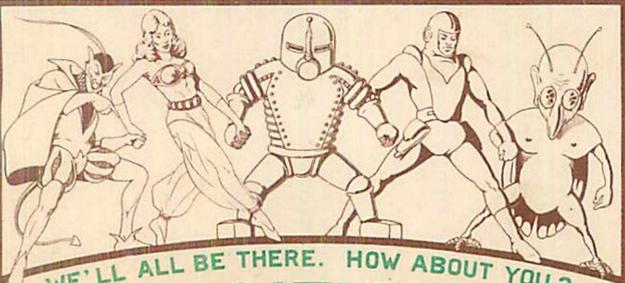


F33

FANTASY JACKPOT



NUMBER TWO
FOR FAPA -- FALL, 1945



WE'LL ALL BE THERE. HOW ABOUT YOU?

PACIFICON

JULY 4, 5, 6, 7.

THE STONE

Tony was prowling about the beach, looking for garnets, agates, shells, or any other interesting jetsam produced by the spring tides, when he found the stone. He couldn't help but find it, for the sunlight seemed focussed by it into a beam which flashed across his vision so that he turned---and saw it lying there amongst seaweed and driftwood, glowing as if filled with its own radiance. Blue it was, his favourite colour, the pure blue of the sky in May captured in this smooth shining stone. Not very large, perhaps---but much, much larger than any precious stone he had ever seen, larger even than the bits of coloured glass he occasionally found on the beach and gave to his sisters as "jewels". When he held it in his hand and felt its hard coolness and saw it gleam as if newly polished he could hardly believe he was not dreaming, for he had often dreamed of finds such as this, rich impossible finds of exotic shells or jewels, finds which always seemed real enough no matter how fantastic they appeared afterwards when he was awake. He pinched and squeezed and rubbed the lovely thing, tremulous delight growing in him. Much harder than glass, it must be, because it had not, like glass thrown up by the sea, had its surface fretted and dulled by constant jostling amongst other stones: harder than any of the stones on the beach, he thought exulting, for none of them shone like this. He shouted, and then, as the others came running (for Tony's finds were always the most exciting) had a sudden impulse to concealment. When they came panting up, he showed them merely an extra large toenail-shell which he had found, orange and iridescent within; fooling the smoothness of the stone in his pocket as they chattered and squealed.

For the rest of the day he was in an abstraction---"one of Tony's moods", as his mother said, and only half of him was there while they played beach-baseball and had their picnic and dug for clams and swam. He could feel the stone's presence almost as if it were a person of whom he was particularly fond and would like to be alone with. When they got home he ran out at once to the shed where, as the oldest, he was allowed to store all his possessions, and sat dreamily and looked at his new treasure. Even in the dark of the shed he could see its blueness. He shone his flashlight on it, and it filled itself with azure radiance, glowing as it had when he had found it.

He didn't speculate about what it was or where it came from: but he had a curious feeling that, deep down in his mind, he knew the answers to those questions. He felt, too, that it must be very old, at least as old as the Earth itself, and almost if not quite proof against destruction, and he had no feat of putting it to the test. He got his little hammer from the tool-box, and, placing the stone on the cement floor, hit it with all his might. As he expected, nothing happened. But there were more drastic tests he could apply to it, confident that it would survive them. He put the stone beneath the point of a big nail, and tried to split it by hammering the nail. He would have been desolated if he'd succeeded---but each test enhanced the value of the stone if it was passed successfully. After two or three taps on the nail the stone skidded away into a corner and lay there, glimmering in the light from the cob-wobby little window: it hadn't even been scratched. So Tony passed to his third test. Going out into the garden, he lit a little bonfire of twigs, and, when it was burning well, dropped the stone into the heart of it. Even in his certainty of mind he felt a slight pang as he did this (for there had been times when his estimate of the resistance of some treasure had been at fault); but he piled on more twigs and scraps of paper, and kept the blaze going

fiercely for a quarter of an hour. He could see the stone shining in the centre of the fire: it hadn't melted or chipped, and the colour of it was not red, but still blue. As the fire died down he danced around it and sang a psalm of the stone's triumph. "Tony's a queer child," his mother would say, "He doesn't seem to value anything he hasn't found or made for himself---it's not the slightest use giving him things. ---And yet those treasures of his have to take a terrible beating from him, don't they, Tony?" And she'd pinch his cheek, and he'd blush.

He showed the stone to some of the fellows at school next day. Most of them weren't impressed, though they agreed it was "pretty". But Tony's particular friend Steve was fascinated by it.

"Like a sea-serpent's eye," he said.

"Sea-serpents wouldn't have blue eyes, sap!"

"Well, it isn't blue, it's sort of greenish."

Tony was thunderstruck. "Nuts!" he said, "You're colourblind. Hero---" he turned to fat, loud, stupid, cheerful Pete, who was kicking a ball about the school-yard, "hero, what colour d'you say this stone is? Steve's crazy, he says it's green."

Pete gave his great red-and-white grin. He liked being appealed to on intellectual matters. He appeared to deliberate, scratched his head, struck exaggerated poses of thought. "Well," he said eventually, "I'd say it was red---not bright red ---strawberry-jam-coloured." Steve roared with laughter, and Pete, as much hurt as he could be, turned away. Tony didn't laugh. He put the stone in his pocket and said no more of it. Later on Steve tried to bring the subject up, but was rebuffed.

That evening Tony retired again to his shed to ponder the matter. The stone was queer. It looked different to different people. He sat and stared at it until he lost consciousness of himself, until its blue unwinking glow seemed to expand and fill all the space around him. Faintly, from very far, a myriad voices seemed to be calling him, some warning, some infinitely enticing. Sounds had always had a special enchantment for him---he had a queer habit of translating sights into sounds, so that for him the beauty of his stone had partly the quality of a sound. The enticing voices had just this kind of sound, and were persuading him to ignore the more prosaic warning ones. Deeper and deeper he sank into the blue mist....He was aroused by hearing his name insistently called.

"Tony!" It was his mother. "Tony, come and be sociable. Hero's Doctor Berlitz come in for the evening, and he wants to see how you're getting on." Reluctantly Tony went, clutching his stone, entered the brightly lit living-room, bashfully shook hands with the visitor.

"Well, not so much bigger than he was last time I was here---but I'll bet he's tough---or perhaps he's going to be a genius?"

Tony hated this kind of talk, as impersonal as if he weren't there; his sisters loved it. He shuffled his feet and dropped the stone on the floor. As he was retrieving it, the doctor got a glimpse of it.

"Hello, young man, what have you got there?"

"Just a stone."

"Find it yourself?"

"Yes, on the beach."

"Let's have a look." The stone was taken from Tony, who scowled. "This is quite a find, young fellow---not sure that I can put a name to it. But I tell you what, I've got a friend who knows about these things, and if I could take it to him...." He stopped, as Tony's scowl deepened.

"No, don't want to know what it is." Ungraciously, holding out his hand for it.

"Tony, dear, don't be so rude." His mother turned to the doctor. "I'm afraid he's often like this over his finds when they're fresh. He'll not be so anxious about it in a little while."

