

33 Rippon Ave.,
Hillsdale, Mich.,
Feb. 15, 1934.

Dear Dick:-

I haven't answered your letter of Jan. 17th (nor any from anybody else) because I have been putting in literally every minute that I could spare from the job—in fact, have stolen quite a lot of time from the job—to finish this DAMN SKYLARK. Got the second rough draft on paper last night, or rather, about 2 AM this morning, so am mailing the first rough draft herewith.

I think I told you when you were here that this story was so damnably hard to write that I had to make two rough drafts besides my preliminary notes and working outline? Well, maybe that's a break, after all; because after Christmas, and the nice things you said about having another rough draft of one of my stories, I decided to make the first draft, which was going into this little black notebook in rather sketchy form, much more complete and send it to you with my compliments. You will notice that the first half of the story is very incomplete; but you have already read that in the MS, and the last half is quite full. Of course, I have changed it quite a lot in the second rough draft, and will change it still more after Jean gets it into type; but this will give you an idea as to what it is all about.

Now that "Triplanetary" has finally got into print, all restrictions are off as to your disposal of the rough drafts you have of it—do anything or say anything about them you want to. I would like you to keep this Skylark stuff under your hat for a while, however—I am not going to send Forrest his draft until publication has been definitely decided upon—maybe not until publication has been started.

As to your suggestion that I go into social, economic, etc., conditions in the future—you are all wet. Seaton and Crane are not future, but contemporary characters; the whole action of the three Skylarks covers only a year or so. Besides my ideas of future development are handled by the civilizations of other worlds, particularly Norlamin. Second besides, that kind of stuff is not my forte, and I do not like to invade the fields already covered, and better, by Vincent (among others) as you suggest. In fact, I do not like to use even incidents that—although I am afraid that I grazed Merritt pretty closely in one incident—see Saturday, Sept. 17th and next page and let me know what you think. But it is not really plagiarism, as I think you will admit. It is the only logical bait to use for the Intellectuals, and I can't seem to get away from it.

Personally, I think the whole yarn is rotten, not fit to be published. But then, I always do feel that way when a story is done—so, although it certainly is not as good as I thought, or rather, hoped, that it was going to be, it probably isn't quite as bad as I'm afraid it is. It couldn't be! Anyway, this is most emphatically and positively the LAST SKYLARK.

Cordially yours, *Doc*

others have read

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