and I continued to soar, winding slowly up toward the roof. It finally occurred to me when we were about halfway up that I could cry uncle myself; I didn’t have to wait for Ariel to weaken. So I called out, “Ariel? Tired now?”
“No.”

“Well, I am. Could we go down, please?”

She didn’t argue, she just said, “All right. What am I to do?”

“Lean right and get out of the circle.” I intended to have her move out five or six hundred feet, get into the return down draft, and circle the cave down instead of up. I glanced up, looking for Jeff. I finally spotted him some distance away and much higher but coming toward us. I called out, “Jeff! See you on the ground.” He might not have heard me but he would see if he didn’t hear; I glanced back at Ariel.

I couldn’t find her.

Then I saw her, a hundred feet below—flailing her wings and falling, out of control.

I didn’t know how it happened. Maybe she leaned too far, went into a sideslip and started to struggle. But I didn’t try to figure it out; I was simply filled with horror. I seemed to hang there frozen for an hour while I watched her.

But the fact appears to be that I screamed “Jeff!” and broke into a stoop.
But I didn’t seem to fall, couldn’t overtake her. I spilled my wings completely—but couldn’t manage to fall; she was as far away as ever.

You do start slowly, of course; our low gravity is the only thing that makes human flying possible. Even a stone falls a scant three feet in the first second. But that first second seemed endless.

Then I knew I was falling. I could feel rushing air—but I still didn’t seem to close on her. Her struggles must have slowed her somewhat, while I was in an intentional stoop, wings spilled and raised over my head, falling as fast as possible. I had a wild notion that if I could pull even with her, I could shout sense into her head, get her to dive, then straighten out in a glide. But I couldn’t reach her.

This nightmare dragged on for hours.

Actually we didn’t have room to fall for more than twenty seconds; that’s all it takes to stoop a thousand feet. But twenty seconds can be horribly long . . . long enough to regret every foolish thing I had ever done or said, long enough to say a prayer for us both . . . and to say good-by to Jeff in my heart. Long enough to see the floor rushing toward us and know that we were both going to crash if I didn’t overtake her mighty quick.

I glanced up and Jeff was stooping right over us but a long way up. I looked down at once . . . and I was overtaking her . . . I was passing her—I was under her!

Then I was braking with everything I had, almost pulling my wings off. I grabbed air, held it, and started to beat without ever going to level
flight. I beat once, twice, three times . . . and hit her from below, jar-
ing us both.

Then the floor hit us.* * *

I felt feeble and dreamily contented. I was on my back in a dim room. I
think Mother was with me and I know Daddy was. My nose itched and I tried
to scratch it, but my arms wouldn’t work. I fell asleep again.

I woke up hungry and wide awake. I was in a hospital bed and my arms still
wouldn’t work, which wasn’t surprising as they were both in casts. A nurse
came in with a tray. “Hungry?” she asked.

“Starved,” I admitted.

“We’ll fix that.” She started feeding me like a baby.

I dodged the third spoonful and demanded. “What happened to my arms?”

“Hush,” she said and gagged me with a spoon.

But a nice doctor came in later and answered my question. “Nothing much.
Three simple fractures. At your age you’ll heal in no time. But we like
your company so I’m holding you for observation of possible internal in-
jury.”
“I’m not hurt inside,” I told him. “At least, I don’t hurt.”

“I told you it was just an excuse.”

“Uh, Doctor?”

“Well?”

“Will I be able to fly again?” I waited, scared.

“Certainly. I’ve seen men hurt worse get up and go three rounds.”

“Oh. Well, thanks. Doctor? What happened to the other girl? Is she . . . did she . . . ?”

“Brentwood? She’s here.”

“She’s right here,” Ariel agreed from the door. “May I come in?”

My jaw dropped, then I said, “Yeah. Sure. Come in.”
The doctor said, “Don’t stay long,” and left. I said, “Well, sit down.”

“Thanks.” She hopped instead of walked and I saw that one foot was bandaged. She got on the end of the bed.

“You hurt your foot.”

