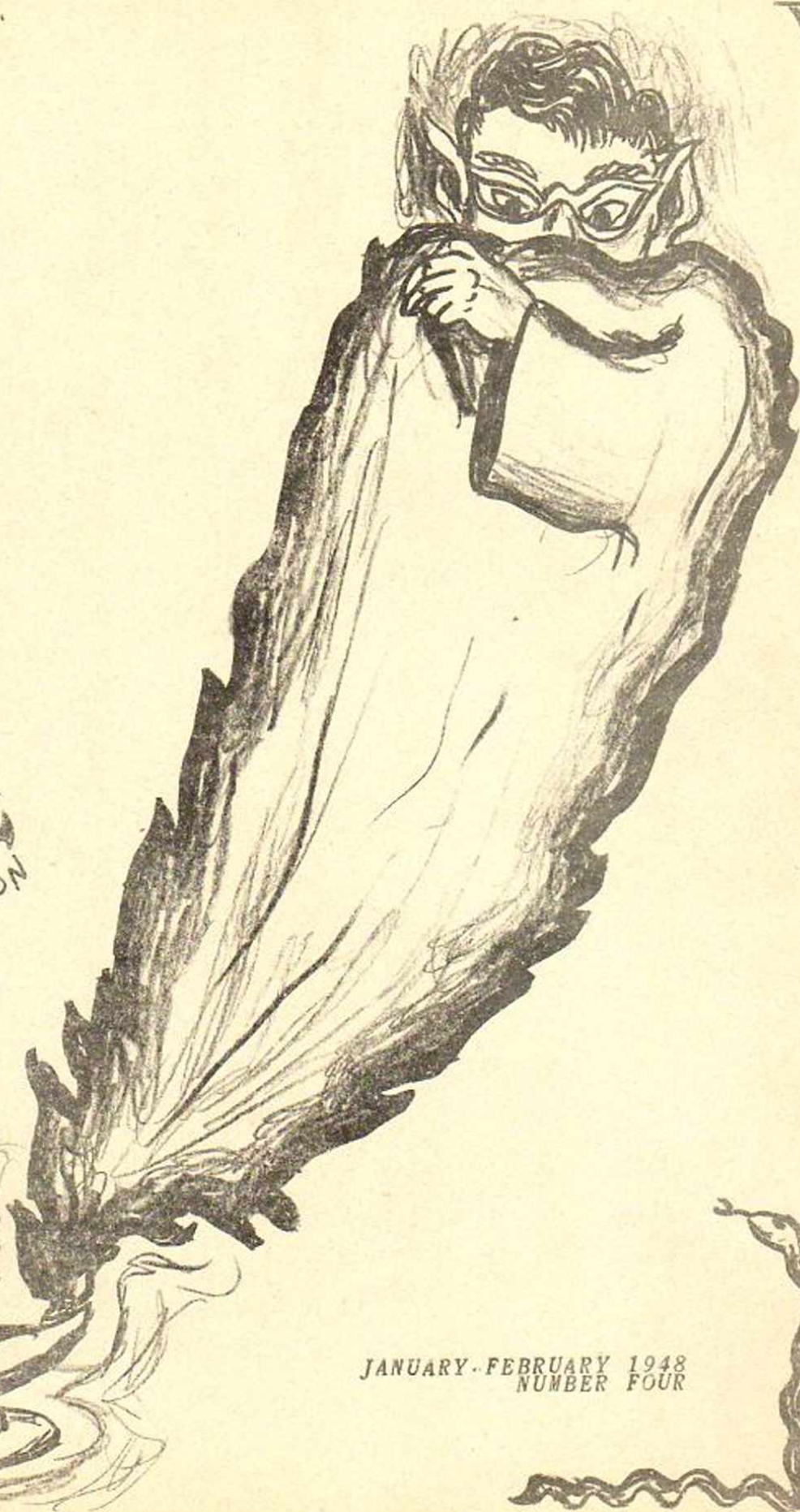


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SHANGRI-LA #4

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SHANGRI-LA is the official publication of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society. It will appear at bi-monthly intervals. Letters of comment are welcome. And we trade magazines with any willing publisher. Write to the editor for all arrangements. The address is Dale Hart, Apartment 20, 1116 Georgia Street, Los Angeles 15, California. The address of the clubhouse remains 637 1/2 South Bixel Street, Los Angeles 14, California.

LEthograph Cover by Budoff

EDITORIAL

If you're looking for controversy in this, the natal issue of the LASFS publication under a new policy and a new editor, you can look in vain.

I had a long and fancy editorial dreamed up. It was to be comprehensive and detailed and explanatory of many matters---and I haven't given up the idea, except for the moment. In the next issue, it gives fireworks, probably very.

On this first day of the new year, in the new magazine, we are going to be as amiable as a shaggy dog. We are going to stand or fall on the plain merits of the mag, without controversy to lend any interest of a special nature.

