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Any acknowledgement would be greatly appreciated when referencing or distributing material from this eBook.

Dedications

Dedicated in loving memory of my wonderful parents:-

Konstantinos (Dino) Christopoulos who took me to see my very first science fiction film in the early 1960s, The Man With The X-Ray Eyes (1963)

Rosemary Christopoulos who sat with me after school as I watched on TV episodes the first two doctors of the Doctor Who series and insisted on asking me interminable questions about who was who and what was going on! Thanks mum and dad!

The SCI-FI FILM FIESTA eBook series is intended as a salute to the pioneering work of science fiction film makers. May future generations have the privilege of enjoying your work and never stop wondering....What if?

Dedicated also to you, the reader who appreciates these classic gems from the golden age of sci-fi film-making. It is you who help to keep such films alive for future generations to enjoy.

Other eBooks in the Sci-Fi Film Fiesta series:

Volume 1: “Here Be Monsters”

Volume 2: “Into Space”

Volume 3: “Other Worlds”

Volume 4: “Journeys Within”

Volume 5: “Alien Contact”

Volume 6: “Alien Invasion”

Volume 7: “The End Is Nigh!”

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**SCI-FI FILM FIESTA
Volume 10:
“Supersized & Miniaturized”**

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Introduction

Although this 10th volume in the *Sc-Fi Film Fiesta* eBook series features only a handful of films from the 1950s, they have all managed to achieve a kind of iconic status and a level of cultural significance.

Collectively, the five featured films serve as a metaphor for much of the human condition and are therefore of relevance to audiences of any era. For instance, in the *Amazing Colossal Man*, we cannot help but feel sympathy for the outcast who has become a menace to society through no fault of his own. It is the way in which the wider society views and treats him based on fear and what sets him apart from the norm that is of real importance.

In the case of a film like *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, many a person in our post-industrial world may like the character Scott, find themselves feeling overwhelmed by fate and circumstances which seem to be beyond their control. The individual may well feel small, powerless and insignificant in the face of overwhelming world events and geo-political forces; the pace and extent of technological change; algorithmic dictatorship of our lives; the buffeting delivered by economic instability; the demolishing of long-held certainties; real and manufactured threats to security; invasion of privacy and erosion of personal freedoms.

How then does one deal with this sense of a lack of personal control and of being manipulated by forces that are too overwhelming and powerful? Do we continue to play the role of mindless marionette puppets or simply resign ourselves to disappearing unnoticed into insignificance? Perhaps we might settle for unproductively wallowing in self-loathing and self-pity or destructively misdirecting our anger, blame and frustration toward the rest of humanity and even those closest to us? Or, do we instead act to gain control over our individual and collective destinies by severing the strings by which our political, corporate, media and powerful vested interest group puppet masters control and manipulate us?

As you consider the following films, don't waste time and energy obsessing over low-budgets and primitive special effects or indulge in endless observations about Cold War references and influences. Sure, there was a buck to be made at the drive-in and a new angle to exploit in order to get more bums on cinema seats, but the five films on offer here do in fact have quite a lot to say to us about us and do so in some very interesting ways. Now....enjoy!



The Amazing Colossal Man (1957)

An entertaining sci-fi movie despite the low budget and ordinary special effects

“The Amazing Colossal Man,” an adaptation of the 1928 Homer Eon Flint short novel, “The Nth Man,” is a 1957 science fiction film, directed by Bert I. Gordon and starring Glenn Langan. The film involves a man who grows to over 60 feet tall due to an atomic explosion.