She shrugged. “Nothing. A sprain and a torn ligament. Two cracked ribs. But I would have been dead. You know why I’m not?”

I didn’t answer. She touched one of my casts. “That’s why. You broke my fall and I landed on top of you. You saved my life and I broke both your arms.”

“You don’t have to thank me. I would have done it for anybody.”

“I believe you and I wasn’t thanking you. You can’t thank a person for saving your life. I just wanted to make sure you knew that I knew it.”

I didn’t have an answer so I said, “Where’s Jeff? Is he all right?”

“He’ll be along soon. Jeff’s not hurt . . . though I’m surprised he didn’t break both ankles. He stalled in beside us so hard that he should have. But Holly . . . Holly my very dear . . . I slipped in so that you and I could talk about him before he got here.”
I changed the subject quickly. Whatever they had given me made me feel dreamy and good, but not beyond being embarrassed. “Ariel, what happened? You were getting along fine—then suddenly you were in trouble.”

She looked sheepish. “My own fault. You said we were going down, so I looked down. Really looked, I mean. Before that, all my thoughts had been about climbing clear to the roof; I hadn’t thought about how far down the floor was. Then I looked down . . . and got dizzy and panicky and went all to pieces.” She shrugged. “You were right. I wasn’t ready.”

I thought about it and nodded. “I see. But don’t worry—when my arms are well, I’ll take you up again.”

She touched my foot. “Dear Holly. But I won’t be flying again; I’m going back where I belong.”

“Earthside?”

“Yes. I’m taking the Billy Mitchell on Wednesday.”

“Oh. I’m sorry.”

She frowned slightly. “Are you? Holly, you don’t like me, do you?”

I was startled silly. What can you say? Especially when it’s true? “Well,”
I said slowly, “I don’t dislike you. I just don’t know you very well.”

She nodded. “And I don’t know you very well . . . even though I got to know you a lot better in a very few seconds. But Holly . . . listen please and don’t get angry. It’s about Jeff. He hasn’t treated you very well the last few days—while I’ve been here, I mean. But don’t be angry with him. I’m leaving and everything will be the same.”

That ripped it open and I couldn’t ignore it, because if I did, she would assume all sorts of things that weren’t so. So I had to explain . . . about me being a career woman . . . how, if I had seemed upset, it was simply distress at breaking up the firm of Jones & Hardesty before it even finished its first starship . . . how I was not in love with Jeff but simply valued him as a friend and associate . . . but if Jones & Hardesty couldn’t carry on, then Jones & Company would. “So you see, Ariel, it isn’t necessary for you to give up Jeff. If you feel you owe me something, just forget it. It isn’t necessary.”

She blinked and I saw with amazement that she was holding back tears. “Holly, Holly . . . you don’t understand at all.”

“I understand all right. I’m not a child.”

“No, you’re a grown woman . . . but you haven’t found it out.” She held up a finger. “One—Jeff doesn’t love me.”

“I don’t believe it.”
“Two . . . I don’t love him.”

“I don’t believe that, either.”

“Three . . . you say you don’t love him—but we’ll take that up when we come to it. Holly, am I beautiful?”

Changing the subject is a female trait but I’ll never learn to do it that fast. “Huh?”

“I said, ‘Am I beautiful?’”

“You know darn well you are!”

“Yes. I can sing a bit and dance, but I would get few parts if I were not, because I’m no better than a third-rate actress. So I have to be beautiful. How old am I?”

I managed not to boggle. “Huh? Older than Jeff thinks you are. Twenty-one, at least. Maybe twenty-two.”

She sighed. “Holly, I’m old enough to be your mother.”
“Huh? I don’t believe that either.”

“I’m glad it doesn’t show. But that’s why, though Jeff is a dear, there never was a chance that I could fall in love with him. But how I feel about him doesn’t matter; the important thing is that he loves you.”

“What? That’s the silliest thing you’ve said yet! Oh, he likes me—or did. But that’s all.” I gulped. “And it’s all I want. Why, you should hear the way he talks to me.”