Tony faced them, hands tightly clenched. "I don't go poking into other fellows' things, telling 'em what they are when they know all the time...."

"You know what it is?" Tony nodded. "What, then?" Amused, the doctor was baiting him gently. Tony improvised desperately.

"I've read about it somewhere. It's the only one there is, and it's got no name because the guys who knew about it were afraid to call it anything, and its colour changes when a different guy is looking at it" ("Tony, dear, don't say guy") "and a guy wrote a book about it saying it's very old and it doesn't belong to the earth at all and that's why it can do things like it does and it's been lost a long time....." He stopped, breathless, and was relieved to hear the laughter that greeted his outburst.

Relieved---because he knew, suddenly, that what he'd been telling them was true ---or as true as it could be when rendered in boyish speech. And why didn't he want them to know the truth? They mustn't, that's all he knew.

When he went to bed he put the stone on his bureau. And on the nights that followed it always rested there.

As time went on his schoolfellows noticed a change in Tony. He was growing quieter and more reserved. Often when they spoke he didn't answer, and even during lessons he was inattentive. He seemed to be looking far away, or perhaps listening to distant sounds. And in truth that is what he was doing: he was listening to those voices which first he had heard soon after he found the stone, when he had been looking at it. Now that he and the stone had been together for quite a while (he didn't like saying it belonged to him---that sounded and felt all wrong) he could hear the voices at any time by just listening in the right way---hundreds of different ones, some calling and some repelling. Human they were, the warning ones, and perhaps even fainter than they had been at first. The enticing voices were of quite a different kind, and stronger now---when he listened to them they merged into just one voice, a strange inhuman voice that did not speak in words at all, but sang and whispered and throbbed and roared like the wind itself, but having too a mystery about it that might hold a hint of terror. At night, while the stone lay on his bureau, he would lie and listen to those voices, the human ones saying "Go back", he felt, and the other strange mixed voices calling him to..... to what? No, perhaps more telling him of things, of beautiful and exciting and perhaps terrible things that lay just ahead. Sometimes he would gaze into the stone as he had gazed on that second day, until he lost himself in a well of blueness. When he did this, time ceased to have any meaning, and he could not tell how long he might have been rapt. Once he was only aroused by nightfall. He had been so quiet that his parents had thought him out somewhere, and perhaps lost.

His family began to notice his altered looks and behaviour, his pallor and quietness and inattention. Doctor Berlitz was summoned professionally. But he could find nothing really wrong with Tony. He prescribed a tonic. Tony was impatient and restless during the interview---he hated having his body prodded and listened to by a virtual stranger, and was glad when it was over and he could listen once more. The mysterious summoning voice was stronger now, and more urgent, and Tony felt that with just a little more concentration he would be able to understand what it was saying. He was beginning to feel, too, that when he was listening to the stone his mind was somehow richer and full of more exciting possibilities than when he was using it for everyday things. He seemed to know more, even to remember things which had never really happened to him, to know of many of the mysteries and

wonders of the world as things which he had seen for himself. Sometimes when looking into the stone he felt as if looking out on unfamiliar landscapes which none the less aroused some dim memory: white beaches watched over by waving palm-trees, and brilliantly blue seas; or gnashing ice-floes heaving in the swell that was trying to break them up, under skies leaden with snow; or strange cities steeped in fog or in oriental sunshine. Sometimes these landscapes were totally alien, giving him the feeling of immeasurable distance from where he sat enthralled. These ones terrified but at the same time fascinated him; like the voice.

As he communed more and more with the stone, he took less and less interest or pleasure in ordinary things, and he found that as his mental existence with the stone grew deeper and more enchanting, he grudged every minute not spent in listening; everything else was dull and bothersome, it was as if he couldn't spare much of his mind for it, or even as if he hadn't so much to spare. He would find himself standing in the street, having forgotten to walk, and, what's more, having forgotten momentarily how to walk. He would have to observe other people walking and then make a great effort before he could again do it himself. Or sitting at table, forgetting to eat, heedless of the mockery of his brothers and sisters or his mother's worried look. Speech, the product of hundreds of conditioned reflexes, became more and more difficult and irksome---in answer to a simple question he would have to hunt desperately in his mind for words which seemed almost meaningless, to string them together in ways which grew less and less familiar.

His mother and father were now very worried about him, and one evening a strange doctor came to see him, a Dr. Murray. He was an unusual kind of doctor, because he didn't examine Tony physically at all---he just asked him questions. Curious questions, about the way things were related to other things, others about things which had happened to Tony when he was younger. Tony knew he should be able to answer these questions easily, but he couldn't. Sometimes when in a way he knew the answer he couldn't find words in which to express it. And always now the strange voice, quite loud in his ears and almost intelligible, was enticing, calling, urging, almost commanding, confusing his attempts to reason, thwarting the struggles against it of his too deeply buried instincts. Now Dr. Murray, his face very serious, wasn't asking questions any longer but just saying single words, and making Tony say other words, any word that came into his mind, in return. Often Tony couldn't think of any word at all. However, when Dr. Murray said "blue" instantly the word "stone" leapt into Tony's mind, but when he tried to say it he couldn't. It was as if the strong strange voice was telling him not to, and though his instincts cried out that it must be said, his brain wouldn't respond, he was tongue-tied. He felt suddenly frightened, and tears came into his eyes. Dr. Murray placed a gentle hand on his head, and told him to run along. Tony couldn't move for a moment, and then he managed to stumble to the door and away. As he went, Dr. Murray had turned to his father and mother, and his expression was still graver. He was saying something about the subconscious mind.....about a most unusual case.....

But Tony was in his room now, listening to the rich symphony of a voice that called and bewitched (the warning human voices so very faint now) and watching the myriad scenes which he didn't exactly see, but felt he had just been seeing. They made him sad in a way, and he was sadder still when he realised that one of these scenes was that very beach on which he had found the stone.

A sound from outside broke into his consciousness: that of the stone rolling off the bureau and along the floor. Someone with reasoning powers might have thought it curious that the stone should roll slightly uphill. But all Tony knew, instinctively, was that he must put it back, and this he struggled to do, with muscles whose coordination had almost gone. As he fumbled it back into place he looked at it with eyes which could see practically nothing else: it was a much darker blue than it had been---almost black.

The harmony of voices were stronger now, and somehow more urgent and irresistible. Tony was entirely enveloped in alien sound and scene; wholly oblivious to his physical surroundings. The warning voices were gone, and forgotten. Surprisingly, the stone seemed to grow in size, and deepen in hue. It was spreading across the bureau, enlarging as its hold over Tony's soul grew stronger, stronger than it had ever dared be before.

The hardness and brilliant coolness of the blue spread over Tony like a blanket. The myriad voices rose in a crescendo that spread up from a whisper to a shriek. Tony, all terror gone, submitted himself unreservedly to its unearthly charm.

Dusk was creeping into the empty room, the dusk that obscures colours and leaves everything a drab grey. A spot of cool blue light flickered briefly from the top of the bureau, then danced its way to the edge. It fell --- or floated --- to the floor, and slipped away towards the window.....

