

Mindsongs: Episode two

Lizards, a girl and a strong-arm television

By **GORDON GRAHAM** and **MICHAEL HOLLETT**
 Copyright Graham-Hollett 1975
 Paul and the blue jay were flying side-by-side. Propelled by thought, they drifted lazily over hills, down through valleys and over the felt green hills again. The scene below them was totally pastoral and peaceful.
 Paul was able to fly effortlessly. Only when his mind wandered did

he begin to lose height. But a few moments of concentrated thought was all he needed to get back up alongside his winged companion.

The bird began to fly higher, towards the glowing sun. "I can give you many answers, Paul," the blue jay said.

Paul followed it higher.
 "Don't push me, but in time I will explain what has been happening to

you; why you have seen so many strange and puzzling sights."

Although Paul was unaware of it, as the two flew the sky began to darken and the air became less pure. Paul's eyes were fixed upon the blue creature, when suddenly its shape was replaced by a yellow-orange flame and black smoke. The sound reached his ears milliseconds later.... "BOOM!"

Paul's eyes darted downwards as the bird's charred body fell from the sky. He saw below him a gray city of bleak skyscrapers. Atop one building was a large anti-aircraft gun. Its barrel was now pointed

towards Paul and before he could react, it fired.

...

Paul's eyes opened and he was aware of the lab technician extracting a needle from his arm. Paul's eyes raced around the familiar laboratory. He closed them and nervously ran his fingers over the starched, coarse sheets of the hospital bed. As he moved his hand across the cloth, the sensation changed dramatically. It felt like satin. His eyes popped open.

"Well, it's about time you woke up."

Paul turned in the direction of the voice; there was a woman laying beside him in the bed. He knew her. "Kathy?"

"Why so surprised?" she asked.
 "What happened? I was in the lab and now I'm here..."

"Don't start that again, please Paul," Kathy said.

He looked around the room; it was her bedroom. He had been here before.

"Really, Paul. What's happened? You've been so mysterious and confused lately. Ever since you did that experiment. Where have you been going?"

"I don't know what's been going on, or the answers to any of your questions. The experiment though, that's the key. That must explain something. It's so good to have

someone to talk with," and he moved towards her in the bed. Only when he put his hand on her side it wasn't soft like it should have been, the way he remembered it. It was rough and scaly.

"CHRRISST!" Paul screamed and leaped from the bed. A giant lizard lay where Kathy had been. He grabbed his clothes and ran out the door, slamming it behind him.

He pulled his clothes on in darkness and then walked shakily away from where he had been.

In the distance he heard laughing from time to time. As he got closer, he saw lights.

When Paul reached the lights and laughter, he found himself at the head of a long corridor. Immediately in front of him was a family scene. There was a man seated in a large easy chair with a stand-up lamp on his right and an end table on his left. A woman sat beside it in a stiff chair. A little boy and girl sat on the floor in front of them with a lovable dog in between. All their eyes were glued on the television that hummed in front of them. This scene was repeated for as far as Paul could see.

The hum of the TV was sporadically interrupted by the group's mechanical laughter.

Paul walked hurriedly past the grouping toward the hallway's unseemend.

A voice called sternly, "Wait a minute." Paul stopped and looked at the television, that had just spoken.

"Me?"
 "Yes. C'mere, sitdown," the TV smiled.

"No thanks," and Paul tried to walk. He couldn't.

"Sit in this chair now!" the TV demanded, and it began to flash pictures of adorable children, grannies, cute dogs and laughing audiences.

"No." But Paul's words lacked conviction.

"Paul Dorey, come, sitdown and watch me for awhile," the television droned hypnotically. Paul could not resist and found himself in an easy chair, laughing with the other people.

Paul watched the TV for hours, and then an announcer appeared on the screen and said creerily, "Paul Dorey, c'mon in."

"In?"
 "C'mon in," the announcer repeated. Two arms came from the sides of the TV, gripped Paul and pulled him into the 24 inch screen.

Images, scattered images. Faces. Kathy. Flying, racing. Black. Flashes of light. Colour. I Love Lucy. People. Spinning...

Paul was seated in an outer office now. Copies of Time, Sports Illustrated and Chatelaine were displayed on the table beside him.

A well-dressed man entered the room from behind a closed door. "Paul Dorey?"

"Yessir," Paul answered.
 "Mr. Dorey, God will see you now. If you'd step this way please."

Next week: Meets God for cocktails and goes to the moon.

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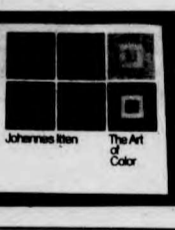
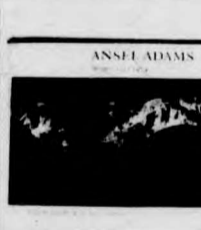
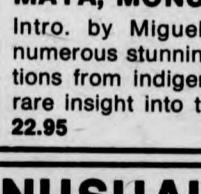
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