Directed by Bert I. Gordon

Written by Mark Hanna (screenplay); Bert I. Gordon (screenplay) & George Worthing Yates

Produced by Bert I. Gordon (producer); Samuel Z. Arkoff (executive producer); James H. Nicholson (executive producer)

Music by Albert Glasser

Cinematography by Joseph F. Biroc

Film Editing by Ronald Sinclair

Released by American International Pictures

Cast

Glenn Langan: Lt. Col. Glenn Manning

Cathy Downs: Carol Forrest

William Hudson: Dr. Paul Linstrom

Larry Thor: Maj. Eric Coulter, MD
James Seay: Col. Hallock
Frank Jenks: Truck Driver
Russ Bender: Richard Kingman
Hank Patterson: Henry
Jimmy Cross: Sergeant at reception desk
June Jocelyn: Nurse Wilson
Stanley Lachman: Lt. Cline
Harry Raybould: MP at Main Gate
Jean Moorhead: Woman in Bathtub
Scott Peters: Sgt. Lee Carter
Myron Cook: Capt. Thomas
Michael Harris: Police Lt. Keller
Bill Cassady: Lt. Peterson
Dick Nelson: Sgt. Hansen
Edmund Cobb: Dr. McDermott
Paul Hahn: Attendant
Diana Darrin : Hospital Receptionist
Lyn Osborn Sgt. Taylor
Jack Kosslyn: Lieutenant in briefing room
William Hughes: Bombsite Control Officer
Keith Hetherington: Newscaster
John Daheim: Soldier
Judd Holdren: Robert Allen
Harold Miller: Official

***“ATTENTION ALL PERSONNEL! PLUTONIUM EXPLOSION WILL
TAKE PLACE AT TIME ZERO!”***

Time: 2.45 am

Place: Desert Rock Nevada

Event: Test of a new plutonium bomb

Purpose: Soldiers to experience an explosion “under simulated combat conditions.”

(Spoilers follow below.....)

When the “chain reaction cycle did not complete as expected” Lt. Col. Glenn Manning is ordered to keep his men secure in the protective trench, as the bomb will still explode but its timing is unknown.

Suddenly a “light civilian plane” is spotted flying over the “restricted area” and it “appears to be in trouble.” With its spluttering engine in its final death throes, the little plane crash-lands near the bomb test site.

Despite the fact that the “bomb could go off at any second,” Glenn’s main concern is that “there’s a man in that plane.” Contrary to orders, Glenn leaps from the trench in a desperate bid to rescue the pilot. Once he enters the detonation area, the bomb goes off, and Glenn is caught in an atomic blast that bathes him in deadly radiation.

How ironic that an act of bravery is performed to save a life only to be seared and extinguished by an evil cataclysmic act of destruction!

“Things like this just happen. There doesn’t have to be a reason.”

Barely clinging on to life with “third degree burns over almost 100% of his body,” Glenn Manning is treated by specialist, Dr. Paul Linstrom and military scientist, Dr. Eric Coulter at the base hospital. Glenn's fiancée, Carol Forrest waits anxiously while for the medical personnel behind the scenes, all indications seem to point to the likelihood that Glenn will not survive”:

“What kind of chance do you give a man who hasn’t a square inch of skin left on his body” and who “by all the rules...should be dead?”

*God’s will?
Will of the gods?
Fate?
Predestination?
Chance?
Coincidence?
Karma?
God knows!*

The next morning, a nurse discovers something unusual concerning Glenn’s condition. When Linstrom and Coulter are called in to see, they are gob-smacked when confronted by the sight of Glenn's miraculously healed burns.

Questions arise:

- How did Manning manage to survive the explosion?
- How to explain the presence of new skin and the absence of scarring?

Speculation:

“Plutonium may have some unknown quality that was responsible.”

Application:

Perhaps the process Manning went through could hold the key to some kind of “regenerative healing capacity.”

Certainty:

“Something out there is beyond the limits of our knowledge.”

Conclusion:

Not enough data to be sure of anything.

Consequences:

Yet to be determined.

Would-Be Gods

By science the secret power of the gods is released
And wielded by mere mortals with madness unleashed;
While some look up in hope for future promise yet unknown,
A deep despair descends with what they're yet to be shown.