Arleen dug herself down into the shrubbery to a more concealing spot and watched the others dash past in search of those who had not yet been caught. Then she saw it, half covered by a brown leaf; a stone such as she had never seen before. She reached out and grasped it. It was hard --- hard as steel --- and with the same polished tinge of silver-grey.....

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Editorial

Chapter One
Composite Corruption

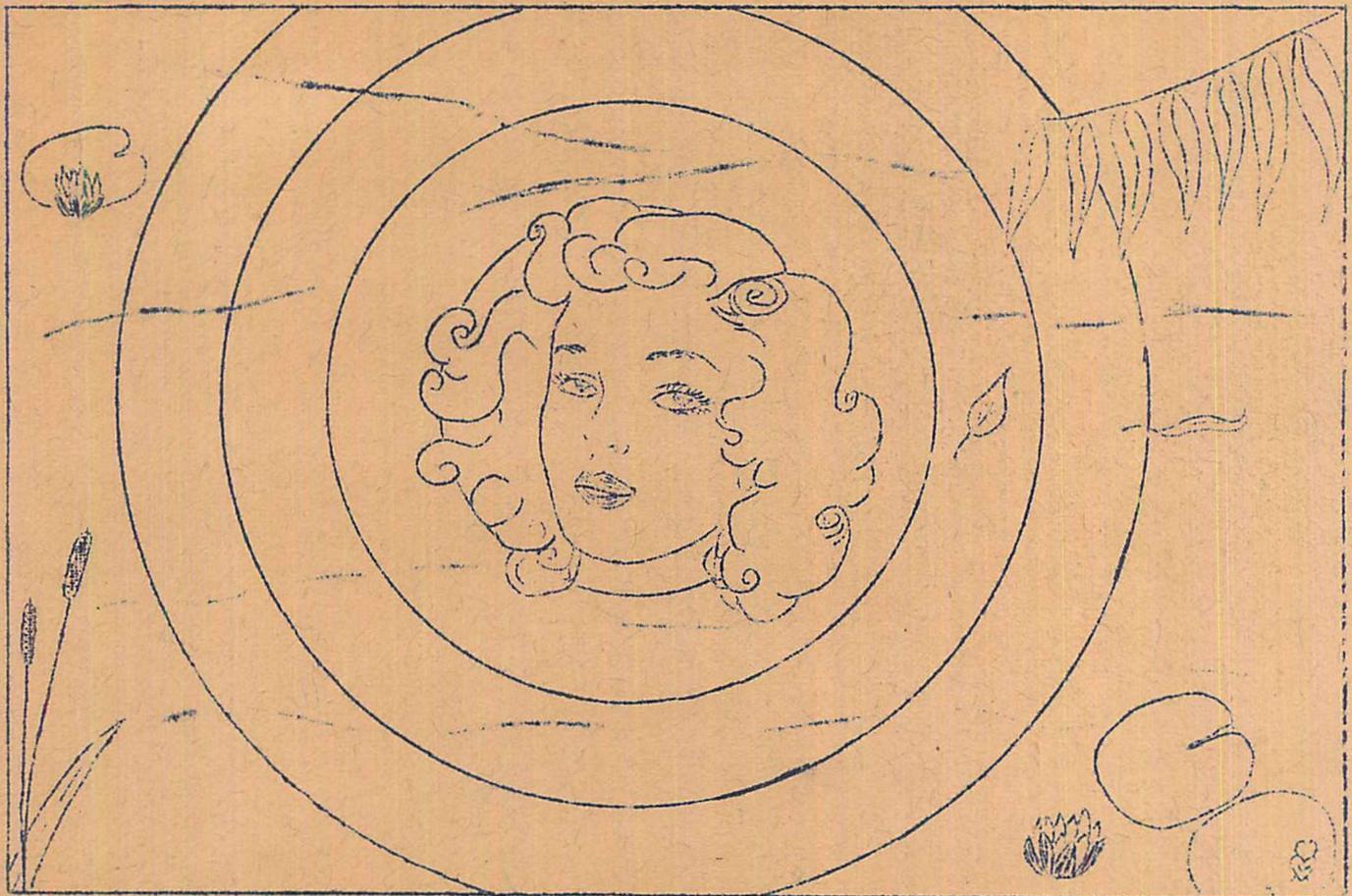
When three of us --- Mel Brown, Mike Fern, and myself --- realized that we each had to have something in the Fall mailing in order to remain in Fapa, someone (I think it was me) had a brainwave of the first magnitude. We were to put out a 24 page magazine between the three of us, thus actually saving time and trouble and work in running it off and putting it together.

Mel was highly in favor of the idea (even supplied the name), because he was to be leaving for New York soon and couldn't spend the time putting one of his own out what with packing and all. Furthermore, he had several pages of stories, poetry, etc., all run off for a proposed but never completed mag. Mike agreed to it because he hadn't had a chance to contribute to Fapa while he was doing so much moving about. I was deeply enthusiastic because it promised to get out my Fapazine without involving a great deal of work --- Mel had several pages already done, and Mike is as industrious as they come --- which was about the only reason why I had progressed no farther than getting a few pages of material ready every three months, and which always was dated by the time I should have gotten it out of the way.

Needless to say, it didn't work out quite that way. Mel left; then Mike unexpectedly got his boat priority and headed for Hawai, so it was left entirely up to me. Detailed apologies for the error on the cover that says this is #2 and other things I'm responsible for will be found on Page 12.

Andy Anderson

OCTOBER SUNSET



Nicholas Caddell was Irish, but his behaviour did not proclaim it. He had lived most of his life in the flat and comfortable county of Cambridgeshire, which seemed, by contrast, so infinitely preferable to his dilapidated family estate on the west coast of Ireland. He had, of course, been there with his family several times, but the place had bored him. It rained, there was no cricket, there were no books, and the company was sparse and peculiar.

So at the age of twenty-three, when he left University College, he might have been said to be a confirmed Englishman, with an Englishman's love of London and approval of respectable country pursuits, kept strictly in their place, of course. He had not the least vestige of an Irish accent or temperament. His only characteristic that declared him to be unmistakably an Irishman was his appearance--black disorderly hair, long wondering nose, speculative blue eyes and a sensitive humorous mouth.

He was a mathematician, a brilliant one, and after the University it took him only a week to get an important mathematical job at the British Museum. He settled in lodgings, went to work, and that was that. In a few years he had sunk so completely into his life and routine of brilliant, precise brain movements that he could hardly have been stirred out of it with a bomb--one might have said.

He had a few friends--mostly young men like himself, of considerable theoretical intelligence, with whom he played chess and discussed abstract scientific questions. They all liked him and were delighted by his work, but they said he was a little too inhuman.

"The trouble with you is," said Stowe, a merry-eyed chemist who was about to win the Nobel prize, "that you have no ordinary human failings. You have worked out the whole of your life by mathematics, and your infernal mind is always on the watch, refusing to let you make the slightest slip. Moreover you refuse to believe in anything which is mathematically not correct and logical--a very rash philosophy.