“I have. But boys that age can’t say what they mean; they get embarrassed.”

“But—”

“Wait, Holly. I saw something you didn’t because you were knocked cold. When you and I bumped, do you know what happened?”

“Uh, no.”

“Jeff arrived like an avenging angel, a split second behind us. He was ripping his wings off as he hit, getting his arms free. He didn’t even look at me. He just stepped across me and picked you up and cradled you in his arms, all the while bawling his eyes out.”

“He did?”
“He did.”

I mulled it over. Maybe the big lunk did kind of like me, after all.

Ariel went on, “So you see, Holly, even if you don’t love him, you must be very gentle with him, because he loves you and you can hurt him terribly.”

I tried to think. Romance was still something that a career woman should shun . . . but if Jeff really did feel that way—well . . . would it be compromising my ideals to marry him just to keep him happy? To keep the firm together? Eventually, that is?

But if I did, it wouldn’t be Jones & Hardesty; it would be Hardesty & Hardesty.

Ariel was still talking: “—you might even fall in love with him. It does happen, hon, and if it did, you’d be sorry if you had chased him away. Some other girl would grab him; he’s awfully nice.”

“But—” I shut up for I heard Jeff’s step—I can always tell it. He stopped in the door and looked at us, frowning.

“Hi, Ariel.”

“Hi, Jeff.”
“Hi, Fraction.” He looked me over. “My, but you’re a mess.”

“You aren’t pretty yourself. I hear you have flat feet.”

“Permanently. How do you brush your teeth with those things on your arms?”

“I don’t.”

Ariel slid off the bed, balanced on one foot. “Must run. See you later, kids.”

“So long, Ariel.”

“Good-by, Ariel. Uh . . . thanks.”

Jeff closed the door after she hopped away, came to the bed and said gruffly, “Hold still.”

Then he put his arms around me and kissed me.

Well, I couldn’t stop him, could I? With both arms broken? Besides, it was consonant with the new policy for the firm. I was startled speechless because Jeff never kisses me, except birthday kisses, which don’t count. But
I tried to kiss back and show that I appreciated it.

I don’t know what the stuff was they had been giving me but my ears began to ring and I felt dizzy again.

Then he was leaning over me. “Runt,” he said mournfully, “you sure give me a lot of grief.”

“You’re no bargain yourself, flathead,” I answered with dignity.

“I suppose not.” He looked me over sadly. “What are you crying for?”

I didn’t know that I had been. Then I remembered why. “Oh, Jeff—I busted my pretty wings!”

“We’ll get you more. Uh, brace yourself. I’m going to do it again.”

“All right.” He did.

I suppose Hardesty & Hardesty has more rhythm than Jones & Hardesty.

It really sounds better.*
Once we settled on Clarke's Rescue Party as the opening story for the anthology, the choice for the second story was practically automatic: This one.

Well . . . not quite. The part that was more or less automatic was that it would be some story by Robert Heinlein. The question of which story in particular, however, was something we had to kick back and forth for a while.

We faced a bit of a problem. For all of us as teenagers, the Heinlein was not really the Heinlein who wrote short stories. It was the Heinlein who wrote that seemingly inexhaustible fountain of young adult novels: Rocket Ship Galileo, Citizen of the Galaxy, Have Spacesuit—Will Travel, Tunnel in the Sky, Time for the Stars, The Star Beast, Farmer in the Sky, Space Cadet, The Rolling Stone, Starman Jones . . . the list seemed to go on and on.

If books had infinite pages—or book buyers had infinitely deep pockets—we would have selected one of those short YA novels for the anthology. Alas, pages are finite and the pockets of customers more finite still, so we had to find another alternative.

We chose this story, because of all Heinlein's short fiction it probably best captures the spirit of his great young adult novels. Most of Heinlein’s short fiction is quite different, often much grimmer, and—speaking for me, at least, if not necessarily Jim or Dave—not something which had much of an impact on me in my so-called formative years.

