



THE 4-D
DOODLER

By Ralph Waldeyer

Datum

T H E 4 - D D O O D L E R

B y R a l p h W a l d e y e r

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Preface

Flatland is a romance of people living in a two-dimensional world. **F**In this story, one of the Flatlanders dared to explore a world below and a world above their flat “universe”.

But in *The 4-D Doodler*, a three-dimensioned being —like all of us— is pulled to a four-dimensioned world, but only a part of him goes to the fourth dimension; so he is trapped between the third and the fourth dimension.

The adventurers in both books are some kind of dimensional-travelers, but with the exception that here, the author —Ralph Waldeyer— points to the possibility that moving from one dimension toward another is not necessarily quantized. That is, it is possible to live in a n -dimension space and in a $n + 1$ -dimension space simultaneously, only that different “regions” of the body are not in the same dimension at the same time.

Waldeyer offers an interesting possibility that maybe Edwin Abbott —the author of *Flatland*— did not suspect: what if A. Square —the main character of *Flatland*— instead of being lifted to the Spaceland “in whole” was lifted just “a part” of him? This is exactly what happened to Professor Gault when Harper —his assistant— took a two dimensional cutout of him and “jackknifed” the paper cut placing him (by some sort of fourth dimension doodling) in the third and fourth dimension simultaneously.

E. Pérez



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The 4-D Doodler

“Do you believe, Professor Gault, that this four dimensional plane contains life-intelligent life?”

At the question, Gault laughed shortly. “You have been reading pseudo-science, Dr. Pillbot,” he twitted. “I realize that as a psychiatrist, you are interested in minds, in living beings, rather than in dimensional planes. But I fear you will find no minds to study in the fourth dimension. There aren’t any there!”

Professor Gault paused, peered from beneath bushy white brows out over the laboratory. To his near sighted eyes the blurred figure of Harper, his young assistant, seemed busily at work over his mathematical charts. Gault hoped sourly that the young man was actually working and not just drawing more of his absurd, senseless designs amidst the mathematical computations....

“Your proof,” Dr. Pillbot broke into his thoughts insistently, “is purely negative, Professor! How can you know there are no beings in the fourth dimension, unless you actually enter this realm, to see for yourself?”

Professor Gault stared at the fat, puffy face of his visitor, and snorted loudly.

“I am afraid, Pillbot, you do not comprehend the impossibility of such a passage. We can not possibly break from the confines of our three dimensional world. Here, let me explain by a simple illustration.”

Gault took up a book, held it so that a shadow fell onto the surface of the desk.

“That shadow,” he said, “is two dimensional, has length and breadth, but no thickness. Now in order to enter the third dimension, our plane, the shadow would have to bulge out in some way, into the dimension of thickness an obvious impossibility. Similarly, we can not enter the fourth dimension. Do you see?”

“No!” retorted Pillbot with some heat. “In the first place, we are not two dimensional shadows, and-why, what is the matter?”

Professor Gault’s lanky form had stiffened, his near sighted eyes glaring out over the laboratory to the rear of Pillbot. The psychiatrist wheeled around, followed his host’s gaze.

It was Harper. That young man’s antics drew an amazed grunt from Pillbot. He was describing peculiar motions in the air with his pencil. Circles, whorls, angles, abrupt jabs forward. He bent over the paper on the desk, made a few sweeps of the pencil, then the pencil rose again into the air to describe more erratic motions. Harper himself seemed in a trance.

Suddenly Pillbot gave a stifled gasp. It seemed to him that Harper’s arm vanished at the elbow as it stabbed forward, then reappeared. Once again the phenomenon happened.

Pillbot blinked rapidly, rubbed his eyes. It must have been illusion, he decided. It was too ... unlikely....

“Harper!” Gault’s voice was like the snapping of a steel trap.

Startled, Harper came to with a jerk. Seeing he was being watched, he flushed redly, then bent over his charts again. An apologetic murmur floated from his desk.

“What was he doing?” Pillbot asked puzzledly.

“Doodling!” Gault spat out the word disgustedly.

“Doodling?” echoed the psychiatrist. “Why that is a slang term we use in psychiatry, to describe the absent-minded scrawls and designs people make while their attention is elsewhere occupied. An overflow of the unconscious mind, we call it. Many famous people are ‘doodlers.’ Their doodles often are a sign of special ability—”

“Exactly!” snapped Gault. “It shows a special ability to waste time. And Harper has become worse since I hired him to do some of my mathematical work. Some influence in this laboratory—I blush to confess—seems to bring it on. ‘Four dimensional doodling’ we call it, because, as you saw, he doesn’t confine it to the surface of the paper!”