"Look at the difference between us: I swear at my lab. boy, I am quite likely to forget my latchkey, and I am never surprised when I find that I have been trying to use sodium sulphate instead of potassium. I am fond of cats and I go to plays. I have a very happy life. I am superstitious--slightly--I have a profound belief in the ill-effects of going on a journey on a Friday, because I have often proved them myself.

"But your life is sterile. You believe in nothing, you enjoy nothing. You don't even smoke. You might as well be an ascetic. And the curious thing is that it is not the life that you were meant for. I don't know how you got into it, but you have certainly taken a wrong turning somewhere." He stopped, and looked pugnaciously at Caddell, who smiled and shook his head.

"You have forgotten my one failing," he answered, "which is mathematics itself. I can't get away from it. It fascinates me. I believe in it as implicitly as you believe in your Friday journoys, I love it as you never loved your cats and your concerts, and it comes in between me and everything else. Anything which cannot be proved by it is no use to me."

Stowe shook his head. He was not satisfied, but he saw the futility of arguing with a mind like that. And so Caddell might have gone on living and died, no doubt, at an advanced age, dried and pulverised with mathematics. But it was not to be. A sudden, fateful happening shattered the trend of his life, and left him lost, in the ruins of his philosophy.

He saw a fairy.

It was on a fine October evening. He had finished some particular work, and, as his habit was, went out for a rapid walk in Kensington Gardens, because the cold vigorous evening air braced his brain and stimulated it to further activity that night.

He was standing on a bridge, watching with observant eyes the hesitating fall of leaves and the way in which rings on the water widened and intersected when they touched it. He heard his name spoken. Very softly and quietly, so softly, indeed, that he instantly thought that it was a voice in his own mind. He looked down into the pool again, and there, below, looking up at him, was the most mournful, the most beautiful face that he had ever seen.

It was no earthly face. A pair of sorrowful eyes looked up into his, but there was no movement. A chestnut leaf reeled across the image, disturbing it, and when the water settled again, it had gone. He looked behind him, hoping to see someone there, but of course there was no one. And so he walked home, racked with uncertainty.

Curiously enough he never, for an instant, thought that he was mad. Possibly it was because he was so accurate. He knew his own state of mind. He knew he was

not the sort of person who went mad, and so it never occurred to him, when crossing the Channel of a rough day, to wonder if he was drunk, simply because he could not stand upright.

But in some ways it would have been easier for him if he had thought that he was mad. For now he was faced with this disastrous conjunction of ideas--he had seen it and he knew that it did not exist. There was no room for such a thing in a mathematical universe, and therefore he did not believe in it, but how was he to reconcile this with the fact that at least, if it did not exist in space, it had created its image and memory in his mind?

He walked home through crowded London, where shop windows were beginning to glow a friendly yellow, and it seemed to him that he had never known unhappiness before. His mind paced round and round its little circle.

He tried to eradicate it with work, but it was no use. It haunted his mind like a loose end, a problem that had never been solved, and never would be solved.

Next day it seemed to him that he saw leprechauns in dark corners, and in the quiet dusk there were strange horns sounding for him. He became mortally afraid. But in the evening he went out for his walk as before, through crowds of invisible beings who thronged his path silently.

The Round Pond was like a placid silver mirror. No voice stirred its peace and no reflection marred its ripples. He walked on past it, with one devil layed, and the other up and crying aloud. He came to a windswept puddle, roused by a chance breath, which quieted as he passed it. And there was the face. The eyes sought his, with a thousand questions in them. And although he neither heard it nor felt it with any of his senses, he knew that she spoke to him. A dog barked, and one of those long, slow, autumn silences fell around him. She was gone.

He went on, and walked, unnoticed, farther than ever before. He knew that he loved a creature whose existence he denied. He could not forget her, try as he would. He found strange things coming into his mind, sayings and snatches of songs. All night phantom horsemen moved up and down the street under his window and shadowy hounds bayed. In the morning he woke, haggard and wan-eyed.

He told Stowe, who listened with a grave face and dancing eyes, and then said, "It's a judgment on you, old man. You 've reverted to type with a vengeance."

"What can I do?" he asked desperately. "I shall begin to believe that I don't exist myself, soon."

"Take a grip on yourself," warned Stowe, but he could give very little practical advice.

Caddell went about his work with the feeling, for the first time, that there must be a dangerous flaw in it. Could the whole principle of mathematics be wrong? Off went his mind on its little track.

He went out sooner than usual that evening, while the sun was still in the sky. He walked far and fast, and found himself on London Bridge, just as the sun balanced, a red ball, on the horizon. His mind was a turmoil, in which no thought was distinct.

The sun slid underneath, leaving a pale green sky, clear as a shell. The face was there, listening, as it seemed to him, for his answer, in a vast silence. A faint milky star lit in the sky, and when he looked for the face again it had vanished, silently and incomprehensibly as it always did. And it seemed to him that it had never been.

RIGHTY MEN in KAUAI LEGEND



ETHEL M. DAMON

In days when the spirit world of the supernatural still hovered close to the everyday world of people and things, stories of giants and gigantic exploits were frequently recounted on the island of Kauai. Even the Menehune were giants in their numbers and in their accomplishments, although their individual stature was small. It is well known that they performed prodigious feats such as heiau building on the other islands, particularly on Hawaii, but apparently nowhere in the islands except at Waimea on Kauai did they cut and fit great rocks, facing them square and true, to line a watercourse of considerable extent.

Why should canoes using mat sails have first been used on Kauai? No one can say, except that Pakaa, a lad who lived on the cliff at Kapaa, used to watch fishermen straining to paddle heavily laden canoes and bethought himself to try what the wind might do to help. Putting up two sticks in his canoe to hold a triangle of woven mat solved his question.

Not a gigantic feat? Indeed it was just that. And how Kauai folk did love to tell that tale over and over, especially of his winning a big wager. For, carefully concoaling masts and sail, Pakaa paddled out to the fishing grounds, took a few fish, then wagered these against the whole catch, if he beat the older fishermen to the shore. They laughed, thinking him but a child in strength. But when they had turned toward the shore, up went his little masts and sail and he skimmed lightly over the water, easily outdistancing them.

Whether because of her bountiful food supply or her isolation from other-island wars, Kauai certainly reared men of great bodily prowess. Even the little island of Niihau had her giants. One of them one day hurled his spear so furiously at Limaloa, a Kauai giant, that the impact of the spear against the Anahola peak rent the rocks asunder and left the great hole which may still be seen from miles below.

Uninjured, Limaloa, or Long Arm, strode giant-wise across the island ---some thirty miles in a couple of steps---wrenched a lump of rock off the cliff near Polihale and hurled it across the seventeen to twenty mile channel at the Niihau giant, who was crushed by its weight and completely buried under it on the shore.

Proof of the tale seems indisputable. For the great boulder still lies where it fell, a piece of Kauai rock quite different from any Niihau rock formation and spacious enough to shelter from storm or sun, as it frequently does, a whole flock of Niihau sheep. And to this day it is called Giant's Rock, Pohaku o Kamailo.