Plus, there was another bonus. Again, for me at least. I’m sure I first read this story when I was thirteen. I think that because I remember being absolutely fascinated by the fact that: a) the protagonist from whose view-
point the story is told is a girl; b) she was really bright; c) she was of-
ten confused by her own motives and uncertain of herself, for all that she pretended otherwise.

Leaving factor “a” aside, factors “b” and “c” described me at that age to a T. That bizarre age in a boy’s life when girls had gone from being a very familiar, well-understood and mostly boring phenomenon to something that had suddenly become incredibly mysterious, even more fascinating— and completely confusing.

After reading the story, I remember thinking that I really, really hoped Heinlein knew what he was talking about—and that the depiction of women and girls you generally ran across in science fiction of the time was baloney. With few exceptions, in SF of the time, a female character was doing well if she achieved one-dimensionality. And that dimension was invariably good looks. This was no help at all. I already knew girls were good-looking. What I needed to know was everything else—everything that Heinlein had put at the center of his story.

A year later I was fourteen and I had my first girlfriend, who remained so throughout my high school years. And whatever doubts I might have had that Robert A. Heinlein was the Heinlein were dispelled forever.

### Posts Regarding Life and Contentment

Here are some other similar posts on this venue. If you enjoyed this post, you might like these posts as well. These posts tend to discuss growing up in America. Often, I like to compare my life in America with the society within communist China. As there are some really stark differences between the two.
The Most Important Things That a Man Looks for in a Woman.
Here, we look at the things that men search for in a woman. These things are considered, by men, to be absolutely essential in a mate. We discuss ten attributes and go into detail as to why they are important.

Adventures Exploring the Cemeteries of Indiana
Cemeteries can tell us a lot about ourselves, our history, and our future. This is most especially true in regards to smaller and remote cemeteries located in the counties that surround us. This is my story about the impressions that my prays into these curiosities made upon me.

What it was like being a kid in the early 1970’s
This is my narrative of what it was like growing up a a young teenager in 1971. This took place in the hills of Pennsylvania outside of Pittsburgh. I was 13 years old. I went to school, rode my bicycle around everywhere. I fished with my father, and watched television a lot.

The Fiasco of the Reengineering of the Common Tomato
This is the sad, sad story about how the wonderful and tasty tomato was reengineered to be “better”. It was made better to ship. Better to sell. Better to store. However, there was one thing missing. No one paid any attention to taste, which is why it tastes like a cardboard shipping box today.

A Movie Tribute to the 1980’s When Ronald Reagan Ran America. Here we argue that movies reflect society when they were made. Today we see popular movies being remade as all female versions due to the progressive realities today. Likewise, the movies of the 1980s reflected the time when they were made as well.
Mad Scientist Explorations
Here we discuss what it was like growing up as a boy in the 1960's and the 1970's and the people, things, and adventures that inspired us. As such, we explore how the independence of growing up enabled us to cope through life when we got older.

The Gorilla Cage in the Basement
When I was a small boy, I used to play in the abandoned buildings nearby. Here is a story about one of the objects that lay hidden inside one of those buildings and the possible mysteries that it held. As a child we thought it was a gorilla cage, now as an adult, I am not so sure...

The Importance of a Family Meal Together
There is nothing more important and satisfying than spending time together with friends and family and eating a meal together. It is a time of friendship, familial bonding and relaxation. Here we discuss what I have learned from my childhood and how I apply it today in my life.

The Pleasures of Fresh Baked Bread with Butter
One of the things that I have come to miss, since I moved to China, is fresh hard crusty rolls with full salted butter. The Chinese are not really fans of crusty bread. They like sweets and sponge cakes. Here I describe something that is close to me; not appreciating what you have right in front of you.

What Work was Like in the 1960’s and 1970’s.
When people go to work today, they find that there are all kinds of rules and regulations. It is for diversity, safety, inclusion, and improvement in a new progressive world. Well, here is what work was like before it became a sterile progressive testing ground for the New World Order.
Learning during my 1970s High School years
Here is a pretty long post on what it was like to go to elementary school in the 1960's, and then attend high school in the 1970's. I graduated in 1977, and that my friend is exactly the target date for the famous movie “Dazed and Confused”. Here is the real deal what it was like.

