

# Ferro-Human Future History

## Federation:

"**Omnilingual**" -- as archeologists excavate the ruins of Martian civilization, how can they hope to decipher its written records without a Rosetta stone? (This story, by the way, fits into the Paratime historical framework in regard to the Martians).

"**Naudsonce**" - how can you make successful contact with the people of an alien planet, when neither side can manage to grapple with the other's language?

"**Oomphel in the Sky**" - the Terrans have tried to get along with the Kwannons; but are inadvertently knocking the foundations out from under their religion...

"**Graveyard of Dreams**" is an alternate version of Cosmic Computer (a.k.a. Junkyard Planet), providing more information about the System States Alliance and its part in the downfall of the Federation.

"**When in the Course** -" provides our only glimpse of Freya, mentioned only in passing in other stories (Paula Quinton in Uller Uprising is of Freyan ancestry). See also Piper's novel Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen for a longer, very similar version of this story.

## Empire

"**The Edge of the Knife**" predates the founding of the Federation, let alone the First Empire, but fits into this collection quite nicely. Professor Chalmers' memory occasionally works both ways; teaching his Modern History IV class in 1973, he begins drawing a comparison to an assassination that will not happen for another two months. (He once tried to get a copy of Rise and Decline of the System States from the college library before remembering that it wouldn't be published until the 28th century.) He always meticulously records his memories of the future, but can't control when they'll crop up, something that's beginning to endanger him.

"**A Slave Is a Slave**" takes place during the early years of the first Empire: the annexation of Aditya, a culture in which everyone is either a Lord-Master, or a slave. Into this society, the Empire has sent Count Erskyll, a young radical who for his first proconsulate assignment was sent to this backwater, where he couldn't possibly do much harm.



"**Ministry of Disturbance**" follows His Imperial Majesty, Paul XXII through what, at first, appears to be a typical, mind-bogglingly dull day of routine reigning. (His consort has a day full of recording greetings for flower festivals across the galaxy to get through, and crazy old Harv Dorflay has uncovered yet another imaginary conspiracy against Paul's life.) "Routine", in fact, is the watchword for the empire of 2936 A.E.: all threats to the Empire's security are from within rather than without. Paul, in fact, is delighted at any sparks of energy and interest in his apathetic subjects. But what can he do? And is he as safe as he believes?

"**The Return**" was co-written by John J. McGuire. Like Burroughs' *Lost Continent*, this is a tale of civilized men exploring a continent ruined by war 200 years before - but this continent is North America, not Europe. This story focuses on the Fort Ridgeway team's first contact with the people of the Toon while seeking the microfilm records of the Carnegie Library, and like other Piper first contact stories, the mystery is to find out what makes these people tick - but here, both sides of that problem are presented.

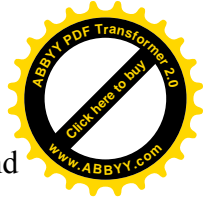
"**The Keeper**", like uncounted generations before him, lives in a small house on a backwater planet where an ice age is coming on, protecting the Crown whose history none now remember. (He's a poor man - the Crown is his trust, not his treasury.) To him, the days when there were no woods but great buildings and many starships is almost a fairy tale - he and his people have forgotten that Earth was the first of humanity's worlds. But others remember, and have at last sought him out.

## Paratime

"**He Walked Around the Horses**" is Piper's first paratime story, and doesn't directly fit with the other stories collected in this book. This novelette was first published in April of 1948, and is the story of a British envoy to the court of Austria who vanished while en route from Vienna to Hamburg in 1809. The story is cleverly told as a series of statements from witnesses as being reported by the Minister of Police.

"**Police Operation**", the first proper Paratime Police story, introduces Tortha Karf, chief of the Paratime Police, and his assistant Verkan Vall. How do you cover up, in the 1950s USA, the appearance of a Venusian nighthound?

"**Last Enemy**" introduces Hadron Dalla, a First Level psychologist working undercover on a Second Level timeline, who inadvertently turns the political structure of that civilization on its ear...



**"Time Crime"** introduces Hadron Dalla, a First Level psychologist working undercover on a Second Level timeline, who inadvertently turns the political structure of that civilization on its ear...

**"Temple Trouble"** , Transtemporal Mining Corporation runs into trouble with their uranium franchise among the Hulgun. The temples of Yat-Zar on that timeline, which they operate as a cover, have suddenly acquired a competing religion...