

## Side 1

CHARLIE. Yes—your research assistant—that was a good joke— but—.

FROGGY. It all depends on my approach; the right approach? That's it.

CHARLIE. Yes. . . . Still—.

FROGGY. Wot.

CHARLIE. I should have stayed with Mary, at the hospital. When a man's wife is dying, he belongs with her, not—not in Georgia.

FROGGY. We'll only be 'ere three days.

CHARLIE. Still—with only six months left. Six months. Before she—.

FROGGY. Now, now. Doctors 've been wrong before. Besides which, Mary wanted yer to come 'ere with me, you know that. Fairly begged me to take yer, she did.

CHARLIE. Yes. And so I agreed. But—.

FROGGY. Yes, and she was right, too, if I do say it. The way you were 'angin' about the 'ospital, pinin' away. You were lookin' worse than wot she did.

CHARLIE. Still. . . .

FROGGY. She was worried for yer.

CHARLIE. Hm. . . .

FROGGY. She was. I could see it in 'er eyes.

CHARLIE. (*A great sigh.*) Oh, Froggy.

FROGGY. Wot.

CHARLIE. I don't think worry was what you saw in Mary's eyes.

FROGGY. Wot? 'Course it was.

CHARLIE. Oh, Froggy. For someone I see so little, you're such a good friend, I—. I'm so bad at talking to people. But I—I think you ought to know. Mary—Mary doesn't like me, very much.

FROGGY. Go on. (*"Pull the other."*)

CHARLIE. No, no. The fact is, she finds me boring.

FROGGY. No.

CHARLIE. Yes. Yes. (*Pause.*) Yes. (*Pause.*) That's why she wanted me to go away, you see. She simply finds me shatteringly, profoundly—boring.

FROGGY. Now, why would she think that, eh?

CHARLIE. Oh, because I am. I know it. There I've sat behind

my grey little proofreader's desk for twenty-seven years, now—. I sometimes wonder whether a science-fiction magazine even *needs* a proofreader. Does anyone really care whether there is one K or two in "Klatu, barada, nikto"? No, no, I'm boring, all right. I've often wondered—how does one acquire personality? What must it be like, to be able to tell a funny story? To arouse laughter. Anger. Respect. To be thought—wise? How must it be?

FROGGY. You were a good officer.

CHARLIE. Not much of a trick in peacetime.

FROGGY. Well, we can't always 'ave wars, yer know. You would've faced enemy fire with the best if you'd 'ad to.

CHARLIE. That is something I shall always wonder.

FROGGY. Well, don't wonder. And don't wonder about Mary, either. I don't know 'er very well, but I know that a looker like wot she is, she's 'ad 'er chances. She could've cast 'er eye on some other bloke, but she never 'as, now, 'as she? (*No answer.*) Eh? (*Pause.*) 'As she?

CHARLIE. (*Who hadn't intended to admit this.*) Oh. . . .

FROGGY. Naaow.

CHARLIE. Yes. . . .

FROGGY. All right, all right. You've caught 'er flirtin' with some bloke, is that it? Caught 'er makin' eyes at some bloke?

CHARLIE. Yes. . . .

FROGGY. Where was it?

CHARLIE. The shower. . . .