Except for a few slips, Charles Burbee was a good editor. He put out a nice magazine which was well-liked and well-supported. (We'll let that be that, for a while.)

This issue and succeeding issues will be put together by the combined efforts of the entire membership, using the now time-honored production methods of the one-shot project. A fairly regular bi-monthly appearance is planned.

The old "Shangri-LA" saw three issues, the last one appearing soon after the turn of the decade. In going back to the old title, we feel like we're starting afresh. The title replaces "Shangri-L'Affaires," of course.

If you like us, comment. If you don't like us, comment. We want letters.

Here's the mag. Take over.

----D.H.

"You can't teach an old dog new tricks!" They shouted. "We will not submit!" They cried. "We shall not teach!"

But They taught him; he made Them. He wasn't Their inferior nor was he Their superior. He barked only "Ep", and wrote his lessons with his pencil held in his tail, and passed and passed and passed.

First student, first celebrity, how They howled over him all over the world as he passed and passed and graduated. They took a million pictures and shook his paw. They patted him on the head.

"You're a good dog - brilliant. You like a good tree, and you like a good bitch, but you're housebroken and have a degree - you're great, Ep."

Ep said nothing, wrote no word of his plan, and, after graduation, had dog biscuits in the White House with the President of the United States.

And held his breath...suffered hell that They'd find him out and that he'd be destroyed before his life's work was done. His great heart beat painfully within him when he feared that They'd find him out. Minute is to minute is to hour, and hour is to day.

Professor Hoge knew that dogs didn't like to carry books in their teeth nor to be laughed at as a joke. He knew that there were other forms of life on earth and that these forms once ruled the world as his did now, and he didn't laugh at Ep. But at first he didn't see, such was his pre-occupation and delight at watching the students react to a dog in their midst, learning and passing.

But Standish.....Sometimes he would stare at Ep, and his black eyes would glitter.

"You're a devil," he'd say, and, when he was drunk, he would kick Ep and curse him. Once he choked Ep with his hands, his breath stinking on the great one's face.

"What villainy are you up to, you hound of darkness?" he screamed. "What madness?"

How Ep trembled for fear, trembled for fear that he'd have to tear the throat out of Standish, because he lived for the plan, and it was early to die, too early. How piteously did his noble heart waste its numbered beats in quicktime! He knew that he would be killed if he killed one of Them.

"Save me!" he cried to the Inscrutable. "Save my honor so I may live and we--" Thus he cried, and would have killed, but Standish became ill from his alcohol.

Professor Hoge knew the secret and said it with laughs and feeble jests. "The world is going to the dogs, eh, Ep?" he said. "You want to be ready for it."

He knew! Ep stared into the merry eyes, felt giddy, but his limbs didn't tremble. If he must kill ---But the Professor who'd taught him, who knew in his mind all time and the torrents of life, its tremendous breadth, only smiled. He knew that Ep was a mutation of a dog, not a true dog at all.

"When dogs have language, Ep," said he, "they will have most of what man has, haven't I taught that?"

"You have," wrote Ep.

The Professor smiled, but not with his eyes, because he knew what went on in the world outside of the campus.

"I should like to be there, Sp," was all he said. "What have you planned?"

But Ep wrote only "Every dog has his day," for They liked Their pun, nor was he destroyed by dogs because the Professor knew that when the big night came it wouldn't be Ep's fault.

The darkness did come. It was fire and madness, and it came from Them, to begin with, and Them it destroyed in agony, in murderous flame, nor could the sun be seen. Two of the last were Standish and Professor Hogg. They stood with Ep on the bridge amid the ruins of the campus of UCLA to watch the good red brick become rubble and saw flames on the hills around them and the flames below them out towards the sea. They stood on the bridge and watched their fragment of world vanish.

Standish had his bottle. He didn't understand, because he had his bottle, and it was good whiskey, the best that money had once bought. He would not understand, but he would not feel death because of the bottle. He swayed to Ep, and his knees sagged.

"You....devil," he gasped.

That was all he comprehended, and that was his hail and farewell. He said no more as death swallowed him up.

The Professor brushed the fallen ashes from his coat and said, "To think that all of the centuries that men domesticated dogs it was only to the end of producing a mutation that would succeed him. Yet -- justice. You're the closest animal to man, and you've earned this burnt cinder, Ep." Nor did he apologize for Them nor believe that Ep would do better because They were like that.

"I only wish," and his eyes pleaded with the red sky, "that I could see it." But there was no answer. "Good luck, Ep," he said.

"I wish you could see it," wrote Ep and that was their goodbye.

Then Ep went to his prepared place and put his plan into operation. And now that They're gone, because of Their atom, we preach against Their wars and Their hate. We honor Ep, Ep the magnificent, Time's Favored One, Chief of the Age, He who leads us from sunset to dawn.

And that's the end of my sermon.

A bulldog will pass among you to take up the collection.