The oafish fist of officialdom crashes down upon Carol Forrest when minion security officer Lt. Cline informs her that she is prohibited from seeing Glenn again - for what else? "Security reasons!" And of course there is the good old Nuremburg-style defence: "I'm only carrying out orders." Two statements that have done the most to rob great swathes of humanity of life and liberty throughout history!

Undeterred, Carol ventures to the hospital where instead of finding her husband, she discovers an empty room. Upon inquiring as to the whereabouts of her husband, Carol is told, "Sorry miss, I've never heard of a colonel Manning."

At the reception desk Carol is met with yet another obstacle when she is informed that "there's no Colonel Manning listed here." Only by taking a peek at the register of names does she learn that her fiancé has been moved to another facility: the army "Nevada Rehabilitation and Research Centre" in Summit, Nevada.

"Washington gave strictest orders to keep the affair quiet."

The thickly layered cake of lies receives another tier of deception when Forrest drives out to the research centre and is met at the gate by a military guard who informs her that there haven't been any patients there "since the war ended." Carol is eventually admitted entry, and is soon informed by the desk sergeant that there is "no colonel Manning registered here."

Wisely trusting no-one, least of all official denials, Carol ventures further into the facility and overhears Linstrom and Coulter discussing Glenn's condition. She learns that he has been breathing rapidly and has been "unconscious since the accident." Carol then lets herself into Glenn's darkened room and faints in horror when confronted by the sight of a giant recumbent version of her fiancé.

HEIGHT: 18 FEET

Linstrom informs Carol that Manning's condition may be the result of his being exposed to the plutonium blast which has caused his old cells to stop dying and his new cells to continue to multiply at an accelerated rate while replacing the damaged cells. With the process being out of balance and the "old cells refusing to die," Manning will "continue to grow until he dies" at a rate of 8 feet per day!

Perchance to dream

In one of the most poignant scenes of the film, we enter into Glenn's dreams as he sleeps. We see him with Carol having a picnic at a time when the Korean War has just begun. Carol says to Glenn "there's no reason for you to volunteer." Try telling that to a man who feels that he knows his duty and is not afraid to stick his neck out and plunge himself into the very maw of danger when the situation demands it of him.

The dream moves on to a battle during the war when a then Lieutenant Manning survived enemy fire whereas two of his comrades were killed. It was as if they were sacrificing their own lives so that he may live! Imagine the guilt and self-blame festering within Manning as his subconscious tries to resolve the unanswerable question of why he should survive while his fellow soldiers should die?

Had events and circumstances somehow conspired to lead Manning toward the very predicament he now finds himself in?

HEIGHT: 22 FEET

Glenn awakens after dreaming about the night he was injured in the plutonium blast. The realisation of what has happened to him gradually grows as he begins to discover the doll-house dimensions of the world he now inhabits. Shock and terror then find expression in a primal scream.

Even the comforting support of a good woman like Carol cannot break through the cumulus clouds of Manning's despondency and cynicism. In response to Carol's optimistic belief that "they'll be able to help you," all Manning can ask is; "What sin could a man commit in a single life-time to bring this on himself?"

So philosophers, priests, therapists and counsellors, what say you all?

God's will?
Will of the gods?
Fate?
Predestination?
Chance?
Coincidence?
Karma?
God knows!

HEIGHT: 30 FEET

What is even harder to find an answer to is the truth! The government and the military have kept the truth of Manning's condition from the media and the public.

One way of doing so is to make the truth itself appear to be so unbelievable and outlandish that it is easily discounted and not given any credence. Take for instance

the 25 sides of beef that was delivered to the Research Center. When the driver asks what it is for, the guard tells him, "It's for him. The giant. The 30 foot one we've got living here."

NEWS BULLETIN
(excerpt)

H. WELLS presenter

What happened to Colonel Manning? "To all accounts he should have died. What's all the mystery for, Washington?"