Pillbot looked startled. “By jove,” he cried. “I believe you’ve hit on something new to psychiatry. This young man may have some unknown faculty of mind—an instinctive perception of the fourth dimension. Just as some people have an unerring sense of direction, so perhaps Harper

has a sense of—of a fourth direction—the fourth dimension! I should like to examine some of his 'doodles'.”

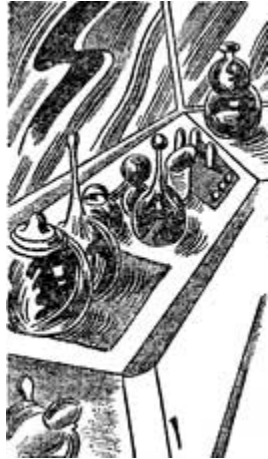


FIG. 1: Some influence in this laboratory—I blush to confess—seems to bring it on.

Harper looked up in alarm as his crusty tempered employer appeared, followed by the stout figure of Pillbot. He rose and stood aside unassumingly, as Pillbot bent over the scrawls on his charts, clucking interestedly.

Harper flickered a worried glance over to the corner. He hoped they wouldn't notice his stress-analyzing clay model standing there. It looked like a futurist's nightmare, with angles, curves and knobs stuck out at all angles. Professor Gault might not understand....

For one of his retiring temperament, Harper was aiming high.

There was a standing award of \$50,000 for the lucky mathematician who would solve the mystery of the “stress-barrier” encountered by skyscrapers as they were built up toward the 150 story mark. At this height, they encountered stress and strains which mathematical computations and engineering designs had been unable to solve. Harper believed the “stress-barrier” was due to an undetected space-bending close to the earth's surface, a bending of space greater than ever provided for in the prediction of Einstein. And if he was right, and could win that award, then there might be wedding bells, and a little bungalow with Judith....

Harper's greatest fear was that he would do something to annoy Gault into firing him, thus depriving him of the privilege of using the mathematical charts and computing machines available in the laboratory. Right now, he hoped Gault wouldn't notice that statue in the corner—

“What's that!”

Harper's heart leaped. The Professor was glaring at the statue, as though it were something the cat brought in.

Pillbot looked up from examination of the “doodles” and followed Gault over to the futuristic statuary.

As Gault made strangled noises, Pillbot stared interestedly. “Why—its like some of the designs in his doodling,” he exclaimed.

“And made with some of my best modeling clay for reproducing geometric solids!” rasped Gault. He wheeled upon Harper.

“Get that thing out of here! I won’t stand for such rot in this laboratory. Throw it into the hall for the janitor!”

“Ye-yessir,” said Harper, gulping. He took hold of the statue, pulled at it.

“It—it won’t budge,” he exclaimed amazedly.

“Eh? Won’t move? It’s not heavy, is it?” demanded the Professor.

“No—about thirty pounds, but it wont move!”

Gault took hold of one of the angles of the thing, jerked at it savagely. He gave it up with an oath, returned to Harper’s desk muttering.

Harper suddenly noticed the top portion of the statue. It didn’t seem to be all there! He was positive there had been another section on top, shooting off at an angle, representing a problem in tangential stress. What had happened to that top section?

He would figure that out later, when the occasion was more propitious. Right now, he realized that only the presence of Dr. Pillbot prevented Gault from firing him. He cast an apprehensive glance toward his employer.

With trepidation, he saw Gault reach for something projecting from behind a bench. Gault pulled it out, held it dangling before him. A strangled exclamation of wrath came from him. His long nose pointed accusingly toward Harper, like a finger pointing out a criminal.

“I was afraid of that!” he grated. “Cutting paper dolls!” Gault was holding up a large paper cutout of a human figure—a long, rangy man.

“This is the last straw,” Gault went on, his voice rising. “I have stood enough—”

“It—it wasn’t me, sir,” Harper cried quickly, with visions of his job and \$50,000 vanishing. “It was your ten year old nephew, Rudolph, when he was here yesterday. He cut it out, said it looked like—like his uncle—”

Harper stopped as Gault seemed about to explode. Then the mathematician subsided, a malicious expression crept over his face.