T H E E N D

NOW THAT THEY'RE GONE

by
Raymond E. Banks

They're gone now, the humans, and the world has been made safe for dogs. They know Ep, Ep the god, our god, the first of the new order. Yes, They knew him, for the newspapers published his story. For my sermons today, I will tell you of him. It will be the old, sweet story.

He was a student, first of all, when They became aware of his existence, a student at UCLA -- that was the University of California at Los Angeles -- and he was an English major there. He took his work in English, and They laughed. "You're a dog," They said. "You're a dog who writes with his tail - silly dog to go to a college. Why do you want to go and learn English? What can a dog do with English?"

But Ep -- praise Ep, the god, the first who is all -- said only "Ep," which was the only sound he made that They ever heard.

He learned to read, learned to write, learned to calculate and how chemicals come together and why, learned what had happened in the world fifty-five million years ago, and that They didn't own the earth back yonder, learned how to make a double entry -- all of these, and a few more.

They laughed, but They didn't suspect his motive for going to school, nor did Ep tell them. He kept his jaws shut. You couldn't read his secret in the great brown eyes; it wasn't to be seen from the stiff gray hairs of his coat, nor could They understand the wags of his tail. He was a serene - a noble figure of a dog.

His coat was the mantle of peace which covers us all, the sky at dawn and at twilight, while the twinkle of stars is the twinkle of his eyes, and his four limbs are the pillars of our world, their grace the beauty of our lives, their muscles our firmness in the ways of truth and justice.

They laughed, all but two. That was the danger for Ep, the two. One of them was Standish, one of the last of Them. Standish was also a student at UCLA and Ep belonged to him. He was big, saturnine, cynical.

"You're trying to make some bitch, Ep," Standish would laugh. "You're putting on the dog," he would laugh, and Ep would say nothing, since those were dangerous days for the plan, Ep's plan, even if Standish didn't understand the plan.

The other was smarter. He had all time in his mind, that Professor of Anthropology. His name Hoge. The other professors rented, those who had Ep in classes.

"JUST A MINUTE"

by Arthur Jean Cox

Thursday, November 6th; 415th consecutive meeting:

Treasurer Ackerman announced that the club was \$3.50 in the hole. "Brother, can you spare a dime--?"

Ex-member Elmer Perdue was present and he suggested that the club allow the printing press to be removed from Cy Condra's garage to his place. Cy Condra wants to get rid of the damned thing since it's only cluttering up his garage and Elmer, since he has moved, now has storage space for it. The club had its choice of sending it either to Fran Laney's house or to Perdue's and since Elmer's place is closest it was decided by the members to let Mr. Perdue have his way. Whether anything shall come of this in the future we shall see; Mr. Laney may object.

Thursday, November 13th; 416th consecutive meeting:

After announcing that the treasury held the fabulous sum of two dollars (\$2) Forest Ackerman read us a letter from Rex Ward, the publisher of FANDOM SPEAKS. Rex is resigning from the club feeling that he can no longer face the members of the LASFS because he has done what he thinks we think is the unpardonable sin: He has sent his fanzine to AMAZING STORIES to be reviewed in their fanzine column! Forest, however, wrote him a letter explaining that no one would spit on him if he dropped around, that it was largely a matter of personal opinion and that the club-as-a-whole was not fanatical on the subject. Rex, though won't be around, anyway. It seems that he's got a lot of schoolwork to catch upon.

Next, we got down to serious business: Charles Burbee, editor of Shangri-L'Affaires, "The Sincere Fanzine" and official organ of the club, defied the club's decree that it would give to the fan column inaugurated by AMAZING STORIES no official recognition and sent his sterling fanzine there, nevertheless, stating that in his opinion the club's attitude was foolish. So--in spite of lawyer-to-be Cy Condra's brilliant defense--we kicked him out as editor of the publication. Burbee is no longer editor of 'Burbee's Magazine'!

Thursday, November 20th; 417th consecutive meeting:

Ha!, what a meeting! Where shall I begin? Not counting the minor details the proceedings were very exciting. Most of the excitement revolved around AMAZING STORIES and Charles Burbee. Charlie, who came in late, read us a letter from Rog Phillips, editor of AS's fan column, had returned the copies of SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES which Burbee sent him, saying that he would not review it because he knew that the club was against it. If he did review it, he told us, members and money would flow in from all over the country, restoring life to "the near-defunct Los Angeles Fandom."

Mr. Phillips stated that he would shower all these glorious benefits on us by reviewing the mag if we carried out the following orders:

"1) The club must unanimously vote for the reviewing of the magazine in AMAZING, Ackerman abstaining."

"2) The club must return Rex Ward's membership card to him."

"3) Ackerman must be kicked out of the club."

This, of course, provided a great deal of amusement.

Burbee's presence naturally had a tendency to cause the conversation to center around the club magazine. It was decided, after much talk, to make its publishing a group-affair with everyone having a part in it. Dale Hart was chosen as co-ordinator.