WEIGHT: 2987 POUNDS

As if to emphasise Manning's predicament, Linstrom orders him moved to a tent as he has outgrown his room. It is as if he has now become some kind of a circus freak sideshow performer or exhibit.

Linstrom later makes an almost callous-sounding but also rather idiotic comment that Manning "should be confined!" How can one confine something that is continually growing?

His rather insensitive nature reveals itself when he keeps insisting that Carol shouldn't remain close to her fiance. How could anyone expect a good woman like her to agree? She points out to Linstrom that Glenn is "all alone except for me."

She understands that there is nothing in the world that is more difficult for a single individual than to bear the burden of a personal tragedy in total isolation without the support of friends and family.

Linstrom also reveals to Carol that Glenn's heart is growing at only half the rate of his body and soon will be unable to support his enormous size with the result that he will die in a matter of days: "All parts are enlarging at the same ratio, except the heart." According to Linstrom, Glenn's mind will go first and then "his heart will literally explode."

All Carol can do is ask that age-old unanswerable question: WHY? WHY DOES IT HAVE TO HAPPEN?

Linstrom can only reply with, "I wish I knew."

God's will?
Will of the gods?
Fate?
Predestination?
Chance?
Coincidence?

***Karma?
God knows!***

When a sergeant brings Manning his dinner in the tent which is now his home, Manning's mental and physical deterioration is now quite evident. Looking at the miniature newspaper headline, he asks, "They call this living?" before succumbing to a fit of coughing that suggests that all is not well with him.

The petrified and hapless sergeant desperately wants to be anywhere else but in the presence of this giant but he finds himself nailed to the spot by his orders and the force of that overpowering physical presence. Manning's comments are directed at both the sergeant and the rest of humanity:

"Why don't you ask me how it feels to be so big? That's right sergeant, I am a circus freak...I think you're the freak! ... I'm not growing- you're shrinking!"

Manning then succumbs to a paroxysm of coughing and clutches his chest in pain.

Later while talking with Carol, Glenn reveals just how bitter and angry he has become. He sees himself as being a monster and declares that the beating of his heart "keeps getting louder and louder." Glenn goes on to recall his yearbook entry in which it was stated with almost cruel irony that he was considered to be "a man most likely to reach the top." Before storming off, Glenn loudly shouts out an appeal to all creation:

"I DON'T WANT TO GROW ANYMORE!"

In a world we have made for ourselves all of us have from time to time wished we could just yell out for things to stop – to stop moving so fast; to stop becoming so complicated; to stop changing so much; to stop growing bigger and bigger beyond our individual power to control.

Even Carol's optimism and support is not strong enough to sustain Glenn. Back in his tent when Carol informs him that she is hopeful concerning the experiments that have been performed on animals, all Glenn can think of doing is wish for death to release him "from this curse." According to him, he is just "a lost cause." Even Carol's appeal to him that she could never leave him "at a time like this" is met with an angry retort:

"GET OUT! LEAVE ME ALONE!"

An individual suddenly has a problem foisted on him; a problem of such magnitude that it becomes too much for one person to deal with. Self-blame, frustration, anger, depression and despondency are all that seem to be left to deal with things. All thoughts are turned inward and become warped while pessimism and negativity are magnified and in fact almost define that individual's entire universe as the individual becomes further alienated from everything and everyone else around them....

The following morning Coulter reports to Linstrom that he may have found a solution to Manning's growth: "...I've got the answer! ... The answer is in the bone marrow!" In order to correct the body's regenerative balance, they will need to "inject sulphur-hydro compounds into the bone marrow" together with high

frequency stimulation of the pituitary gland to reduce Manning's size. Hey, it's scientific-sounding crap that sounds good, OK?

Height: 50 – 55 Feet

“Sooner or later someone's bound to see him”

In the meantime, a bigger problem has arisen with the disappearance of Glenn Manning. A 10-mile-wide search for Manning is soon organised involving helicopters, “Charlie Dog” & “William X-Ray” circling Boulder Dam and Las Vegas. The search fails to find any trace of the by now over 50-foot-tall giant Glenn.