“H-m-m,” he said. “Might be just what I need to explain things to Dr. Pillbot.”

“I shall take this matter before the Psychiatric Society,” Pillbot was saying excitedly. “Undoubtedly you have some strange faculty—an instinctive perception of four dimensional laws ... what was that, Professor?”

“I said if you will step over to this desk I will explain to you in elementary terms—very elementary and easy to understand—why you will never be able to study four dimensional beings—if any exist!” Gault’s voice was tinged with sarcasm.

Pillbot came over, followed by Harper, who was interested in any explanations about the fourth dimension—even elementary ones....

Gault, with a glint in his eye, pressed the paper figure flatly on the surface of Harper’s desk.

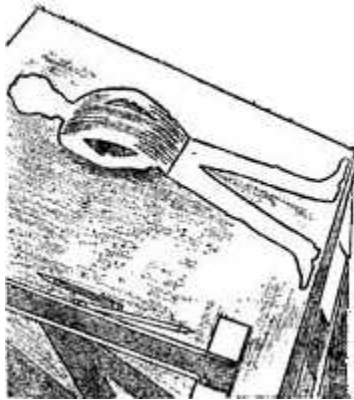


FIG. 2: Harper grasped the paper cutout, and bent it, “jackknifed” it, creasing it firmly in the middle.

“This paper man, we will say, represents a two dimensional creature. We lay him flatly against the desk, which represents his world—Flatland, we mathematicians call it. Mr. Flatlander can’t see into our world. He can see only along the flat plane of his own world. To see us, for instance, he would have to look up, which is the third dimension, a direction inconceivable to him. Now, Doctor, are you beginning to understand why we can never see four dimensional beings?”

Pillbot frowned thoughtfully, then looked up. “And what about the viewpoint of the four dimensioners themselves—what would prevent them from seeing us?”

Harper hardly heard the Professor’s snort of disgust. This two dimensional cutout in “Flatland” fascinated him. An idea occurred to him. Now, just supposing the....

As Gault and Pillbot argued, Harper grasped the paper cutout, and bent it, “jackknifed” it, creasing it firmly in the middle. Then he raised the upper half so that it rose vertically from the desk, while the lower half was still pressed flatly against the desk surface.



FIG. 3: Professor Gault had vanished from the waist up.

“Now,” he murmured to himself, “the Flatlander would appear to his fellows to have vanished from the waist up, because from the waist up he is bent into the third dimension ... so far as they are concerned...”

“E-e-e-e-e!”

At the wavering scream, Harper looked up quickly. Pillbot was staring frozenly in front of him, toward the floor. Harper followed his glance—and saw it.

Professor Gault had vanished from the waist up.

His lower body still stood before Pillbot, swaying slightly, but the upper body was unconditionally missing. From the large feet planted solidly on the floor, long

legs rose majestically, terminating in slim, angular hips—and from thence vanished abruptly into nothingness. It was as though the upper body had been sheared away, neatly and precisely, at the waist.

Pillbot stared from the visible portion of Gault to slack-jawed Harper and back again, sweat splashing from his puffy face.

“Why, why really my dear fellow,” he quavered, addressing the half-figure. “This—this is a bit rude of you, vanishing in the midst of my sentence. I—I trust you will—ah, return at once!” Then, as the full import of the phenomenon penetrated to his understanding, his eyes became glazed and he backed away.

The portion of Professor Gault addressed failed to give any indication it had heard the remonstrance. Slowly, the legs began to feel their way, like a blind man, about the floor.

Harper stared wildly, white showing around his pale blue irises.

“No!” he bleated. “The Professor didn’t do it himself—I caused it to happen. I bent the paper cutout, and—and Something saw me do it, and imitated me by bending the Professor into the fourth dimension!” Harper moaned faintly, wringing his hands.

Pillbot at the moment got little satisfaction from this demonstration of his point about four dimensional life. He glanced fearfully at the half-figure.

“You—you mean to say,” he quailed, “that we are under scrutiny by some Being of the fourth dimension?”

“That’s it,” replied Harper with a whinny. “I—I know it, I can feel it. It became aware of our three dimensional life in some way, and its attention is now concentrated on the laboratory!” He wrung his hands. “I just know something else terrible is going to happen!” He backed away quickly as the occupied pair of pants moved toward him.

