

THE KILLER

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Suddenly he snapped awake, and realized he didn't know who he was, or what he was doing here, in a munitions factory. He couldn't remember his name, or what he had been doing. He couldn't remember anything.

The factory was a large one, with assembly lines, and conveyor belts, and the click-clack sound of parts being snapped together.

He took one of the finished guns out of a box where they were being automatically packed. Evidently he had been operating the machine, but it was stopped now.

It seemed reflex for him to pick up the gun, natural. He walked slowly over to another part of the factory, along the catwalk. There another man was packing bullets.

“Who am I?” He said slowly, hesitantly.

The man went on working. He did not look up, he made no motion that he had heard.

“Who am I? Who am I?” He screamed it, but although the whole domelike factory room echoed with his wild yells, nothing changed. The men went on working, without looking up.

He swung the gun at the bullet-packer's head. It hit with a crunch, and the packer fell forward onto his face, spilling bullets all over the floor.

He picked up one. It happened to be the right calibre (caliber?). He jammed in several more.

There was the click-click of footfalls above him. “Who am I?” he screamed up, not really expecting to get an answer.

But the man looked down, and begun to run.

He jerked the gun upward and fired twice. The man stopped, and he fell to his knees, but before he fell, he pressed a red button on the wall.

A siren began to wail, loud and clear.

“Killer! Killer! Killer” The loudspeakers screamed.

The workers did not look up. They tolled on.

He ran, trying to get away from the siren, from the loudspeakers. He saw a door, and ran toward it. It opened, and four uniformed men stood there. They fired at him with queer energy guns. The bolts sped by him. He fired three times more, and one of the uniformed men fell, his energy gun clattering to the floor.

He ran the other way, but more of them were coming from another door. He looked wildly around. They were coming in on him from all sides! He had to get away!

He climbed, higher and higher, toward the upper story. But there were more of them up there. They had him trapped. He fired until his gun was empty.

They came toward him, some from above, some from below.
“Please! Don’t shoot! Can’t you see I just want to know who I am?”

They fired, and the energy beams slammed into him. Everything went black...

They watched them slam the door on him, and then truck rolled away. “One of them turns killer every now and then,” The guard said.

“I just don’t understand it,” the second said, scratching his head.
“Take that one. That’d he say—“I just want to know who I am.” That was it. Seemed almost human. I’m beginning to think they’re making these robots too good.”

They watched the robot repair truck disappear around the curve.