Glenn has now been missing for 15 hours and there is mounting concern that his condition may be affecting his mind. A special syringe filled with a serum from Glenn's bone marrow has been created. It is hoped that it will stop his growth.

“Do you consider Manning dangerous?”

While considering the danger that Manning may pose, Carol states her belief that, “It's not a wild beast you're talking about. He's a human being!” By contrast, Lindstrom believes that Glenn should have been confined with chains and a fence. He tries once again to insist that Carol leaves: “Can't you see the futility of the situation?” Carol tells Lindstrom point blank, “I'm not leaving until I know.”

HEIGHT: 60 FEET

WEIGHT: 18.000 POUNDS

NEWS BULLETIN

(excerpt)

H. WELLS presenter

“Flying saucers of earth have a competitor....Two motorists almost collided with a 60 foot giant! ...” What have you got to top that one?”

Not finding the giant and working out “what to do with him after he's found” are problems that have to be dealt with. It isn't surprising that recourse to a military option is soon settled on. The next morning Colonel Hallock armed with a pointer and a map outlines the operation to locate Manning with the customary “here, here and here” references. The assumption is that “the giant is potentially dangerous” and once he is located the troops are to “stay away from him.”

Lindstrom, Carol and Coulter are in one of the helicopters searching for Manning. They have on board an outlandishly large syringe with which to inject the serum into Manning.

Manning is eventually spotted just outside of Las Vegas. He casually proceeds to wander along the Strip stopping off the Dunes Hotel; the Riviera; the Imperial Palace; the Silver Slipper (where he rips off a giant rotating high heel shoe marquee) and the Tropicana (where the police against orders open fire on him with their rifles.) Here Glenn retaliates by pulling up a palm tree and hurling it at the crowd.

Next stop is at the Sands where he picks up a convertible car and throws it, just before he smashes the sign. Lastly, Glenn breaks up the Pioneer Club Vegas Vic cowboy sign and throws pieces of it at the police.

Manning then leaves Vegas and makes his way towards Boulder Dam. Lindstrom's helicopter manages to land close to Manning and they prepare to give Manning his injection. By this stage it is apparent that his mind has gone.

Linstrom and Coulter grab hold of the syringe and drive the needle into Manning's ankle. Manning pulls out the syringe, and spears Major Coulter through the body with it.

Manning then reaches down and picks up Carol and walks to Boulder Dam. Lindstrom pleads over his megaphone with Manning to put Carol down. As soon as he does so, he is struck with a barrage of gunfire followed by a bazooka blast. Manning falls off the top of the dam into the Colorado River to what seems to be his death.

Points of Interest

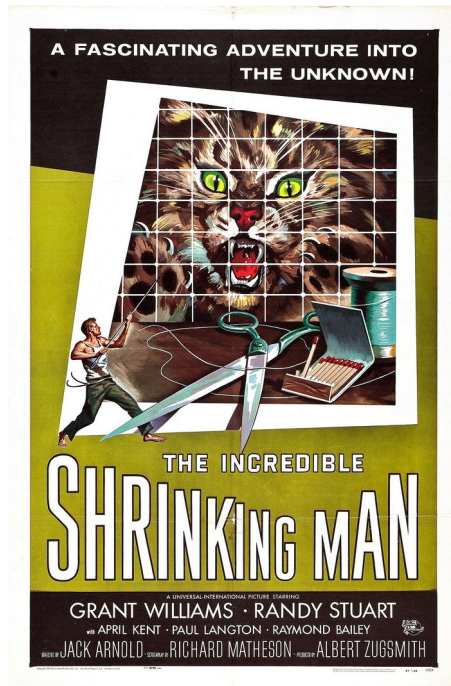
“The Amazing Colossal Man” unfortunately contains quite poorly-crafted and unconvincing special effects even for the time at which it was made. The giant Manning character was just projected onto other film and superimposed with the result that he often looks transparent. On the other hand, the effect of the giant hypodermic needle impaling the major looked quite realistic, brutal and hilarious at the same time!