His retreat was halted by his desk, upon which reposed two large California oranges, an inevitable accompaniment to Harper’s lunch. To him, orange juice was a potent, revivifying drink. Now he automatically reached for one of the oranges, as a more hardy individual might reach for a whisky and soda in a moment of mental shock.

His eyes wide on the shuffling approach of Gault’s underpinnings, Harper nervously dug sharp fingernails into the orange, tore off large chunks of skin.

A sudden blur seen from the corner of his eyes pulled his gaze back to the desk. The other orange had vanished.

Phwup!

It dropped to the floor before Harper, but now it was a squashy mess, the insides standing out like petals, the juice running from it.

The other orange slipped from Harper’s nerveless fingers, rolled along the desk top. Harper pounced on the squashy thing on the floor, feverishly pushed back the projecting insides, closely examined it. He looked up wide-eyed at Pillbot.

“Turned inside out,” he gasped hoarsely, “without breaking its skin!”

Pillbot’s expression indicated that the scientific attitude was slowly replacing his former fright. He snapped his fingers.

“Imitation again!” he said, half to himself. He looked at Harper. “When you bent the paper figure this—this fourth dimensional entity imitated your action by bending the Professor. Now, as you started to peel the orange, your action was again imitated—in a four dimensional manner—by this entity turning the other orange inside out.”

His voice dropped, as he muttered, “Imitateness—the mark of a mind of low evolutionary order, or of ...” his words faded off, his expression thoughtful.

More white showed around Harper’s eyes. “You—you mean I am being specially watched by this Being—that He—It—imitates everything I do...?”

“That’s it,” clipped Pillbot. “Because you possess this strange perception of Its realm the Being has been especially attracted to you, imitates whatever you do, but in a four dimensional manner. A Being of inexplicable powers and prerogatives, with weird power over matter, but with a mentality that is either very primitive, or—”

Harper leaped into the air with a yell, as Professor Gault’s abbreviated body sidled up to him from behind. As he leaped, the inside out orange flew out of his grasp.

“I just know,” he quavered, “that Professor Gault wants me to do something, is probably barking orders at me from that other dimension—oh dear, I’ve dropped the orange on the Professor’s—where his stomach should be!”

The squashy orange had landed on the area of Gault that was the line of demarkation between his visible and invisible portions—the area that his stomach would occupy normally. It rested there in plain sight of the two startled men.

“I—I’d better remove it,” said Harper weakly. He moved with a dreadful compulsion toward the swaying half-figure, one slender hand extended tremblingly toward the inverted orange.

Abruptly, the orange vanished. Harper halted like he’d run into a brick wall. Staring blankly ahead, he put his hands to his stomach, moaning faintly.

“What’s the matter?” cried Pillbot.

“The orange—it’s in my—stomach!”

“See, what did I tell you,” exulted Pillbot. “Another act of imitateness. It saw you drop the orange on Gault’s—where his stomach should be, and

imitated by putting the orange in your stomach. It proves I'm right about the Being–glug!” With a loud belch, Pillbot broke off. He stared blankly at Harper, then his hands slowly came up to clutch at his stomach.

Harper looked quickly at the desk top.

“The other orange,” he gasped. “It’s gone!”

“Into–my–stomach!” groaned Pillbot. “Be–be careful what you do! My God, don’t do anything. Don’t even think. This–this four dimensional creature will surely imitate whatever you do in some weird manner.”

Rubbing his stomach, Pillbot glanced about at the various articles of furniture. He blanched. “I wouldn’t want any of that stuff inside of me,” he yammered.

Harper flicked a despairing glance at the half-body, now gliding along in the vicinity of the paper cutout.

“We–we must do something to get the Professor back,” he said worriedly.

He thought incongruously of a restaurant where he used to order lemon pie–and invariably get apple. Finally he found that he could get lemon by ordering peach. Now the problem was, what did he have to “order” to get his employer extricated from being stuck between dimensions, like a pig under a fence? Anything he did would be imitated in a manner that might prove tragic.

The upright portion of the cutout was leaning over backward, the head drooping down like a wilted flower, as the tension at the crease slowly lessened.

Gathering together what resolution he could, Harper determined to take the bull by the horns. He would get the Professor returned by pressing the upper portion of the cutout flatly onto the desk surface. With trembling hands, he pressed down on it–then sprang back with a muffled yell.