As a prodigy of size and strength, Kauahoa, Giant of Hanalei, stands preeminent. Legend reports his exact height and the height of his mighty club. But even more stories cluster about the memory of his boyhood rivals, Kawelo and the young prince, Aikanaka.

Kawelo was born near the Wailua river on east Kauai. The same day, Kauahoa and Aikanaka were born and the three lads were brought up by Kawelo's grandparents at Wailua. All day long Kawelo paddled up and down the river, developing an appetite for a whole imu or oven full of food at one time.



The three boys became expert in fishing, paddling, spear-throwing, rowing. The spears of twice forty men Kawelo could avoid and parry. And when he came home at night he ate forty laulau, or bundles, of pork steamed in a ground oven. Jealous of Kawelo's canoe, Kauahoa flew a kite. Not to be outdone, Kawelo acquired a kite too and slyly tangled his cord with the other so that Kauahoa's kite broke loose and floated away to the Koloa hills, a defeat for Kauahoa who, though growing to a great size, was no match for Kawelo in a war of wits.

Even Kawelo's paddling became prodigious, for once when fishing on Oahu a single stroke of the paddle shot his canoe from Waikiki to Kou, as Honolulu was then known. Here he captured the wizard fish, Uhumakikai, which in its death struggles dragged Kawelo's canoe to Kauai and back (200 miles) in a day and a night of strange journeying.

Learning from a vision that his parents on Kauai were being oppressed by King Aikanaka, Kawelo embarked with his wife and brothers and quickly crossed the channel to Wailua, where the enemy planned an easy victory. One of the king's leaders Kawelo met in single combat, but merely sliced off an ear and a finger, because he was a blood relative.

Eight hundred fighting men did the king send to the beach against Kawelo. All were routed by Kawelo and his friends. When they brought the leader in as prisoner, Kawelo felled him with a single blow of Kuikaa (Whizzing Point), his war club, then shouted his call of triumph:

You are smitten by Kuikaa, the avenger,
The one that grinds up the rock foundation!
Here is the cock that accomplishes;
One kick and you easily collapse!

Encamped behind the ridge of Nounou, Aikanaka and his few remaining men watched Kawelo's small force leave the beach and approach. Trying to taunt them into a paroxysm of fear, the king's men jeered at him, "O Kawelo, you ugly, low born little minnow of Wailua!" One version calls him a counter of cockroaches. And Kawelo actually started to leap over the precipice, smitten with shame that his wife should hear him reviled as a slave and base-born. But she, valiant woman, accompanying her man as usual into battle, caught him back from the pali and he, recovering, shouted, "The cock is king!" The implication being that the cock roosts higher than the head of the King, Kawelo thus asserts his superiority.

Lastly, Kauahoa, Giant of Hanalei, hearing of the defeat of Aikanaka's fighting men, strode forth across the hills, to avenge their death and to wipe out forever his boyhood humiliation when Kawelo had snared his kite. Picture the giant, if you can. Higher than some of our tallest trees he stood, one hundred and twenty feet, with the strength of eight streams of water or eight companies of forty men. As his tread resounded through the mountains above Kilauea, he uprooted a first growth koa tree with birds perching in its branches. Leaves that he stripped off took root and formed a creeping, trunkless koa tree which was never found elsewhere than at Kahilikolo and which was still growing there a few years ago.

The country people shouted as he passed and thereby was Kawelo warned. For the first time he knew the taste of fear, as he saw the giant descending the mountainside and realized that his own war club of ten fathoms in length would reach only to the giant's middle. In this last extremity, Kawelo called his wife to bring her pikoi, a snare of thong and stick. He bade her watch the time, hearken his command in the paha, or challenge that he would chant, and then swiftly fling the snare up into the branches of Kauahoa's tree-club over

at lead. This she speedily did, to the giant's bewilderment. Instantly, Kawelo directed a blow between the legs of his adversary, dividing his body in half from bottom to top."

Enmity still persisted with King Aikanaka, who heard that the one form of combat Kawelo had never mastered was that of fighting with stones. Unsuspecting, Kawelo advanced with his war spear. A stone from a slingshot struck him, then stones were hurled by many hands so swiftly that he was buried from sight and thought to be dead. But recovering, he moved from side to side, scattering the stones until he could swing Kuikaa, his war club.

Nothing availed. They overpowered him with a second shower of stones. Again and yet again and again he gathered strength but every time more and more slowly. The fifth and last great pile of stones seemed to be indeed his grave. Exulting in his death, the people took up his body on a bier, and carrying it to Maulili, Koloa, bound it to a tree, with his war club tied to a branch. They left two men to guard him, planning on the morrow to strip the flesh from his bones.

"At the first crowing of the cock" Kawelo stirred so that the guards started in fright, thinking him a ghost. "Give me my club," he commanded, but the strength of the two men was not enough to lift the great club up to him. Then Kawelo began to chant, calling to his brother, whom his spirit-sense knew to be approaching from the sea:

A small cloud
The small dark canoe of Kamalama! . . .
Swiftly flies the cloud . . .
The dawn is a road for thee, O Kamalama!
You from the seashore, I from the uplands,
We two will route Aikanaka at noontide
And rattle his chin on the pebbles!

Hearing this skilful chanting and knowing Kawelo's prowess, the guards fled away. Coming down from the tree, Kawelo seized his club and began the slaughter in the uplands. Both his brothers advanced from the sea, slaying as they passed. "Only the fastest runners escaped by their tail feathers." Kawelo's foster son was found guilty of betraying him and Kawelo, though he loved him, "smote him with his war-club until he died." Kawelo's war cry was then shouted, but was followed by an elegy on happier days:

Cold are the companionless hills
Where we slept, O my son! . . .

This was the last of Kawelo's battles. He rejoined his beloved wife at Hanalei and they grew old at Wailua. There he died and "no one knows where his body is buried."

Giant shadows often cross the Kauai landscape even today. In the half light of dusk or early dawn a phantom Limaloa, Giant of Kekaha, still strides across the sand flats of Nohili, spear in hand, and clad in feather helmet and long feather cloak. On the bank of the Waimea River at the first swinging bridge ten or twelve of the great squared stones may be found along the old Menehune ditch. Kawelo's Spring, Ka Punawai O Kawelo, created by a thrust of Kuikaa, his mighty war spear, still flows into the Wailua River above the falls.

The low ridge at Wailua-kai, behind which Aikanaka's men were encamped, shows, strangely enough, the profile of a man lying on the ground, and is called today the Sleeping Giant, although its ancient name, Mounou, meant to fight by hurling stones. And some versions of unpublished legends relate that in one of his encounters with Kauhooa Kawelo's war club, Whizzing Point, tore the gaping hole in Anaholu rock.

Just as one turns from Wainiha toward Haena legend marks a low black rock jutting out into the bay as an indisputable reminder of the days when mighty men walked the shores of Kauai. Like a long, thick tongue it thrusts itself into the surf, and such indeed it is said to be, although which Kauai giant was here slain and thrown to the sharks echo no longer recalls. The body was readily devoured by the monsters of the deep, until they came to the tongue which proved so hard and tough that it was rejected even by a shark and thrown back on the shore. Credible indeed this seems, for the cruel and insulting taunts which these Polynesian giants constantly shouted at each other might well have turned their tongues into black lava rock!