Some True Stories of Cat Heaven
Being in MAJestic taught me many things. One of which was an intimate understanding of Heaven and other “spiritual” things relative to quanta entanglements. Here I discuss what it is like to have a beloved animal (cat) dies and what actually happens to them and why.

Life Lessons from Working within the Corporate Dream – 1
After I was trained by MAJestic, I was left to fend for myself in Corporate America. It was a hellish existence. As such, I learned many lessons concerning behavior and the ultimate impact that it holds on our families, our friends, our loved ones, and our very lives. Here are my commentaries.

Life Lessons from Working within the Corporate Dream – 2
This is part two of the two part section. There is quite a lot of information to impart. Stories are told, and experiences relayed. Honestly working in corporate America in the 1980's, through the new century really sucked. It was harsh on everyone except the owners of the companies.

How to Build Up Your Life from Nothing.
This is for all those young men who are just leaving school and trying hard to build up their life. You can do it. Here are my thoughts and advice for a young man who is encountering that most difficult of challenges; carving your life out in the wilds of the world.
Allow your Children to Play and Grow (Part 1)
I am horrified, just horrified, that parents do not allow their children to play, roam and explore on their own. It has created a society of pampered fearful children. Here I discuss this in terms of what I know. This is very non-PC and might offend the more liberal readers out there.

Allow your Children to Play and Grow (Part 2)
This is the second part of my rant about permitting children to play, explore and have fun. Everyone, the odds that some stranger will abduct your child is very small. Most people who do this are family friends and neighbors. Stop being so fearful. It harms the development of your child.

Ode to Diabolical Cretin John McCain
Well, that evil son-of-a-bitch is finally dead. If his grave wasn’t so far away, I go there and dance on top of it. This guy has spent his life backstabbing people, hurting people, concocting wars, and doing everything in his power to disrupt the lives of people. Good fucking riddance.

The Song “Baby Got Back” Translated into Latin
Here is a fun post. The song “Baby Got Back” is translated into Latin and then back again. I have to tell you that it is indeed hilarious. *Rebecca, ecce! tantae clunes isti sunt!* (Rebecca, behold! Such large buttocks she has!) Anyways, it’s just all fun and games. Enjoy.

Every Man Should Have a Roll-Top Desk
It’s true, and I discuss why. A roll-top desk is made for the person who accumulates the clutter of the road as they forge their way through life. The desk becomes a symbol and a place for a man’s privacy. It is a place where he has control over his life, and a place to store his treasures.
Why Women Need their own Personal Makeup Vanity Space
I am a strong believer that everyone needs privacy and a personal space to call their own. In this post I discuss the need for a woman to have a vanity and why it is important for a woman to spend time using it. Everyone, regardless of their situation, needs a place that is all theirs and theirs alone.

What the Progressive Liberals have in store for Conservatives
The progressive socialists, who now go under the name of "Liberals", have plans on the consolidation of their power and control. This is what their ultimate plans are. It does not bode well for traditional American values, Rights, the Constitution, or history. It’s going to be a dangerous time.

The Warning Signs that Government Collapse is Imminent
All nations go through cycles. They do so, and when they mature they evolve into other governmental forms. The United States is long overdue for a change; a reset. Now, while this will occur, it is unknown how severe it would be. Here are my thoughts on this issue and some warnings.

Democrat Busybodies and the Destruction of Freedom
Wouldn’t life be wonderful if you could just be left alone and live your life in peace? I think so. The founders of the United States thought so, however there is an army of busybodies who disagree. They have this vision of utopia where everyone listens to their commands.

Adventures of a 70's Kid in an Army And Navy Store
Here we look at what adventures an Army and Navy store could hold for the inquisitive child. We talk about the history and the inherent adventures that lay hidden in dusty boxes, and dark corners. We narrate the exploration though the eyes of nostalgia. It's a pleasant excursion.
Comparison between American and Chinese Playgrounds
The differences between American and Chinese playgrounds couldn’t be more telling. It is a tale of how things are handled differently and the roles that parents take. In China the role of the parent is to equip the child for life. While in America it is to protect the child from life.