Three feet above the half-body, the Professor’s head had flashed into visibility.

“You only pressed the head onto the desk,” said Pillbot disgustedly, “so the Being only impressed Galt’s head back into the laboratory. Now press down the rest of the body.”

The Professor's head, suspended above the body, glared about, affixed Harper with a smouldering glance. The mouth moved rapidly, but no words came.

"Professor, I can't hear you," whimpered Harper. "Your lungs and vocal cords are in the other dimension. Here, I'll have you completely returned." He reached a hand toward the cutout, the torso of which still bulged upward from the desk.

Gault's head wagged in vigorous negation of Harper's contemplated act. His mouth moved in what, if audible, would have been clipped, burning accents.

Harper drew back his hand as if he had touched a red hot poker. "The Professor doesn't want me to touch the cutout," he said helplessly.

Gault's head hovered over the cutout like a gaunt moon. It swooped down toward the paper figure, seemed to be studying its position on the desk closely. Pillbot watched him for a sign of his intentions or wishes.

Harper wandered distractedly over toward the high wall bench. He had it! He would distract the attention of the Entity from Gault by making another cutout. He would then experiment with that second one, without endangering Gault. He'd be careful not to make this one thin and tall, so as not to resemble the Professor in outline. Perhaps with it, he could trick the Entity into releasing the missing part of Gault's body...

He scraped in the bench drawer for the scissors, and started to sheer through a large stiff piece of paper.

A moment later he looked up as Pillbot walked over.

"Gault has some reason for not wanting his silhouette touched," he said. "Can't quite make out his lip movements, but he seems afraid some permanent mark may be left on him by his return. He wants time to figure out—why, what are you doing?"



FIG. 4: Pillbot stared from the visible portion of Gault to slack-jawed Harper and back again, sweat splashing from his puffy face.

“I’ve made another cutout for experiment,” explained Harper. “And this one doesn’t look like the Professor, isn’t tall and thin. See–?” He lifted the second cutout from the flat surface of the bench, held it suspended before him.

“This one is short and fat–” Harper halted abruptly, the breath whooshing from his lungs.

There was no use talking to thin air. Pillbot had been whisked into nothingness. Where the portly figure of the eminent psychiatrist had stood was now nothing, not even a half man.

Too late, Harper realized that when he had lifted the paper figure from the surface of the bench, the Entity had imitated him by “lifting” Pillbot into the fourth dimension. Belatedly, he knew that the cutout which he held dangling, resembled Pillbot in outline.

Harper dashed back and forth in little rushes, carrying the paper figure. He dared not put it down, for fear of seeing some segment of Pillbot flash back. He did not know what to do with it.

Finally he compromised by suspending it to a low hanging chandelier, where it dangled swaying in the slight air currents.

Gault was watching his assistant’s antics with a bleak expression that changed to sardonic satisfaction as he realized Pillbot was in a predicament like his—only more so. Abruptly he frowned, staring ahead, and Harper guessed that Pillbot had located Gault’s torso in the other realm, was nudging him to indicate the fact.

Suddenly Harper knew that he himself must enter this fourth dimensional realm. That strange instinct told him the solution to everything was there—somewhat as a woman’s intuition impels her to act in a certain way, without knowing why.

How to get there? Another paper cutout? He glanced toward the Professor—the occupied trousers, and swimming above it, the man’s head. The head was watching him, the expression savage.

No, there must be no more cutouts, Harper decided. While the four dimensional entity distinguished between the outlines of a thin silhouette and a fat one, something in between, like Harper’s form, would be testing It too far.

He, Harper would take the place of his own cutout!

Gault's head reared up, glared fixedly at his assistant as the young man swung his legs onto the desk, then lay down flat. A moment he lay there, in "Flatland"—then leaped to his feet.

It was as though he had leaped into a different world. He was no longer in the laboratory. He wasn't on any, floor at all, as far as he could make out. His feet rested on nothing—and yet there was some sort of tension under him—like the surface tension of water.

He was—he suddenly knew it—standing on a segment of warped space! There was a spacial strain here that acted as a solid beneath him!

Harper looked "up"—that is, overhead. There was nothing there but vast stretches of emptiness—at first. Then he saw that this emptiness was lined and laced with filmy striations, like cellophane. They bore a strange resemblance to his "doodlings," as though that strange faculty of his enabled him to somehow perceive this place of the fourth dimension. And instinctively Harper knew that these lacings were the boundaries of a vast enclosure—a four dimensional enclosure, the "walls" of which consisted of joined and meshed space-warps.

