SPASM!
CO-INCIDENCE

GUESS WHAT I FOUND.

UH...

COME ON, GUESS.

I DON'T KNOW. TELL ME.
A NUT!

YOU FOUND A NUT!

WHAT A CO-INCIDENCE!

WHY? WHAT DID YOU FIND?

NOTHING.
I CANNOT MOVE. I FEEL THAT I SHOULD.
AND THERE ARE THESE VINES AND
THINGS GROWING OVER ME.

WHAT AM I?

I DO REMEMBER SOMETHING . . .
I REMEMBER REMEMBERING.

AND THE WIND WHISPERED TO HIM THE ANSWER AND HE
STRAIN TO HEAR . . . A MILLION
MILLION BACKS OF A MILLION
MILLION LEAVES.
But he couldn't remember. And though he didn't know what he was certain thoughts persisted.

I think I should be moving, but I cannot.

The universe danced around him. The ground was alive—and the trees. The world crawled in the sun, and in the sky there moved great white and thunder mountains.

How long have I been here?

And then sounds approaching—not sounds of the forest.

Wait! What is that?
Hey, Sue, let's go this way!

We've never been this way before.

Help me... ooo.

Hey! A real neato canteen.

Hey, Sue! Look! I found an old cant...
THEY...SEE...
ME.
THANK GOD!

LOOK AT
THE BONES!

WOW!
She knew no one would ever come. Survivor-Pak or not—no one had ever been found out here. This was Eternity, and a ten-year Pak meant nothing to Eternity. She thought of many things during the first week of panic. She thought of loneliness, forever. She thought of going mad. She thought of the man in the iron mask. She thought of suicide. No! She thought of fear.

A supersaturated solution crystallizes around a catalyst, a solution of hope and despair—hope crystallizing out around a dream—an insane dream. She'd heard once that nothing changes in space—and it was this that her mind clutched crazily. To her an only hope.

She slept and woke and slept and time dragged painfully on. To die like this; to die here and never change, never decay—to be young forever in death. Her mind reeled and this all pervading idea became an obsession; something for the empty mind to hold on to. In fact, a thing to live for. To die for. To console the horror of nothing.

Then the impossible happened. In the vastness between planets, where the lost was never found, a tiny suited figure, hooked also to a Pak, drifted into view; moving straight toward her. Oh, God! Can it be? Fear of cruel hallucination shook her nerves. How many days, months, years had that other long figure moved suspended here? Could it be alive?
That had been last night.

Now it was day and the cold, cold sun was curtained by clouds.

She could still hear the moans from down the inky stairwell. But he wasn’t coming up.

Bang!

Bump

Bam

Ohh, uhh.

Ohh!

That must have been because the fall broke his legs when she threw the chair.
The two drifted together - a rendezvous of improbability. Listen! Listen! Can you hear? She found courage and pounded her fist to the helmet, and the figure from out there slowly turned toward her.

AIIIIEEE! NO! NO!

Her hands went to her helmet and her life touched the velocity of escape. Dead, frozen. Young forever, unknowingly the dream of so many months became real. For as she died so did the million or so symbiotic bacteria in her system. Bacteria that had lived to feed on the flesh of the stranger. Lived until they too had died, in their own waste.

She had strangely won. But no one was there to applaud.
THE COLD WAS HER OLD ENEMY, IT HAD KILLED SOMEONE DEAR TO HER ONCE LONG AGO, SO SHE NEVER WENT OUT.
AND... NOW...

... SOMEONE, SOMETHING...

HAD... COME... IN!

CLICK!
She was very hungry and there wasn’t much wood left for the stove.

Will I ever eat again? I guess the deliveries are still on the porch. The cold will keep them.

Creak!

UHHH..
She sat for a long, long time and when the morning downstairs finally died...

...she went out.
COME FLY WITH ME.

YOU’VE GOT WINGS, WE’VE ALL GOT WINGS, COME FLY WITH ME.

ICAN’T FLY.

THIS IS THE CHAIR I REST IN, MY CHAIRS ARE VERY COMFORTABLE.

MY CHAIRS ARE TOO HEAVY.

THAT’S THE CHAIR I SIT IN WHEN I LOVE, AND THAT’S THE ONE I USE WHEN I HATE. THAT’S MY CHAIR FOR THINKING, THAT’S FOR WHEN I’M LEARNING. THAT’S FOR LAUGHING AND THAT FOR CRYING.

AND THAT ONE?

OH, THAT’S THE CHAIR I SIT IN WHEN I’M JUST A WOMAN.

I USED TO HAVE LOTS MORE CHAIRS, BUT I WAS STRONGER THEN.