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Editorial

Chapter Two
The Defiler

First, credits: cover by Mils Frome, Canadian; "The Stone", the story which leads off the magazine, is a reprint from the first issue of Beyond, and was written by Dr J K Aiken. "October Sunset", illustrated by Lora Ruth Crozett, was from the same magazine and was the work of Miss J D Aiken. Illustration on page 14 is by Alva Rogers. The back cover looks like Willie Watson's work, but was one of those run off by Mel Brown and he left no word concerning it. The book reviews were also left in manuscript form by Mel, and I am assuming they were taken from the London Times' Literary Supplement, as the initials LFLS were found after most of them, although Mel might very well have written some of them himself. The ratings, I believe, are his. This sort of guesswork in credits is indicative of the way this entire magazine is being edited and published.

Unfortunately, Mel had only the first four pages of "The Stone" completed, with about half a page not yet copied from Beyond. Worse yet, the couple of copies of Beyond that were once in possession of the localites have disappeared. So, I was forced to write in the ending from what Mel had mentioned about it. My portion is that found on page five. I agree with Dr Aiken in saying it's a nasty trick and a rotten ending.

So that was what I was up against. A half-completed magazine, material scattered from here to Hell, and a decided ignorance of who was supposed to receive credit for it. I can thank, though, and do, F T Laney, F J Ackerman and Gerry Hewitt, who helped to the limits of their feeble capacity.

Now, to cap it off, the LASFS mimeo has sprung a spring and won't work, with six pages yet to run off. You may not be reading this until the middle of 1946 after all.

Grievously,

Andy Anderson

(for)

Mel Brown
Mike Fern
himself

THE OUTLAW OF POORN

134

Sgt. Edgar Rice Ackerman

This, gentle reader, is a semi-serious discussion of pornography, a rather disgusting subject, and one on which I am not the least bit ~~anxious to appear~~ myself as an authority. I don't know how I got talked into this anyway. I ~~now~~ mentioned an odd discovery I'd made, and before I knew it, Editor Daniels had extracted a promise from me to write it up. I never got to follow it up; and if I had, I undoubtedly would have had to clean it up. So, with deadline staring me in the face, not to mention Editor Daniels (and I could tell you which is worse, but why become obscene?) I am forced to put a lot of preamble and padding in this ambling pudding to enlarge it to anything ~~resembling~~ a page-length article.

All it amounts to is that I learned about an avocation you'll never hear described on Hobby Lobby: the academic collection of pornography. The search after obscure, rare, foreign titles on fornication and filth. The accumulation of sexy fotos, prurient pamphlets, bacch--er--dirty books, all on an intellectual level.

It came about when, as editor of my GI paper, I interviewed a new officer. Talk developed from the pinup pix adorning (mostly unadorning) my office. And after awhile the captain was telling me some stuff that would never make copy for my interview but might interest you if you letch yourself go.

It seems he has been collecting pornography twenty five years -- as a hobby! That some states have a license for this sort of thing, so that you can be a recognized collector (that is, if you aren't bashful and want to remain incognito) not subject to arrest or fines. This was a revelation to me. Not that I intend to bust out and get me a license for licentiousness, but I thought it amazing such a low art should be developed to such a status.

The officer explained to me how his curiosity had been aroused by the material confiscated when he was on the police force. He met another collector, and got interested in building up his own selection.

My own position of pornography is that it is a rather fascinauseating subject. The captain was interested in determining just how low the human mind could sink. I became somewhat academically interested in his findings. I had thought, when I got to know him better, I might assemble some facts from his bibliographical sexperience as to the degrees of debauchery of different periods, nations etc. 'Was French literature actually so hot? He declared it was ~~no different~~, no worse, than American. The Germans are more coarse and brutal in their treatment; the flagellation translation, "Nell in Bridewell", for example.

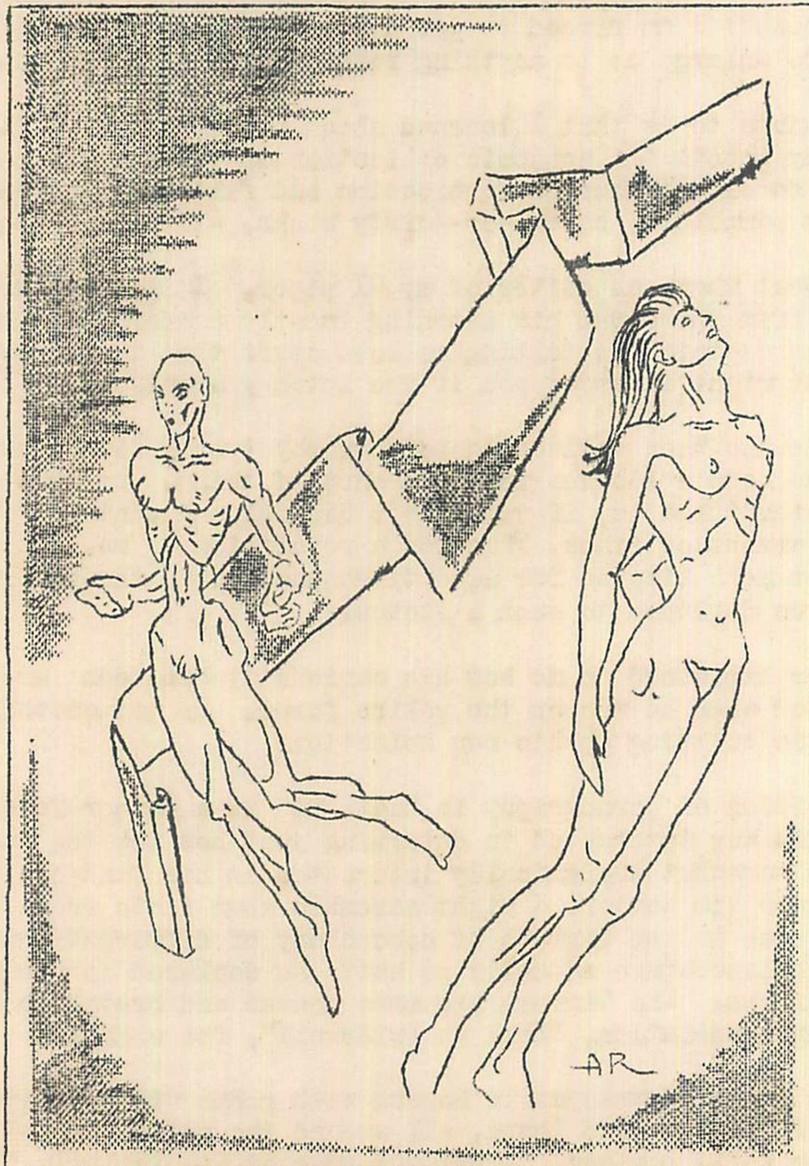
He told me he could take me to houses with rooms whose existence was unknown to any but the initiate; and there, all around the walls, in cellophane packets, were exhibited sexotic curiosa. I was reminded of Dr. Keller's "Binding Deluxe" when a privately printed "rodiaid" was mentioned entitled "Presented in Leather", the binding being just that.