Thursday, December 4th; 418th consecutive meeting:

After Forrest reported that we had minust thirty cents (-30¢) in the treasury the startling news was released that that man, Charles Burbee, intends to go on publishing a magazine entitled SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES despite the fact that this club ousted him as editor of its official magazine, known as SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES. (Mr. Burbee, by the way, had resigned as a member of the club.) Since the title is not protected by copyright it was decided that the best thing to do about this deplorable state of L'AFFAIRES--SHANGRI, that is--was to change the title of our own mag, or, rather, to revert to the old title, "SHANGRI-LA".

Mr. Burbee again. He sent us a letter stating that he would pay his club dues if we, in turn, would pay him for the book FORGOTTEN MYSTERIES which was sent to him at this address but was stolen by someone around the club. It was decided that this would be financially profitable (Burbee owes \$7) so the treasury dug deep into its minus pocket and came up with a plus \$2.50--the cost of the book.

The Executive Committee presented some proposed amendments to the by-laws of the constitution affecting such things as dues, membership, etc. There were over ten of them but we ~~XXXX~~--that is, put them through in just as many minutes--and every single one of them unanimously.

Thursday, December 11th; 419th consecutive meeting:

Dale Hart revealed that Burbee was not going to continue to put out SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES after all. The Burb's idea of a joke!

With this bit of news Director Gus Willmorth closed the meeting announcing that we would now see a movie entitled, "First Step on a 238,000 mile Journey", directed by Arthur Louis Joquel, II, and produced by the Reaction Research Society of Pasadena and starring the members of that society and Joan Caulfield.

Thursday, December 18th; 420th consecutive meeting:

A.E. van Vogt was present to autograph copies of his new book, THE BOOK OF PLATH, just published by Fantasy Press.

EEE read a letter from Dale Perry, President of NFFF, who requested the members of the LASFS to select their favorite illustrations from back-issues of fantasy and science-fiction magazines so that a select few of these select few could be

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THE "NYMPH" o' MANIACK

By Forrest J Ackerman

THIS IS THE STORY behind the story of a collaboration in which I was honored to have my name linked some years ago with the lovely and talented Catherine Moore, now the wife of an old friend --sensational Henry Kuttner. As I am composing this article a few hours before midnite, New Year's Eve, I believe it would be apropos to preface it with a quotation from a New Year letter from Catherine which I ran across in searching for the material for the following.

1936: "Dear Forrie: Happy New Year. And by the way, if you heard a new year's horn blowing extra loudly just at midnight, your time, and couldn't locate it--that was me. I blew a special blast for you at about 2:00 a.m. or thereabouts, as nearly as I can remember now--of New Year's morning just as the radio announced that it was at that moment midnight in Los Angeles. I never quite believe things like that --different times, I mean. Of course, know that you lose a day going round the world, and all that--but somehow can't quite believe it anyway. I read a story somewhere once in which someone in New York phoned someone in London, and over the wire 'the late afternoon New York traffic vibrated weirdly in the stillness of the London night'. It seems so impossible, if you see what I mean." Catherine Moore--puzzled by geochronological paradoxes!

But about NYMPH OF DARKNESS by CL Moore and FJ Ackerman, whose chief claim to fame was that it was among the titles which vied for third place as best fantasy of the year in a poll taken among the "Auslanders"--the Australian fans, down under. (Also, it was one of the earliest stories illustrated by Hannes Bok, a new artist whom a young fan named Ray Bradbury had personally persuaded the late Farnsworth Wright to try.)

Here is the original outline I sent to Catherine when she was living in Indianapolis and working in a bank vault:

THE NYUSA NYMPH--One short and exciting experience in the adventure-filled life of Northwest Smith...Of a fleeing figure in the nite that bumped into NW at the Venusian waterfront--an unseen form--that of Nyusa, the girl who was born invisible! Further details: The business of the squat creature who came swiftly slinking thru the street, short on the heels of the figure in NW's arms, with the strange life-tube in its hands flashing from side to side (it would have caused Nyusa to become visible, you know--the life from the tube)...and of Nyusa, whose abnormally high body-temperature kept her comfortable free from clothing; so that invisible she remained, as born...And from what she fled, and how NW was of service to her, etc.--I will leave to you.

