

Chapter Three

All Play and no Work

"Jack was never a dull boy, look at his adventures with Jill."

- Gliss Magazine.

The Entertainment Square in Gazbriz was one of the marvels of Farnell's World. Not only did it have the usual freaks and clowns, jugglers and conjurers, but fronting onto the square were more theatres than existed on the whole of the rest of planet. This was not just coincidental with being in the same city as the foremost seat of learning; it was a direct consequence!

On the one hand, there were large numbers of intelligent and educated citizens, who also possessed a surplus of credit. On the other, there was an abundance of students, who, in order to assist their passage through the university, were prepared to spend their free time on the boards of the many theatres. This offered the added benefit that they would be accumulating obligation credit while airing what was part of the compulsory syllabus. There was also the prospect of eventually seeing one's name up in lights! Fame! Fortune!

Jacob entertained no such illusions. Not one in a thousand of the students ever achieved real success. He found more than enough difficulty in avoiding making a fool of himself while struggling through the classical section. On the contrary, his consuming passion was with the recently rediscovered arts of the electric current.

Everyone knew about electric heating, and now light and motors. They all knew how to harness power from the mountain torrents. He was interested in the prospects of talking over a distance without wires, and, if the rumours were true, perhaps the sending of pictures!

One of the foremost experts in the new applications of electric current was Professor Welland, who would be holding Jacob's first class of the day, right after the Anniversary night celebration.

Welland was an energetic man, whose enthusiasm for life and