Excuses We Use That Keep Us Enslaved
Here we look at what an American actually is. For the argument made here is that citizenship in the United States is not what qualifies a person to be an “American”. Rather it is the way a person thinks, the way they act, and their general philosophy in life. For not everyone is an American.

More Posts about Life
I have broken apart some other posts. They can best be classified about ones actions as they contribute to happiness and life. They are a little different, in subtle ways.

On Being an Older Gent
Here are my thoughts on growing old as a man. The truth is that the life that I expected to have as I was growing up never materialized. Instead, something else manifested. My life today is nothing compared to what I thought it would be. For my illusions were created by American media.
Things that I wish that I knew when I was 25 years old
Here is the advice that I would give myself when I turned 25 years of age. It is the advice I would give my younger self after attending the school of “hard knocks” for around four decades or so. If only I knew then, what I know now. Would my life be any different? Let’s look at this curiosity.

Be Who You Are
All our lives we are told who to be, what to do, what career to take. Our religion, our work, our schools, our government, and our loved ones all tell us what we need to do. Here, I tell you the opposite. Stop allowing others to tell you what to do. You know what you need inside of you.

Calexit and the American Civil War
This is a pretty detailed look at the causes of the American civil war, and why it wasn’t about slavery. We look at the rewriting of history by the internet, and the efforts that President Obama took to keep California intact so that the Democrats could maintain political power and control.

Why an American man should leave America and Travel
All people should get up off their duff and go forth and Travel. However, this is most especially true for American men. The United States has become a crucible of PC progressive realities that attack and depreciate American men. Go out, young man, see the world as it really is!

The Amazing Bremelanotide PT-141
Forget Viagra, and all those other ED medications. This is the real deal. This little baby causes humans to go into heat. It interacts with the brain and sets up feelings of intense arousal on both men and women. It turns people into 16 year olds. As such it is banned in the USA by the FDA.
**Bronco Billy and the 25th Law of Power**
Bronco Billy is a fictional movie starring Clint Eastwood. The movie depicts the life of a man who decides to change his life and go ahead and do what he has always dreamed of doing. He goes out and becomes his dream. There are lessons here for all of us, we only need listen.

**The r/K Selection Theory applied to American Politics**
The r/K theory is a pretty well-known theory on animal behavior. It simply states that animals behave as they need to based on the scarcity of resources. Here, we argue that it can be applied to why humans follow different political philosophies. Especially in American politics.

**How they get away with it**
Ten years ago, Bankers committed fraud in Wall Street that just about devastated the nation. Earlier, we had the S&L fiasco, the nightmare with penny stocks, and now the grand wholesale treason with the selling of Top Secrets to a foreign nation. This is how they get away with it.

**The Line in the Sand – Now What?**
It’s the same story. Just vote for us, and we will correct everything. Yet, nothing ever happens. You know, boys and girls, this old “song and dance” can only be maintained for so long. Eventually it will fractures, and people will no longer rely on elections to institute change...

**The importance of having a second passport.**
So President Trump is building a wall to protect Americans. Hum. Where have I heard that before? Oh yes, in Germany right when they were making the wall that separated Berlin. Walls serve two purposes; they keep people out, but they also keep people in. Be careful what you wish for.
How Rocket Scientists Build Paper Airplanes
This is a tale of what me and my classmates used to do when we were young Aerospace Engineering students at the university. We would design paper airplanes and shoot them down with bottle rockets. Here is just a fun little exercise down “memory lane”. Enjoy.

What is Snopes.com and can it be Trusted?
Snopes is a “fact check” website that is fully funded by the oligarchy. It is used to “shout down” any narratives that does not support the rich and powerful, and politically connected globally. Here we discuss the organization, who they are and what they represent.

Today America Taxes it’s Expats without Representation.
This is a sad state of affairs. Americans who reside outside of the United States now have to pay American taxes, even though they have no representation in Congress. As I recall this was one of the reasons for the American cry for independence in 1776.