MOORE to Ackerman: I think I know why the pursuer's flash made Nyusa visible. Did you ever notice the peculiar colors one's skin turns under different lights? A violet-ray machine turns lips and nails--as I remember--a sickly green, and the blue lights they use in photographers' shops sometimes, make you purple. I once figured out why, but can't remember and haven't time now to go into it. Something about complementary colors and mixing yellow and blue, and whatnot. Well, you remember in Bierce's THE DAMNED THING his invisible monster was a color outside our range of perception. Couldn't this flash-light be of some shade which, combined with Nyusa's peculiar skin-tone, produced a visible color? ** And Venus is the Hot Planet anyhow, so no need to increase her body temperature above normal to make it possible for her to run about in the altogether. ** Smith had met her in the absolutely black dark of the starless Venusian night. She came tearing down the street and humped into him, and, tho considerably astonished to find his arms full of scared and quite unadorned girl, he of course didn't realize her invisibility then. Afterward came this squat, dark pursuer, flashing his greenish glow-ing ray to and fro. When he'd gone by she heard another sound--origin yet unknown, to me or anyone else--which so alarmed her that she pulled Smith into a run and guided him at top speed thru /the spellings "thru" & "tho" are Catherine's/ devious byways and into an unlighted room. "Lift me up," said she, "so I can reach the light." And when it goes on he realizes that he is holding in midair a beautifully muscular, firmly curved armful of nothingness. He had just dropped her onto the floor and staggered back, doubting his sanity. What happens next I don't know. ** If you have any more ideas, they'll be welcome. This is the stage of a story when I usually sweat blood for several days, racking an absolutely sterile brain for ideas. Then something takes fire and the whole story just gallops, with me flying along behind trying to keep up with it. Very strenuous. ** Think hard and see if you can find any possible reason, sane or insane, as to what the noise was she had heard, why it alarmed her so, whether she is invisible just by a freak of nature or whether by some mysterious mastermind's intent. I suspect she is in the power of some insidious villain, but don't know yet. ** All thru the preface of the story I've made such veiled hints about the nameless horrors which stalk by night along the waterfront of Ednes, that said villain might be almost anything--some horror out of the ages before man, or some super-brain of the far advanced races we know nothing of, or an unhappy medium like the Aleendar. (That reminds me--Vaudir is the infinitive of--as I remember my college days--the French verb wish. I presume Nyusa is purely original with you, so you deserve more credit than I, for it's a grand name.) /"Thank you kindly, ma'am," said the 18-year-old lad. "There is no truth to the rumor that I made it up from the initials of our major metropolis, N.Y., U.S.A."/

ACKERMAN to Moore--/This is the point where I was supposed to come in for my big hunk of egoboo, quoting my share in the development of the plot, but I can't find the vital letter!

What I wrote must be imagined from the mirror of Catherine's reply⁷: Thanks for the further suggestions. I had already gone on past my stopping point when I wrote you, so can't use all your ideas, but have incorporated Dolf and the dancing-girl idea. It seems Nyusa is--sorry--really innately invisible, being the daughter of a Venusian woman and a Darkness which is worshipped by a queer race of slug-like, half-human beings which dwell under the Venusian city of Ednes. (Incidentally, Ednes, the city wherein the Minga stood, is simply lifted bodily out of the middle of Wednesday.) Anyhow, Nyusa is forced by the priests to dance in their ritual worship under a peculiar light which renders her visible in a dim, translucent way. And because of her mixed breed she has access into other worlds from which her masters bar her out by their own strange mental powers because she'd never return to dance for them if she once got away. Dolf guards her for the same reason. I think now that Nyusa's captors drive her too far sometime, and she realizes that after all she is half divine, and calls upon the strain of Darkness within her to burst the bonds they have imposed. Smith, attacked by Dolf as he hides in their temple watching the ritual dance, fights with the worshippers and kills the high priest, whereupon their power over Nyusa is weakened and she exerts her demi-divinity to escape. Thus, tho Smith doesn't get the fortune you suggested, he at least is spared the expense of buying her any clothes, which was a very practical idea on your part.

Ackerman to MOORE: I have a suggestion about the ending. Shambleau stunned Smith; to this day he has probably not forgotten "It". Sweet, was the girl of the Scarlet Dream. While in the Black Thirst, he gazed upon beauty incredible. But Shambleau was to be shunned; and the girl of the Dream... Vaudir dissolved. So let the Nymph--Nyusa--just before she escapes... couldn't she--kiss Smith? A kiss never to be forgotten: a kiss...so cool, with a depth drawn out of Darkness. And yet, a kiss of fire--from her Venusian strain--hot, alive, searing Northwest's lips. A kiss, of delicious demi-divinity...a fond caress of frozen flame. Making it, under your care, Catherine, a kiss smothering with extra-mundane emotion, leaving the readers gasping. Smith's reward, the kiss that becomes famous and concludes the story.

MOORE to Ackerman: I do wish I had had your suggestion about the parting kiss before I finished. I wasn't able to expand the idea as fully as I'd have liked to, both because of the space-saving necessity and because to give it the attention it deserved I'd have had to write the story toward it from the beginning. It was a grand idea and would have given the story just the punch it needed at the end. Oh well, no story of mine is complete unless I leave out some major point until too late. I meant to make Shambleau's eyes shine in the dark, and to play up the idea of the Guardians in BLACK THIRST.

/ NYMPH OF DARKNESS was first published in the printed fan magazine, Fantasy Magazine, in the April 1935 issue, and professionally published, in an expurgated form, in the Dec. 1939 World Tales. #

THE THIRD AMERICAN REVOLUTION*

(a Book Report)

by Dale Hart

In Nietzsche, I see only fragments of the truth, the truth that can be apprehended by my imperfect mind. In London, I seem to see large and integrated sections of what the truth must be.