Abruptly he became aware of movement. He became aware of solidity there above him. And the solidity was in motion.

Harper knew he was gazing upon a being of the fourth dimension—doubtless the Entity that had caused the phenomena in the laboratory, which had snatched him into the fourth dimension, and was even now observing him with its four dimensional sight! There was a shape above him that strained his eyes, gave hint of Form just beyond his comprehension.

Harper hardly noticed that Pillbot was beside him, shaking him. He had suddenly grasped a fundamental law of spacial stresses, and he whipped out a pad and pencil, began scribbling down the mathematical formula of these laws. He began to see now why skyscrapers encountered the "stress-barrier" at a certain height. He understood it just as a person of innate musical ability, hearing music for the first time, would understand the laws of that music.

"Look out, It's moving, descending!" Pillbot was yelling into his ear. "It is about to act. Became active the moment you got here. How did you induce it to bring you here?"

"Huh?" Harper looked up from his scribbling. "Oh." Harper explained quickly how he had induced the Being to act on himself.

“That’s it!” cried Pillbot hoarsely. “You switched the pattern of imitation on It—tricked It into bringing you here. That’s what made it angry—”

“Angry?” Harper almost dropped his pad, clutched at Pillbot as there was a sudden upheaval of the invisible tension—surface on which they stood. A violent shake sprawled them on the “ground” and now Harper saw the torso of Gault, a few feet away, apparently hovering above the surface.

“Yes, angry!” Pillbot was pale. “As long as you merely gave it something to imitate it was pacified. But now it recognizes opposition, an effort to outwit it due to your switching the pattern of imitation. Its condition is dangerous—it’s bound to react violently. We have to get out of here. You must know some way—”

Harper again scribbled some figures on his pad. “As soon as I’ve worked out this formula—”

Pillbot shook him frantically. “Can’t you understand! This Creature is a mental patient of a violent type. We are in a fourth dimensional insane asylum!” Pillbot gazed upward fearfully at a descending mass. “The pattern of its action fits perfectly,” he went on. “Some violent type of insanity, combined with delusions of grandeur. Any slightest opposition will cause a spasm of fury. It recognizes such opposition in the way you tricked it into bringing you here. At first I thought it was a primitive mentality, but now I know it is a highly evolved, but insane creature, thinks it’s Napoleon, wants to conquer the three dimensional plane which its attention has been attracted to in some way—”

Harper looked up in surprise. “Does it know about Napoleon?”

“Of course not, you fool!” screamed Pillbot. “It has the Napoleonic complex, identifies itself with some great conqueror of its own realm. And now it’s on the rampage. We have to get out of here—” He clutched at Harper as another upheaval of the surface threw them down.

Rising, Harper put away his pad. His calculations were complete. He could now show engineers how to build high buildings, taking advantage of space stress instead of trying to fight the stress.

For the first time, the danger of their position seemed to penetrate to his consciousness. He looked about—and his eyes rested on a strange familiar projection rising from the invisible floor a few feet away. It was the section of his clay statue that had vanished—vanished because

its peculiar shape had somehow caused it to be warped into the fourth dimension!

Why hadn't he been able to move it—Professor Gault moved about freely.

He and Pillbot went over to it, tried to move it. A slight filmy webwork around the projection caught Harper's eye. Now he knew—the Being had somehow affixed it to the spot as a landmark, so It could locate the laboratory. It must have been this projection that had first attracted the Being's attention to the three dimensional world, since, ordinarily, It would never have noticed the presence of three dimensional life, any more than humans would notice the presence of two dimensional life if such existed!



FIG. 5: Because you possess this strange perception of Its realm the Being has been especially attracted to you, imitates whatever you do, but in a four dimensional manner.

Harper looked up at a bleat from Pillbot. Above them was a sudden furious play of lights and shades. Vast masses seemed shifting in crazy juxtapositions, now descending rapidly toward them.

“Quick,” Harper, now fully aroused, gasped to Pillbot. “Climb down this projection!”

“Climb down it—?”

“Yes, there is a fluid condition of space where it penetrates between the two planes. By hugging its contours you will emerge into the laboratory—I hope!”

