

# A WORLD IS BORN

A quick flash of satisfaction crossed Ward's dark eyes. Then he grinned and said mockingly.

"Hell of a place to spend the rest of your life, ain't it?"

Mel Gray stared with slitted blue eyes down the valley. The huge sun of Mercury seared his naked body. Sweat channeled the dust on his skin. His throat ached with thirst. And the bitter landscape mocked him more than Wade's dark face.

"The rest of my life," he repeated softly.  
"The rest of my life!"

He was twenty-eight.

Wade spat in the damp black earth.  
"You ought to be glad—helping the unfortunate, building a haven for the derelict...."

"Shut up!" Fury rose in Gray, hotter than the boiling springs that ran from the Sunside to water the valleys. He hated Mercury. He hated John Moulton and his daughter Jill, who had conceived this plan of building a new world for the destitute and desperate veterans of the Second Interplanetary War.

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