The hero of the novel is Ernest Everhard, a socialistic revolutionary, and his test of truth is---will it work and will you trust your life to it?

Some of Everhard's ideas, briefly, are: Primitive man combined to beat the competition of his environment, and that competition naturally evolves into combinations, and that combinations evolve into bigger and better combinations. Competition in the capitalistic world results in a large surplus which cannot be consumed by the capitalists. The surplus must be used to develop new industries or countries---and this process must end somewhere. Class struggle is not class hatred, and the proletariat must struggle for a better existence. Those in power manufacture their own morality and then rationalize this morality. To prevent spiritual mayhem---the surrendering of personal feelings to professional feelings--- the Brotherhood of Man is necessary.

Labor must revolt against Capital, and it does, in the book. The Oligarchy is helped by some members of the proletariat, and vice versa. Education and religion help maintain the status quo. The fighting is often confused and inconclusive. Heroes die beside cowards, there is sudden and lingering death, and counter-espionage meets espionage. On the last page, the Third American Revolution is in progress still.

A few interesting facets of the narrative: The use of balloons and a new explosive called Expedite; the anticipation of plastic surgery; the thesis that charity is only the poulticing of an ulcer; the fallacious and dated conception of Hearst; the resume of Rockefeller's career; and the footnotes indicating what the men of the future might well think of the last two centuries.

I enjoyed the book, as I enjoy all radical literature. I excused all the posturing of the characters, I applauded all the incisive arguments, and I loved the Utopian spirit. Emotion was too mixed with facts, true...but this emotion did not invalidate those facts.

("The Iron Heel," by Jack London. Published by Macmillan, New York, 1908. 354 pages.)



THE CONDITIONED DICK BEELER RESPONSE

Case 8, Ayan P., male, age 29 months.

Ayan was playing along in a play-pen, when a bushel basket containing salamanders, newts, Gila Monsters, and fresh earthworms was dumped on his head. He laughed and gurgled happily while holding a lethargic newt by the tail and beating its brains out on the edge of the pen.

The pen was then cleaned out and disinfected, and the process was repeated with an added stimulus. The stimulus was an electric egg beater held in close contact with the subject's left ear. This time Ayan screamed and seized a Gila Monster by the right foreleg. The Monster bit him deeply about the hand and arm while the eggbeater, unfortunately, amputated his ear. As Ayan suffered severely from shock and loss of blood, it was deemed inadvisable to continue the experiment at this time.

When Ayan came out of his coma, he was immediately rushed to the laboratory for continuation of the experiment. The fact that he was deaf in one ear and paralyzed from the elbow down, can be discounted in the net result, as the functions of these members doesn't play a vital role in the experiment anyhow.

As soon as the experimenter appeared with the bushel of lower chordates, Ayan screamed, turned blue in the face and fell over on his left side in a dead faint. This is highly significant, as Ayan is definitely right handed, and also, this shows his first neutral to positive evidences of fear.

Ayan was revived and the experiment continued. This time the stimulus took the form of twin jets of household ammonia shot into his eyes, plus the driving of a railroad spike into his skull, simultaneously with the application of a rip saw to his lower shinbone.

(Continued on page 18)

THE LAST FAN

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KENNETH
BONNELL

THE Last Fan stood by the side of the Next-To-The-Last Fan. NTTL Fan was dying. In only a short while there would be only one fan left in the Universe.

"Give me my copy of the Last Shangri-LA," the dying man gasped. "I must fire-off--" His voice rose in reverence as he uttered those old words of science fiction. "--holding a copy."

The Last Fan looked about, spotting a stray copy tucked ever so gently between two old cheese sandwiches, blew the crumbs to the floor, and using the tip of his fingers carried the priceless document to his dying compatriarch.

The Next-To-The-Last Fan clasped the stapled sheets to his bosom, and belched from the beer and crackers he had had for breakfast. He was near the point of passing, the Last Fan could tell; he had not said, "Outwithburbeel!" to show that he was conscious of the act. A rattle sounded in his throat. (Probably a cracker, the Last Fan thought.) His hand tightened around the papers he held, crumpling them. The hand relaxed.

The Next-To-The-Last Fan was dead.

The Last Fan looked at the body for a long moment. Then he went to the phone and called the undertaker.

When the undertaker had carried out the remains of his friend, the Last Fan climbed to his attic storeroom that housed his collections. He ran his hands over the backs of the complete collections of Astounding, Weird Tales, the Old Amazing (he wouldn't touch a Post Shaver issue, remaining true to the ideals of LASFS), Unknowns, worm eaten Startlings and Thrilling Wonders. He went into his favorite alcove where the fanzines rested. There were great stacks of Gorgons, Fanows, Tympania, Shaggies, Fantasy Advertisers, and others; a shelf of short-runs or one shots, including that dispicable thing, Forlo Kon. He wondered why he had ever kept the Forlo Kona. They would make better kindling than any thing else.