What life is like inside the ADC Prison in Arkansas
This post discusses what life is like in a hard labor prison in Southern Arkansas. We discuss hoe squads, food, the hole, commissary, dress, fashion, homosexual culture, prison gangs, murders, relationships and other aspects of life when you are sentenced to “Hard Time”.

The Hazing of New Employees – A Lost Tradition
Up until the 1980's all companies would haze new employees. Today, we live in a world regulated by the government and policed by Human Resources. We forget how things used to be just a handful of decades ago. Here is my narrative when I started to work.
How to Build a Gallows and a Hangman's Noose
The United States is entering a period of strife. There will be violence. There will be discord and discomfort. It will be an ugly time. There will be winners and losers. It will be painful for the losers, and the victor will need build a gallows. This is how to do so and why it is needed.

Some things that need to be changed for America to be the “Land of the Free” again.
There are many things that a person can do to improve themselves. But, what about a nation? What about the United States? Here is a handful of suggestions that I would like to propose to help America become whole again.

A Wish List of Favorite Firearms
This is a personal list of many favorite firearms that I would like to own. There are various reasons for the particular weapon of choice, and I provide my reasons. This post has no other purpose than to express my desire to own certain weapons that I cannot as an American.

The Ultimate Method to Make Your Computer Safe and Secure
The best way to make your computer secure and private is to have very strong encryption and use an obscure operating system that very few people know about. Here we look at 37 obscure computer operating systems.

Is America a Republic or is it a Democracy – What is it?
Here we take a nice good look at what the United States is today. We look at reports that are suggestive of other governmental organizations. We look at what is going on contemporaneously inside the United States, and we look at how the United States behaves globally.
The Many Things that Democrats want to Ban
This is a running list of the many things that American Democrats want to ban, have banned, or are trying to ban. You know, a ban of anything is a restriction on freedom. That is not what America was founded upon. Yet, here we are today. Everyday is a new ban, and loss of freedom.

Nations that an American Man could Travel and Relocate to – Part 1
Here, I suggest places where an American man could go if he wanted to start all over again. You know, this happens. Often a man will go through a nasty divorce, or get raked over the coals by a business associate or the United States government. When it happens, it’s time to start new.

Nations that an American Man could Travel and Relocate to – Part 2
Here, I suggest places where an American man could go if he wanted to start all over again. You know, this happens. Often a man will go through a nasty divorce, or get raked over the coals by a business associate or the United States government. When it happens, it’s time to start new.

Alternative Search Engines instead of Google
Google does two things that I do not like. Firstly, they vacuum up everything you do and send the information straight to the American deep state; the NSA and DHS. Secondly, they censor your results for you according to what they think you should see. Here we look at alternatives.

The Consequences of the #MeToo Movement
While the #MeToo movement burst forth onto American culture with good intentions, it was soon coopted by those with selfish and sinister intent. The aggressive nature of the accusations, and the consequences of being accused became dangerous. Here we look at the corporate aspect.
The Lies the Media Tell Us
The United States mainstream media does not report “news”. Instead they fabricate events that are designed to manipulate. They do not employ reporters. They employ actors and they stage events for public display. Let’s talk about this serious situation and how to avoid manipulation.

What it was like Growing Up in 1960’s and 1970’s America
Here is my narrative of some stories of what it was like growing up as a kid in the 1960's and the 1970's. It was a time of freedom, and we took full advantage of it. I’ll tell you what. I discuss a little about the clothing, friendships, and relationships of that time.

What High School Taught me About Democracy
America was formed as a Republic. Yet, for many decades we were brought up in the notion that the United States is the greatest “Democracy” in the history of the world. I have my own opinions about that. Democracy is “mob rule”. Let’s talk about it from what I learned in my High School.

The New Global Order and How to Survive It
The world is polarized. There are two distinctly different ideologies. One is the traditional conservative ideology. The other is the progressive globalist oligarchy that controls just about everything in the West. The future of the world hangs in the resolution of these two ideologies. We discuss that here.

