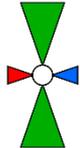


1873 CA4

bncdoc.id	BPA
bncdoc.author	Bedford, John
bncdoc.year	1984
bncdoc.title	The titron madness.
bncdoc.info	The titron madness. Sample containing about 37769 words from a book (domain: imaginative)
Text availability	Worldwide rights cleared
Publication date	1985-1993
Text type	Written books and periodicals
David Lee's classification	W_fict_prose

<1873/c>	, piling on the pieces she threw up at them, Lawton sniffed. ‘This won’t hold anything. Just slow it down.’ Like Forster before her, Nell indicated her pistol and grenades.
 <p>Key: Footprint ConEn1 Footprint ConEn2 Footprint ConEn3</p>	<p>‘As long as there’s ti me, that’s all we need.’ As they descended the stairs, Delaney paused, and took a last look down at her. She smiled shyly, then turned away. In a sense, as long as he could convince himself that she was safe, he was glad she wasn’t coming with them. Whatever it was they were after, it was an unknown quantity, unknown, that is, except for a lethal ferocity. He pulled on his respirator, his mind made up to get back to her as soon as he could, for Nell Anderson was all he cared about now. There it went again. Forster frowned as he looked through his spy hole. A sound. He couldn’t place it, but it reminded him strongly of something. The corridor was empty. It had happened three times now. A hissing, We gas escaping, ending with a funny little squeak. He looked at George, wondering if the sound had come from him. Satisfied that everything was as it should be, he checked his watch. Well over half an hour had passed. They ought to be near him soon. Forster searched in a pouch and came up with a glucose sweet. Quietly he unwrapped the covering paper, then paused, as some instinct made him check again. As he did so, the sound came nearer; louder. His intense scrutiny took in the shadowy and empty lengths of the corridor. Apart from some dark patches on the wall that he hadn’t noticed before, there was nothing to see. His gaze came back to George, still sprawled over the control desk. A fly landed on the empty, staring vizor, and crawled across it. Forster was sorely tempted to nip out and confirm that the noise was coming from George by twiddling the volume and tuner, but fought down the urge. He sat back, pulled off his mask, and popped the sweet into his mouth. It took him only seconds to notice the smell. Forster choked as the putrefying reek seemed to get right into him. Frightened that it was a gas pocket, he fumbled with his mask, and finally got it back on. His heart was thumping. Nothing seemed to be happening, all his senses were apparently functioning normally, except ... that the sweet in his mouth seemed permeated with the awful smell; had become</p>
	a slimy lump of filth
	. He had to get rid of it . Forster reached for his mask, just as the hissing gas noise sounded right on top of him, ending with a little shriek. He knew then where he’d heard something similar before. It was like a man breathing through a respiratory system, with some sort of one-way valve. A shadow fell across the wall opposite, as slowly, and fearfully he turned. The curtain was a dense, opaque greenish-yellow, and something was right behind it, a shape pressing against the humped plastic standing there looking down at him, half seen, half imagined. His hand went out, reached for the submachine gun, his fingers tightening on the stock. With a blood-curdling growl, the curtain was snatched aside. Forster half rolled, his Uzi trembling in his hand as he got off half a clip at point blank range. But it struck with the speed of an attacking

	<p>snake. And something else; something he saw as the curtain tore away and he looked into the depths of the unbelievable face above him, fractionally dulled his reflexes. After they'd gone, Nell tried a different tactic. She disarmed herself, putting her grenades and pistol down on to the floor, and standing directly in front of the spy hole, but some ten feet away. Arms down at her sides, palms forward, she waited. It was just possible for her to see a suggestion of light at the spy hole, set like a marble in the wall. She continued to stare at it as the minutes passed. There was no other way she could think of, except to show the obscene and pathetic distortion of humanity that she came in peace. It was only in the continuing silence that it came to her that her defenceless back was presented to the rest of the room. Suddenly, she began to hear all sorts of sounds, footsteps and slitherings. Angrily, she fought down the urge to turn, and kept her eye on the bead of light, willing the pathetic creature beyond to come to it. Directly before her was a large wall clock. The second hand swept monotonously around and around. She allowed her gaze to flick up every time the hand passed the twelve. She found it eased her aching eyes. It had passed for the thirteenth time when she returned her attention to the bead of light, and caught her breath. The little star twinkled - and went out. They were actually in the prefabricated complex when the staccato chatter of the Uzi echoed through the steel maze like the sound of a rivet gun. Just the one</p>
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