He sat down on the floor and pulled random magazines from the shelves, reading an article here and a story there, remembering the joyful hours he had spent in the LASFS clubroom, in Slan Shack, in Tendril Towers with Tripoli, in Quadruple E's cluttered office. Those were the days. Fandom was all shot to hell now.

He got up and went down stairs, trying to pull himself out of his depression. Oh, to get away from these surroundings a little while.

Habit forced him to walk toward the corner drugstore. His eye passed over the rows of magazines: Ladies' Rocket Journal, Time Machine Weekly (dated years in the future), Plutonian Pranks, Virulent Venus Stories, all the usual periodicals. There was not one magazine for science fiction alone; science fiction was the norm, so how could fans exist, except by calling themselves fans. But because of the commonness of science fiction, the uniqueness of being a fan was lost. Only the ones who were fans "way back when" took the effort of calling themselves fans.

THE END

So the Last Fan resigned himself to a normal life.

NO CALLING CARD

by

C. R. McLEOD

There was nothing strange about the night, although it was colder than usual and the moon was luminous and disturbingly new.

I was alone at the piano in the gymnasium of my school, a white wooden building of two floors on the Dakota prairie. The upper floor had four class-rooms, the principal's office, and a small bookstore without windows over the central chimney. On the ground floor was the gym, where I sat, and a couple of storerooms beyond and to the right.

I say that I was alone because I had made the customary circuit of all the rooms before coming to the gym, to assure myself that I would not be bothered by any outside influence.

During this year I had spent many nights alone at the piano, letting my hands begin on a chord arrangement or a boogie rhythm---anything to be found easily in the dark--until the pattern of the music was the least important thing. I had to keep my hands busy and so keep my mind off the past. Some evenings, when I stayed a very long time, my hands would gradually stop reacting and I would sit in the darkness, listening to the old building creaking as it was now.

I tightened my shoelaces before beginning. This, I've been told, was like wanting tight belts so that you'll feel less empty or having strong locks so that you'll see only your own face in the mirror.

As I began to play, I noticed that the piano seemed very loud, and I thought that the whole village would surely hear, althou it was almost a quarter-mile away. But every sound seemed loud, I noticed; I heard someone walk on the crusted snow in front of the school, then go on toward town.

I don't know exactly when it was that I heard a step in the hall upstairs. But I did tell myself that the step couldn't be a step, because I had looked everywhere and tested each door before sitting down to play.

Nevertheless, I listened.

I knew the number of steps on the stair -- there were fourteen to the concrete at the bottom, then four paces more and you were at the door. I knew the distance to the postoffice, to the store, and to the town's one bar. I counted everything. The trees in the yard. The hangers in the cloakroom. My heartbeats. The days until I could leave for some big city.

My hands still were forming chords, my mind still playing on numbers, when I found that I was counting the sounds on the stairs.

Perhaps it was just creaking. The whole building creaked incessantly, in winter and in summer. But I wondered whether fourteen steps in turn could be just creaking.

And then I heard the duller sound on the concrete landing. And I could feel a presence standing at the bottom of the stairs.

The windows were at my back, level with the ground, and now I saw a shadow at one of them. This I watched as it spread on the floor; I didn't turn to the windows themselves. I was about to, when I heard another step on the entry landing. Then three more.

I knew that seven more steps would bring the stepper to the piano, unless the steps stopped or turned away.

I was a fool, cold, and with a headache, playing in the dark.

The first step. One.

The shadow lay on the floor like a scarecrow---

Two...

I turned around, and there was nothing there, so I turned back.

Three...

Was the shadow I was watching just a decoy?

Four...

The shadow was a decoy. It lay on the floor, motionless, while the sound of the steps came closer.

Five...

Why were the steps suddenly cautious? Why were my hands stiff on the keys? Why was the moon dimming?

Six...

Did I want to know? Suddenly, I knew that I didn't.

Seven...

I couldn't turn---even when the shadow moved---

SOCIAL NOTE; Jonne (Th' Youn' Foo) Evans is now Mrs. William G. Hanlon. She was married Christmas Eve, in Detroit, Michigan, and shortly after the first of the year their address will be 18579 Evergreen Street, Detroit. Bill is a non-fan who works for the Hudson Motor Car Company, in the Advertising Department. We all wish them many years of connubial bliss, of course.

Harrison West

RECOVERED FROM DEMENTIA PRAECOX

Oh! I have journeyed in the mind
The strange and dismal trail from Dis,
Where gargoyles' screams fly on the wind,
And seen the writhing cookatrice.
Through swamps of fetid Pontine mist
Lurching against slimy covered stones,
Those who grim Medusa kissed.
Fleeing the tortured, broken groans,
I've climbed and scaled, yet know not how,
Over jagged flint the upward track
Where sunlight spreads the fog, and now,
Like Orpheus, dare not look back.