Another disappointing feature of the film was its very abrupt ending which may have been a result of its low budget or a deficit of ideas?

The strength of the film is centred around Colonel Glenn Manning's dilemma, the irony of which is never lost on him or the audience. His situation is almost a metaphor for much of the human condition when faced with the kinds of suffering that life has to throw at us.

The most powerful scene in “The Amazing Colossal Man” is the one in which the colonel wakes up from his coma for the first time after the plutonium bomb explosion accident. Alone in a dark room in the early hours of the morning, he gradually comes to realise that something is terribly wrong. As the scene fades to black, Manning wails uncontrollably into the darkness of the hell into which he has descended. His reaction is sudden, convincing and emotionally affecting. We cannot help but feel sympathy for this outcast who has now become a menace to society.

The Incredible Shrinking Man (1957)



A thoughtful, philosophical, intelligent and sensitive sci-Fi film

Directed by Jack Arnold
Produced by Albert Zugsmith
Written by Richard Matheson
Screenplay by Richard Matheson, Richard Alan Simmons
Based on The Shrinking Man by Richard Matheson
Music by Irving Getz, Hans J. Salter, Herman Stein
Cinematography: Ellis W. Carter
Edited by Albrecht Joseph
Distributed by Universal-International
Running time: 81 minutes
Budget: \$750,000
Box office: \$(US)1.43 million

Cast

Grant Williams as Scott Carey
Randy Stuart as Louise Carey
April Kent as Clarice
Paul Langton as Charlie Carey

Raymond Bailey as Doctor Thomas Silver
William Schallert as Doctor Arthur Bramson
Frank J. Scannell as Barker
Helene Marshall as Nurse
Diana Darrin as Nurse
Billy Curtis as Midget
Orangey as Butch the cat

“The Incredible Shrinking Man” is a 1957 American black-and-white science fiction film from Universal-International and was adapted for the screen by Richard Matheson from his novel, *The Shrinking Man* (1956)

This film together with “20 Million Miles to Earth,” “Kronos” and “The Monolith Monsters,” all from the same year, left an indelible impression on me for almost six decades.

{Spoilers Follow.....}

“The strange, almost unbelievable story of Robert Scott Carey...”

The film opens with title and credits in white font over a black background, which then dissolve to a swirling fog. We are then presented with a shot of a shore and waves lapping and rolling on to a beach, followed by a shot of a boat bobbing serenely on the ocean “on a very ordinary summer day.”

The story begins with Scott Carey, a businessman on vacation with his wife of six years, Louise resting on the bow of his brother Charlie’s boat off the California coast.

When Louise goes below deck to get Scott a beer, a strange cloud looms towards the boat and engulfs it. After it passes on, Scott discovers that his bare skin is coated with a peculiar glittering reflective substance.

“People just don’t get shorter”

Out Of The Blue

Life-changing events strike out of the blue
Lending old minds new insight
Into certainties long held true,
Of self, of life, of wrong and right,
And why we do what we do.

One morning six months later, a normally 6 foot 1 inch, 190 pound Scott notices that his shirt and trousers seem to be too big. He puts the cause of the looseness of his clothes down to the laundry service, his losing weight and his wife’s cooking.

As the problem persists, Scott visits his family physician, Dr. Arthur Bramson and is informed that his height now measures five-feet and eleven inches. Scott tells the doctor, "I've been six foot, one-inch since I was seventeen." The doctor suggests that his weight loss may be the result of overwork and stress.

