

Office. I ought to have the President here, now."

"What is it?" asked Alicia, as they crossed to the "station" door.

"It's Boracao calling the *Princeton*. It's going to be the last rocket-fire of this fireworks exhibition."

He flung on a coat and turned to McKinnon.

"But please watch that responder until I get back!"

And he was off before McKinnon could adjust the phones and take his seat before the instrument.

But as the newcomer pressed the receiver against his ear, he could hear a sound, faint and small, like the tick of a wood-beetle. This sound translated itself into a coherent sequence of dots and dashes, spelling out the call for "Cruiser *Princeton*" and repeating it, impatiently, with a strangely human note of complaint in the petulance of the wood-beetle tickings.

"*Princeton—Princeton*," the call was repeated, almost frantically, it seemed to McKinnon, as he caught up the operator's pencil and began to write on the paper before him. Then came the break and the answer of the far-off cruiser. Something in the crisply stiff "send" of the navy operator reminded the listener of