

MAUDE MOLD

#38

by Stanley Lieber

NEW KAMI

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Before and after TAB2 visited the mountain, regardless of peccadillo, circumstance, or time period, these guys, these beings, not quite gods, had been up there. They just wouldn't leave, and forcible measures had so far failed, not that they hadn't been tried, so the government at length saw fit to cut a deal. These guys would stick to their mountain and the Air Force would stop trying to kill them. When no reply came the government declared victory and fucked off back to their test site, sealing off the area with impregnable red tape and instructing all personnel to avoid transgressing the boundary of the foothills.

Spiro Mold's death had complicated the arrangement. TAB2, driven into the mountains with his apparent grief having eroded his already thin attention to the rules like so much desert topsoil in the infrequent rain, had stepped right into the middle of the dispute, unaware of his role in the continuing land withdrawal drama. The ascetics who sat immobile at the highest elevations shrugged and accepted him into their stubbornly stationary community, but only just. Maybe he could be ransomed? But that would require getting oneself up off of one's beleaguered ass. TAB2 was happy to finally stop moving. It would be quite a few years until he came back down, even though he had only been gone a few hours.

Of course, bearing new ideas about the current disposition and eventual redistribution of test site resources.

"And just where did you think all this coke was going? Williamsburg?"

TAB1. His dad. Jerked a thumb towards the RAGNAROK, whom from all appearances had been packed full of ticker taped bails of cocaine and was ready for the journey back to Earth.

"I dunno, Palo Alto?"

TAB1 scoffed, suppressing a fatherly grin.

"Lucky guess."