A week later Scott notices his bathrobe doesn't appear to fit him properly. Not only does his robe seem as Shakespeare's Angus might say, to "hang loose about him, like a giant's robe / Upon a dwarfish thief," but also when he and Louise kiss, she no longer needs to stand on tiptoe to kiss him.

Scott definitely appears to be getting shorter. However, unlike Macbeth, he is not a thief in possession of what he is not entitled to, but is instead the one who is being systematically robbed of what is rightfully his. We can, therefore, feel sympathy for him.

Bad Fit

My fearful face frowns with worry
From the mirror that reflects my failure
To neatly fill a destiny meant for me,
Bound tightly by form and structure.

Finally, there is proof that Scott is getting smaller when he returns to see Dr. Bramson who has a series of X-rays taken at different times. By comparing these X-Rays, he is able to show that Scott is indeed getting smaller.

In order to uncover the reason behind Scott's diminishing stature, Dr Bramson refers Scott to the California Medical Research Institute. After more tests are conducted, Dr. Thomas Silver tells Scott that he is losing vital chemical elements of Nitrogen, Calcium and Phosphorus.

The doctor discovers something that doesn't belong which he describes as an anti-cancer. The doctor then asks Scott about possible exposure to insecticide. Scott tells him that two months before he had passed a truck on the highway that was spraying trees. Dr Silver then asks him about radioactive exposure. Just as Scott says no, Louise recalls the incident involving the cloud of mist on the boat six months earlier. It is just possible that the two types of exposure had combined to cause Scott's cells to shrink by rearranging his molecular structure.

The implications of Scott's condition for his and Louise' marriage is briefly but poignantly highlighted by Scott's wedding ring falling off his ring finger, just before they drive off.

As Scott continues to shrink, his story makes it into the newspapers and is now of nation-wide interest. The consequences for Scott are dire: he is unable to drive and has to give up his job working for his brother, Charlie who informs Scott that the loss of a major account means that there are no more pay-checks.

Now reduced to being in debt and unemployed, Scott accepts his brother's advice to sell his story to the newspapers. He also begins keeping a journal of his experiences which he intends to publish.

As news of Scott's condition spreads, his house and privacy is besieged by reporters and curious spectators. Louise contacts the telephone company to request an unlisted phone number but they will have to wait for an unlisted line.

Louise soon becomes the recipient of Scott's misdirected anger as he lashes out at her and the strain is beginning to tell on their marriage. Despite the emotional impact on Louise, she does attempt to reassure her husband that the doctors are working on an anti-toxin.

"The anti-toxin, they found it."

Now at 36½ inches in height and weighing in at 52 pounds, Scott is informed that an antidote has been found for his condition. At the Institute, Dr. Silver injects Scott but it turns out that there are no guarantees as to the treatment's success. In fact, there is only a 50/50 chance and that Scott will never return to his former size unless a cure is found. Scott must now stay at the Institute for a week.

The next week it is found that Scott is the same height and weight as the previous week. It seems that the shrinking process has halted. However, re-growing back to Scott's normal size may not be possible. Scott may therefore have to accept the situation.

With his entire world seeming to fall about him, his marriage deteriorating and his sense of self-worth diminishing, Scott flees from the house for the first time since he sold his story:

"I felt puny and absurd, a ludicrous midget. Easy enough to talk of soul and spirit and existential worth, but not when you're three feet tall. I loathed myself, our home, the caricature my life with Lou had become. I had to get out. I had to get away."

Little Man

Hey, little man! How come you're so small
When yesterday you were 10 feet tall?
Did life just get bigger
Or did you get smaller?
They gave your job to some other jerk
When you didn't measure up at work.
So now you wallow at home in pity and debt
Only able to fuss and fret
About what you'll lose along the way
And still you'll continue to pay and pay.
So, you lash out at the world and those who love you,
As you still continue
To diminish
And finish

Adieu.

"That night I got a grip on life again."