He would have had quite a unique item to add to his collection had a certain Shangri-Lascivious pub (1) ication ever materialized. At a bull session in the clubroom one nite some months ago--well, I shall not name those fans present, but there was a goodly number of well-known names (including yours scientrally ~~with~~, however, I rise to defend, was only an innocent by-sitter) and intemperate plans were formulated for the production of an anonymous pamphlet of erotica stfanatica with Bomb Maidens, yet, not as incendiaries. The finished product to be sent first class, with no return address, to a select circle of fans. But the best laid fanes nes of mice and fen---

If this should leave a bad taste in your mouth, permit me to corn a new word by referring your attention to the rapidly developing now art of fornchy fantasy whose chief exponct is Rooster-Booster Walt Liobscher: Punography!

PS: Remcmber the Rosebud that was caught with its plants down!

ooo00ooo000had



THE MARCHING SONG

OF THE NEW INTELLECTUALS

By Fritz Lieber

In our wake is a trail of looted libraries,
Ravished intelligentsia, universities,
Skimmed prefaces, small theories;
We are the new barbarians.

Unborn ideas must pass our ambushade.
We get the gist of them and, undismayed,
Leap on our nervous horses once again
To find a technique for presenting them;
We are the modern highwaymen.

Dead cultures cannot hold their secrets long;
They tremble to the hoofbeat of our throng:
Florence, Milan, and Genoa,
Cologne, cryptic Etruria,
Cities of dry Assyria,
All know our questing hands.

Shakespeare, Isaiah, Catullus, Li Po,
We gauge their notions and then let them go;
Psychoanalysis improves our grasp,
We can see into any buried past;
For us the mind is made of isinglass;
We are the Huns.

We need no baggage trains to hold our loot,
We only take the choicest, ripest fruit:
A latin epigram, an early hymn,
A verse of Sappho's, delicate and slim,
A sex god, genus africanus,
A phrase from old Petronius,
Some science made euphonic;
We are the galloping connoisseurs.

Our saddle-bags contain all space and time,
Condensed to aid the rapid, modern mind;
If we need illustrations quick and biting,
Lack we expressions when we turn to writing,
The brain sack hanging at our side
Holds phrases that are sure and tried,
We patch up poetry as we ride;
 We've got the goods.

Sometimes we leave the trail and settle down,
Content to organize our great renown,
To drink the praises
Of the various phases
Of our past careers.

But then the race goes on and leaves us flat;
There's new loot to be had; we can't stand that;
So off we gallop through new printed pages,
Through treatises on other ages,
Past celebrities and discursive toas,
Where we hear of new creativities,
Old fads to nurture, new publics to please
With our hag-ridden personal histories.
Our only joy --for we're driven to it--
Is that the whole world wants to do it;
 We are the elect.

THE HISTOMAP OF FANTASY

A Criticism by F. T. Laney

In Sustaining Program for Spring 1945, Jack Speer gives a sketch for a histomap of fantasy which seems to point the way for a very desirable project. As a convenient reference tool, as an orientator for the newer fan, as a showpiece for the delectation of guests, or even as no more than an unusual wall decoration for the den, a large and carefully worked out histomap would seem to rank high among fandom's desiderata.

The preparation and publication of such a chart would not be especially difficult. It could quite easily be made in sections on 8½x14 paper, allowing ½" overlap on each sheet for pasting. If it were made in eight sections, this would give an end product measuring 14 inches wide and 64 inches high--a full-sized histomap. By careful use of the various colors of hekt ink, full contrasts could be obtained--in fact, by diluting the inks into a sort of wash and applying them to the masters with a small brush, a very neat variety of ground colors could be arrived at. And in Jack Speer, we have a thoroughly competent hektographer who could be depended upon to turn out a neat job. No, the mechanical problems would be easily coped with.

The content of a truly definitive histomap of fantasy is something else again. Speer's sketch in its present form does little more than to point the way, nor is it intended to be the final word. As it stands it is severely hampered by the compiler's apparent preoccupation with the pulp manifestations of fantasy, and by a basic failure in logic. In the first place, while the pulp output comprises a fairly substantial quantitative part of fantasy as a whole, from the viewpoint both of influence on the genre and of quality, the magazines drop into a position of relative insignificance. Probably not more than 10% of the truly great fantasy appeared in pulp form, other than as reprints of previously published books; and of this 10%, at least 9% appeared in Weird Tales, Astounding, Unknown, and perhaps Wonder. It is probable that on a fully developed histomap of fantasy, material from the pulps would occupy but a small corner. Where Speer's effort fails on grounds of logic is in the mingling of two radically different types of criteria for classification. He starts out with four general types of tale: supernatural horror, scarey story with phenomena explained, sociologically motivated tales of imaginary lands, and lighter legends. These classifications are, so far as they go, satisfactory despite a slight ineptness in terminology on the second one. But lower in the chart, where Speer starts to list magazine titles, the classification bogs down completely, because each magazine named contains major stories which would classify in each of his general classifications. Black Cat, for example, while containing large numbers of purely mundane shorts, by no means confined its fantasy to supernatural horror. I can recall explained-away supernaturals, non-sociological scientificfiction of a Munsey cast, light fantasy, and satire. Or Weird Tales. Up until the early thirties, a sizeable proportion of WT's content was made up of out and out scientificfiction--which certainly is a long way from supernatural horror. The modern Astounding would certainly furnish large numbers of tales to the sociologically motivated category, to say nothing of the lighter element. Speer errs when he attempts to combine a publishing history with a writing history. He would do well to combine his histomap of fantasy with the one showing

the dominance of different types of scientific fiction, since the latter is certainly of greater significance in an attempt at classification.

The classifications which should be considered in an adequate histomap are not the sort of thing one would jot down in five minutes. However, a few that occur to me might be named. There are Speer's four, of course, though a slight change in terminology might not be amiss: unexplained supernatural horror, explained supernatural horror (this last shown as a minor offshoot of the former), sociologically motivated tales (these certainly are not limited to imaginary lands), and pure fantasy. This leaves a distinct gap, since we have no antecedent for non-sociological scientific fiction. I suggest that we call it something like extrapolations on science, split into two classifications: physical and biological. Satire probably deserves a classification of its own, as does humorous fantasy. The Utopia tale, while in large part sociologically motivated, probably deserves at the least a major subdivision. Each of these major types should be subdivided.

In the selection of names, great pains should be taken to show every author who was either a major influence on his successors, or who was generally prominent among the reading public at the time his works appeared. In addition, such authors who are of genuine worth, but who for some reason failed to gain either wide acclaim or a position of influence should be shown on the chart. Among these last, a few examples include John Metcalfe, T. H. White, Arthur Machen, Herbert Best, Thomas Williamson, and S. Fowler Wright.

The definitive histomap should show all major trends, and should particularly, in so far as would be practicable, delineate the various lines of influence. It is in this latter sphere that it would probably be of the greatest value, since it would show at a glance what stories were related and why. In many cases, of course, the lines of influence would be so complex as to defy adequate expression, but even so a fair start could be made.

