**SCIENCE FICTION BLAST-OFF THEATER**

"All Clear"

                                                               by Richard Nathan

Before the lights come up, a voice announces the title of the story:

                                                            VOICE  
                                    "All Clear"

Lights come on the bridge of a space ship.  Two crew members, WILLIAMS and JOHNSON are reviewing data on the instruments.

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    Running final check of bio-data.

Johnson pushes a few buttons, waits a moment, and checks the reading.

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    Data check all clear.

                                                            WILLIAMS  
                                    What if it's wrong?

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    It's not wrong.

                                                            WILLIAMS  
                                    What if we're bringing back something   
                                    dangerous?

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    The only thing dangerous that we're bringing  
                                    back is you!

                                                            WILLIAMS  
                                    You can't deny it is theoretically possible we   
                                    could bring back a disease, a ***new***disease,   
                                    capable of wiping out all life on Earth.

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    No, it's not possible!  Not with the bio-scan.    
                                    It has twenty-five fail-safe back-up systems.    
                                    Nothing can get past it.

                                                            WILLIAMS  
                                    Nothing we've seen so far.

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    If you're so phobic, why did you go into   
                                    space exploration?

                                                            WILLIAMS  
                                    I like space.  It's the planets that make me   
                                    nervous.  Look, we know that a species can   
                                    only survive if it is has a strong ability to   
                                    overcome obstacles to procreation.

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    Sure.  Things survive only if they have a   
                                    strong survival / reproduction mechanism.    
                                    That's just stating the obvious.

                                                            WILLIAMS  
                                    What if there was a virus with the ability to   
                                    avoid detection?  Isn't that a logical   
                                    Darwinian survival mechanism?

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    If it did anything to affect us, anything at all,   
                                    the bio-scan would detect it and warn us.

                                                            WILLIAMS  
                                    There's some flaw in your logic.  I know   
                                    there is.  But for some reason, I can't seem   
                                    to get my brain around it.  I can't see it!

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    Do you feel all right?

                                                            WILLIAMS  
                                    Yeah, I seem to feel okay.  But I can't   
                                    help feeling we're missing something vital.

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    Well I feel great.  Here comes Daniels.  He's   
                                    spent more time on the surface than both of   
                                    us put together.  Hey, Daniels, do you feel okay?

Enter DANIELS.  His condition is sickening, although he doesn't realize it, nor do his crewmen.  The make-up should be as disgusting as possible.  For example, you might want to mix green food coloring with chunky peanut butter and smear it all over his skin.  Daniels is so sick that he can't speak clearly, but no one realizes it.  Depending upon how sick your sense of humor is, he could also be spitting up blood, foaming out the mouth, having coughing fits, or even having limbs and/or body parts dropping off.  Whatever happens with him, no one should show any signs of noticing he is sick, including Daniels.

                                                            DANIELS  
                                                        (giving a thumbs up sign)  
                                    Mmmm-rrrrr-nnnnn!

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    See, Daniels feels great.  A picture of health!

                                                            DANIELS  
                                                        (giving another thumps up)  
                                    Mmmmm-rrrr-nnnnnn!

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    Williams is worried that we've all contacted   
                                    some disease that can outsmart the bio-scan,   
                                    and we'll bring it back and wipe out all   
                                    life on Earth.

                                                            DANIELS  
                                    Mmmmm-rrr-nnnnn.

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    Strap in, everyone.

The three crew members strap themselves in.

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    You know, Williams, if there was anyone wrong,   
                                    the alarms would be screaming by now.

The alarms start screaming.

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    And the bio-scan wouldn't permit us to take  
                                    off unless all three of us hit those override   
                                    switches, and our psych evaluations guaranteed   
                                    none of us would willingly go anywhere   
                                    near those switches if the alarms went off.

All three crew members seem to go into a trance.  As though they were sleep-walking, they un-strap themselves, get up and hit the override switches and go back to their seats, unaware of what they are doing.

                                                            JOHNSON  
                                    Nothing can outsmart the bio-scan.  How are   
                                    you feeling now, Williams?

                                                            WILLIAMS  
                                    Okay, I feel fine.  Great, in fact.  But   
                                    some day we'll come across something that   
                                    fools us.  Something that finds a way to   
                                    be un-detectable.  I just know it!  I keep   
                                    feeling the idea is almost there, lurking right    
                                    outside my consciousness, but for some   
                                    reason, I just can't get to it.

                                                            DANIELS  
                                    Mmmmm-rrrr-nnnnnn!

Blast-off!

Blackout!

THE END

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