We now find Scott at a carnival where he is introduced to one of the acts, a 36 ½ inch midget. (Yeah, yeah! Vertically challenged, stature diverse? Whatever!) Fearing that the world sees him as being nothing more than a freak, he leaves the carnival and goes to a Café for coffee. There he meets and becomes friends with the female midget named Clarice Bruce, who is slightly shorter than him and who appears at the carnival sideshow in town. Clarice tells him she was born a midget and tries to reassure Scott that life is worth living and that it is not all bad being their size:

"Oh, Scott, for people like you and me the world can be a wonderful place. The sky is as blue as it is for the giants."

The meeting with Clarice seems to have helped to improve Scott's mood and outlook by knowing that perhaps he is not alone and by having his dilemma put into some kind of perspective.

"It's starting again."

Two weeks later, Scott shows Clarice the journal he has resumed working on. Suddenly he notices that he has become shorter than her indicating that the antidote has stopped working. In a panic, he runs back home which brings an end to his friendship with the one person who can understand his plight and with whom he can share his thoughts and feelings on the matter. In a sense now, he is truly alone.

Scott is now small enough (6 inches high) to be living inside a doll house. He is also housed in a private inner abode of bitterness which expresses itself in his tyrannical and demanding behavior toward Louise and by his inability to end his "wretched existence."

When Louise goes shopping, Scott is attacked by his own cat, the very cat he used to enjoy playing with. The beloved family pet sees his former owner merely as a potential meal.

Eventually (after playing cat and mouse with the cat...Sorry!) Scott ends up being accidentally trapped in the basement of his home. After returning home, Louise discovers a blood-stained scrap of Scott's clothing. Louise joins the dots and assumes that Butch the cat ate her husband.

KIRL news report:

"From Los Angeles today, a tragic story: The passing of Robert Scott Carey. The report of the death of the so-called Shrinking Man comes from his brother. Carey's death was the result of an attack by a common house cat--a former pet in the Carey home."

Convinced that her husband is dead, Louise prepares to move.

Scott has now descended to the lowest depths of his house - the basement - where he regains consciousness in a sewing box. Being only three inches tall, Scott knows that he can't climb the stairs. He attempts to call to his wife, but she can't hear him. He contemplates his surroundings and observes:

"The cellar stretched before me like some vast primeval plain, empty of life, littered with the relics of a vanished race. No desert island castaway ever faced so bleak a prospect."

Scott goes quickly into survival mode: Water from a dripping hot water heater. Shelter from a match box. The next requirement, food is more problematic. Without food, the shrinking process will accelerate.

Spotting a piece of cheese in a mouse trap, Scott tries to use a nail to spring the trap, but this only results in the cheese rolling into a floor drain. He then sees a lump of stale cake high up off the ground on a bench or shelf attached to the basement wall. His ability to reach it will involve overcoming the obstacle of a rather dangerous looking spider.

Scott locates a pin cushion and gets hold of a pin to use as a weapon. He fashions another pin into a grappling hook which he uses to scale the side of a box. After some effort, Scott reaches the spider's web which is partially attached to the piece of cake. He uses his pin tool to break off pieces of the stale cake.

"My prison"

Scott approaches a vent in the wall but finds that the grid is too small to slip through. All he can do is lament his predicament of being in "a gray friendless area of space and time."

After obtaining a few pieces of the cake, Scott is chased by the spider but manages to escape into his match box shelter where he observes;

"In my hunt for food, I had become the hunted. This time I survived, but I was no longer alone in my universe. I had an enemy, the most terrifying ever beheld by human eyes."

Later on the hot water heater springs a leak that quickly causes the basement to be flooded with a gushing torrent of water. Scott is washed down towards the floor drain as Charlie and Louise enter the basement. He calls out to them but they are unable to hear him. Charlie unclogs the drain, retrieves a trunk and departs the house with Louise, while Scott clings on to a pencil and lapses into unconsciousness over the floor drain.

"As man had dominated the world of the sun, so I would dominate my world."

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