Stories that Inspired Me

Here are reprints in full text of stories that inspired me, but that are
nearly impossible to find in China. I place them here as sort of a personal library that I can use for inspiration. The reader is welcome to come and enjoy a read or two as well.

Robert Heinlein’s “The Long Watch” – Full Text
What if you were in charge of all the nuclear weapons in the world, and your base Commander checks your political leanings to see if you are willing to conduct a coup d’état. What would you do? Would you go along with the opportunity, or would you be a lone hero?

Kaleidoscope (Full Text) A Story by Ray Bradbury
This is the full text of a short story by Ray Bradbury. It concerns the final moments of a crew of spacemen as they drift about in space helplessly after their space rocket explodes. They know that no one can help them as they await their final moments tumbling through space...

Here There Be Tygers by Ray Bradberry
When I was younger I used to read science fiction stories for pleasure. They filled my minds with adventure and passion. One of my favorite authors was Ray Bradberry and here is a complete reprint of one of the stories that has influenced me to be the man that I am today. Enjoy.

The Long Rain (Full Text) by Ray Bradberry
This is the full text of a most excellent science fiction story. It concerns a group of survivors from a crashed spaceship stranded on a Hellish rainy planet; the tropical cloud-covered Venus. They survive the crash, but have to battle the forces of nature and their own passions.
The Fog Horn (Full Text) by Ray Bradbury
Here is a story about the emotions of being the last of your kind. This story is one that influenced me when I was a young boy in the 1970’s and continues to haunt me to this day. All of us are human. We all feel emotions and passions. They drive us to accomplish or destroy. It’s our choice.

The Rocket (Full Text) A Story by Ray Bradbury
This is a nice short story about a poor man who dreamed about flying into space. No matter how hard he worked, and no matter how much he saved, he was never able to provide for that dream. Then one day, when he was asked to scrap a test rocket, a thought came to mind...

Dark They Were and Golden Eyed (Full Text) by Ray Bradbury
This is the complete short story by Ray Bradbury. It is a story about change and adaptation. I first read this story in my teens and it influenced me to live the life that I am currently living. It is a great read.

A Sound of Thunder (Full Text) A Story by Ray Bradbury
This is the full text of the great time-travel story by Ray Bradbury. Here, a time-travel machine is used to send people back in time to shoot a dinosaur. However, something goes wrong. What would you do? It’s a classic story and well worth a read again.

The April Witch (Full Text) by Ray Bradbury
This is a story written by Ray Bradbury that describes what might happen when a young teenaged girl has the power to enter the body of another person. What if, forbidden to experience love and relationships with “normal” people, she uses magic to experience forbidden pleasures...
The Last Night of the World (Full Text) by Ray Bradbury
What would you do if you knew that today would be your last day alive? How would you spend it? Would you go running in the streets hysterically? Would you spend it quietly with loved ones? Would you play games on the computer, or watch television? Well, here is a story that explores this interesting situation.

The Flying Machine (Full Text) by Ray Bradbury
One of the most common questions that people ask me is why won't the government tell the people about the existence of extraterrestrials. Well, this story is the best reason that I can think of. This is a story by Ray Bradbury and it is called "The Flying Machine".

October 2026: The Million-Year Picnic (Full Text) by Ray Bradbury
Here is the full story of a man and his family that manages to escape from the madness on Earth. They escape and make their way to Mars to start anew. This is their story, and maybe ours in the near future.

All Summer in a Day (Full Text) by Ray Bradbury
This story takes place in a school room on Venus. Not the Venus that we know, but a wet and rainy Venus. It is a world with constant rain with downpours that lasts for years. However, once every seven years, the sun comes out, and when it comes out the children can see what it is like... or not...

The Smile (Full Text) by Ray Bradbury
This story takes place where the United States lies in ruin. The people behave as animals; rats that scurry in/out of the ruined buildings and avoid the radiation and biological contamination. The survivors of Armageddon truly resent their past; the people who laid their world to waste. Only a single smile remains.
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