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DEDUCTION

by E.E. EVANS

"Now don't get me wrong, fellers," Bill Staut was saying. "I ain't got nuthin' agin eddication. Wish't I had some of it myself."

He paused to take a swig at his glass, while his audience sat in silent tribute such as befitted a member of the first crew to make a successful round trip to Mars.

"All I'm tryin' t' tell yuh," Bill continued, "is that sometimes a guy kin git so much eddication that he can't see nuthin' that's as plain as th' nose on yer face. Like the Spec-Techs on our ship.

"The 'Terra' got t' mars without no trouble, an' found nuthin' but desert at first. After we'd cruised aroun' a bit, we sees some ruins, an' stopped there t' see what we could make o' them."

No one appeared to notice that "we", rather incongruous since Bill had been but a tube-cleaner on the Slanship.

"We camped there fer nigh on t' two months, while the Spec-Techs was a-huntin' through that big ruined city -- must a been as big as St. Louis, maybe. They hunted an' dug an' puzzled over th' things they could find, but hadn't been able t' make head ner tail outta anything.

"We had a feller on th' ship, name o' Jack Speed. Kinda Jack-o'-all-trades, he was. Could fix anything mechanical, from an induction-heated cookin' pot to th' main atomic generators theirselves. Didn't have much eddication, but sure knew machines an' tools. That's why he was along -- t' fix anything an' evathing that needed fixin'.

"Well, one evenin' we heard th' big boys a'talkin' about a new buildin' they'd a'found. Seems like as how this'n was in better condition than most. They was sure they could tell somethin' about them there Martians from what they could find in there.

"But a week went by, an' they hadn't made nary a might o' progress. Then it so happened one day that their portable lights went flooie, an' Jack was called out t' fix 'em fer 'em. I was standin' by the port, an' he asked me t' come along an' help him carry his stuff. It were the first time either of us had been offa th' ship."

Bill paused to fix an injured-looking glance on his empty glass, and someone in the crowd immediately signalled the bar-keep to fill it. After that was done, Bill took a healthy swig, and then went on.

"Jack fixed th' lights, all right, an' in jightime, too. Then him an' me sorta wandered around th' building, looking things over. After awhile, Jack stopped where the crowd of Spec-Techs was lookin' at th' ~~res-~~ains of a machine, er sump-in'. They was argufyin' at th' top o' their voices, an' no two of 'em could agree, except that none o' 'em really knew what it was all about.

"Jack listened awhile, an' then coughed sorta apologetically

an' said, 'Gentlemen, this was either a small factory or a machine shop, and that was some sort of a lathe'.

"They looks at him in astonishment, an' then one of 'em said, 'I suppose you can tell us what th' martians looked like?'

"Jack sorta grinned, an' said, 'Well, not exactly, but they were taller than we are, and had seven fingers.'

"They goes wild-like, then, an' hollered an' yelled at him. Finally, th' Chief Spec-Tech asked him how he knew.

"'Nothing much to it, if you've been around machine shops all your life like I have', Jack answered civilly. 'Th' arrangement of th' ruins of th' machines here tells you they was set in th' most economical way, is aisles and rows as they would have been in either a factory or a machine shop. Then, there's some ree- mains of little metal curlicues and shavings here on the floor, so this must have been a lathe of some sort. Notice that bench tning there by the wall?' They all ran over to it. 'It's about six inches higher than would be comfortable even fer a tall man to work at, so they must have been taller than we are. An' those scratches on th' wall above th' bench--that shows they had seven fingers.'

"Then Jack walks away, leaving a puzzled bunch o' Spec-Techs, who even then didn't tumble at first to Jack's meanin', and he had to come back an' explain those scratches to 'em."

Bill stopped, and finished off his glass, while his audience clamored for the rest of the story. He looked at them disgusted- ly.

"Gosh, you're dumb as th' Spec-Techs," he said, and spat. "here, somebody, give me a pencil."

He drew some marks on a piece of paper, then got up and walked away, while the group crowded about and puzzled over:

////// //

THE END

"JUST A MINUTE," (continued from page 6)

published in folio-form by the NFFF. Everette thought that this would be a good creative and recreative task for the club.

Nominations were takne for the post of club chairman. Gus Willmorth was simultaneously nominated by E. Everette Evans and Jean Cox for re-election. Jean Cox was nominated by Kenneth Bonnell as a competing candidate.

THE END

"CONDITIONED RESPONSE," (continued from page 11)

When the phase of the experiment had barely begun, we were interrupted by an agent of the Antivivesection Society of America, and the subject's mother, Mrs. Forever P., both of whom demanded that we "immediately cease this pointless slaughter", a typical layman's point of view. As Ayan shortly afterwards became some- what deceased, we have since been tied up in bigoted ligitation. Thus, at this time, we have been unable to deduce any theories relative to this experiment.

DICK BEELER

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distinction

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