Pillbot glanced overhead nervously, then experimentally slid a foot down the projection. The foot vanished. With a cry of relief, Pillbot lowered himself until only head and shoulders were visible. Then that too vanished.

Harper looked up. Some monstrous suggestion of Form was almost upon him. He grasped the projection and just as his head sank out of sight the Form seemed to smash down on him.

Pillbot helped Harper to his feet, from where he had sprawled at the base of the statue, on the laboratory floor.

“Quick,” he gasped. “The Creature will be infuriated now, by our escape from Its realm. A maniacal spasm is sure to follow. We must get Gault back in some way, then leave the laboratory.”

Even as they dashed over toward the abbreviated form of Gault, the laboratory shook. Invisible strains seemed to be bulging the walls inward.

Harper rushed to the desk upon which still reposed the cutout, the section between neck and waist still arched off the surface. As Harper reached toward the cutout to press it flat, Gault’s eyes widened, his mouth opened in a soundless shout of opposition. Harper hesitated.

“Never mind him,” yammered Pillbot. “Press the figure flat!”

Harper pressed it flat.

For an instant the laboratory stopped its ominous vibration. Then the figure of Gault flew through the air, came up against a wall—but it was his complete figure.

“More signs of violence,” cried Pillbot. “But that action won’t appease It—we must get out of here—”

Even as he spoke there was a thunderous crackling and roaring. Harper felt himself flying about, and for an instant of awful vertigo he did not know up from down. Forces seemed to be tearing at him. He felt as though he were a piece of iron being attracted simultaneously in several directions by powerful electro magnets.

There was a flare of colored lights, a deafening detonation—and he felt himself knocked breathless against a wall.

He picked himself up, looked around.

On one side of him was the familiar south wall of the laboratory. To the north, east and west was—open air. He was standing on a section of laboratory flooring that jutted out over empty space from the wall. His desk was a few feet away, right at the edge of the jutting floor. Gault and Pillbot were picking themselves up to one side of the desk.

The pair looked over the edge of the floor, then recoiled, frenziedly hugging the flooring under them.

Harper crawled over, looked over the edge, quickly backed away. Several hundred feet below, the traffic of the city roared!

Gault went over to the door in the one wall, opened it, then stepped back quickly, his face pale.

“The laboratory has been turned inside out!” he shouted. “We are on the outside!”

“We must get away from here,” squalled Pillbot. “Another spasm of the creature will precipitate us into the street!”

Gault forgot his apprehensions long enough to freeze Harper with a glance. “This is all your doing,” he bawled. “You with your absurd doodling, which attracted the attention of some Being of the fourth dimension!” In his anger, he overlooked the fact that he was contradicting his formerly held opinion.

“The laboratory wrecked,” he continued, “and that isn’t all!” He stalked up to the cringing Harper, thrust his face toward him.

“Do you know,” he yelled, “why I didn’t want to be returned hastily—why I didn’t want you to bring me back by flattening out the paper cutout? You dolt, did you ever try to get a crease out of a piece of paper?”

“I—I don’t understand,” murmured Harper.

“That paper doll was creased, wasn’t it?” shouted Gault.

“Once a piece of paper is creased,” he resumed heatedly, “it can’t be perfectly flattened out again. At the crease a thin cross-section continues to bulge—into the third dimension in the case of that paper cutout. Into the fourth dimension in my case! I’m creased too, at the line where I was bent into the fourth dimension! Surely you aren’t blind?”

Harper staggered back as he saw it—a thin, horizontal line of light shining through Gault’s body—across his waistline, through clothes and all.

“I shall have to go through life this way,” Gault snarled, “due to your imbecilic ‘doodling’, your meddling with what you don’t understand. Go about constantly with a slit of daylight showing through me. You’re fired!”

“Gentlemen,” cried Pillbot. “The entity—we must get away. Another spasm will surely follow—”

Harper didn't think so. A few feet away he had noticed something—his statue lying on its side. It was all there, including the portion that had been in the fourth dimension. The Entity's "landmark" was gone. Harper didn't believe It would locate this particular area of the third dimension again.

The scream of a fire siren rose up to them. As a ladder scraped over the projecting floor, Harper fondly felt the pad in his pocket with the formula on it. He wasn't worried now about having been fired. He was seeing visions of a small cottage with Judith....

Of course, he would have to be careful in the future with his "doodling"! He could not again risk attracting the attention of some four dimensional Being—not with Judith to think about!

The End