It is probable that the intricacies of the various cross currents and influences would require a considerable use of arrows, and, as the work progressed, it is probable that other changes from the commercial histomaps might need to be made. Nevertheless, there are no insuperable difficulties confronting the compiler of such a work.

A number of our more erudite fantasists are eminently capable of drawing up a satisfactory chart: A. Langley Searles, J. Michael Rosenblum, J. C. Bailey, or Samuel D. Russell. Those of us like Speer, who started the project in the first place, or myself, who is interested if not well-informed enough to do the actual compilation, would certainly be of some help in an advisory capacity.

Won't someone start the project off?

FILLER, BUT DEFINITELY!

I cannot resist a note about the neck and neck aspects of the recent vice-presidential race betwixt Warner and Tucker. Since most of the ballots came to me in my personal correspondence, I naturally kept a running tally of the vote. Neither got more than 2 votes ahead of the other at any time, and the day the ballot closed the count was tied at 14 all. It was a horrid temptation to throw out the two last minute Tucker votes! Consider. V-P Ashley's term of office was gone. The candidates were tied. The V-P decides all complicated policy questions! Wouldn't that have been fun? ---PIL

THE HOUSE OF JEFFREYS by Russell Thorndyke
London: Rich and Cowan, 1943. 8/6
Reviewer's rating: a potential classic

Horrors appear to ration themselves. One generation had Frankenstein, another Sweeney Todd, another Dracula, and another The Monkey's Paw. Now our turn has arrived with The House of Jeffreys --- a blood-curdler that succeeds in being as gruesome as any of them without invoking superstition. Mr. Thorndyke, who has always done his best to make timid people fear to turn the page, is to be congratulated. Even the ordinarily courageous may be daunted this time. What he artfully refrains from saying outright takes --- though his meaning can easily be guessed --- some minutes to make itself known simply because imagination balks at a nightmare so grim, macabre, grisly and richly enjoyable to all epicures who sup on horrors.

The old bakehouse which belongs to Judge Jeffreys' descendants has become the offices of a publishing firm. Georgina Jeffreys comes home from the cannibal islands to take charge. With her is a gigantic native who is a source of innocent merriment ... at first. There is nothing in this picture of a London Household in 1880 for the stomach to get upset about until the native's parrot eats a rat. "There were squeals, drowned by the bird's scream of hungry triumph and then the creature satisfied his hunger on the flagstoned floor". Anything may happen in a house where rat-catching is conducted in a spirit like that. Anything does happen. Mr Thorndyke's masterly plot is indescribable.

THE RIDDLE OF THE TOWER by J.D.Beresford and Esme Wynne-Tyson
London: Hutchinson, 1944. 8/6.
Reviewer's rating: Fair

From the moment early in this novel when an exploding bomb reduces Mr. Begbie to a discarnate mind, brooding in the void, we are in the realm not of human character and relationship but of ghostly observation and abstract argument. Previous to this our brief acquaintance with him had divulged that he was a rather worried, middle-aged, man, anxious to make the world a better place to live in, with leanings toward authoritarianism which a disturbing book entitled "Automatism", by one Paul Detmold, had begun to correct. In the new dimension in which he finds himself after the explosion he is able to live through the past, first as an actual inhabitant of an island which suggests the lost Atlantis and later as a discarnate intelligence seeing history unfold, and then participating, in a future in which mankind descends through unsuccessful regimentation and mechanization to the final status of insects.

As a sustained piece of inventive imagination this is in many ways a remarkable fantasy. Through it all, too, the ghostly Mr. Begbie retains all the powers of intelligent comment and moral questioning which he had begun to reveal in his office and his club. At the end he resumes his human body and has a suggestive discussion about his experiences with the mystically informed Paul Detmold. It is, however, a novel of ideas, pushed to the extreme in which human characters cease to exist. Fiction is presumably a form in which all things are legitimate if they succeed. But despite its ingenuity and its seriousness, as a criticism of the inhuman direction in which mankind is now tending, the lack of human substance is a handicap.

THE GOLDEN FLEECE by Robert Graves
London: Cassell, 1944. 12/6.

For his latest historical novel, Mr. Graves, in taking the voyage of the Argonauts, has opened up as rich a quarry for the novelist as could be found. Not only has the story abundant sources in ancient literature, whose overlappings and omissions offer an engaging challenge to modern ingenuity, but it invites excursions of almost endless fascination into the racial and religious prehistory of the Greeks. In charting again the voyage of Jason and the quest of the Golden Fleece, we pass into a world only just emerging from matriarchal into patriarchal systems, in which the Triple Goddess has not entirely submitted to union with the upstart Zeus, into a world of wide horizons and impressive material culture to be plunged after the coming of the Achaeans and Dorians into a Dark Age.

Mr. Graves has pieced together a full panorama of the Mycenaean Age. For him, writing from the standpoint of a believer in the mature classical age, the voyage of the Argo is not myth but history; its course is thoroughly logged; its creatures are flesh and blood. The story combines the raciness of Homer with the naivety and ingenuity of Herodotus. There is much about ghosts and blood-guilt, gods and sacrifices; there is, on the other hand, much plausible and often amusing rationalization: the Centaurs are a fraternity whose totem was the horse; the nymphs are the personnel of various centres of matriarchal cults; the labors of Heracles are cunningly accounted for and rearranged; Circe's pigs, the Harpies, the "rejuvenation" of Polias, Atalanta's race; the fire-breathing bulls and the armed men who sprang from the dragon's teeth are part of a dream of Aëtes.

The personalities of the Argo --- Jason, Atalanta, Heracles, Meleager, Castor and Pollux and the rest --- carry on the action with great zest between the crucial points of the story, which is by no means wholly dependent for its dramatic interest on the scenes at Iolchos and Colchis. Incidents are invented to give play to the characteristic excellence of this team of champions. As for the Fleece itself: it appears that Phrixus to avoid being sacrificed to the Rain God stole the ... Fleece ... the sacred and necessary instrument of the rain-making ritual and escaped with it to Colchis. ... The loss of the Fleece naturally gave the Minyans a sense of bad luck, and a generation later the Argonauts, who were all Minyans, sailed off to bring it back.

Mr. Graves has given to scholars much to think about and to query and to the general reader an epic story rich in background and incident and told with great gusto. It is not easy to compare the achievement of this work with that of "Belisarius", "Sergeant Lamb" and the Claudius books, but both as a work of creative scholarship and as a piece of entertainment it deserves to rank highest.

--- LONDON TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

HE WOULDN'T KILL PATIENCE by Carter Dickson (pseud)
London: Heinemann, 1944. 7/6.
Reviewer's rating: favorable

Two sides of London are shown in "He Wouldn't Kill Patience". One is the picture, faithfully drawn, of dim masses in the darkness against the pink glow of burning dockland. Another is a happily conceived fantasy of rivalry between two Homes of Magic ... Raids, reptiles, and rival illusionists are all necessary to this story.

THE CASE OF THE GILDED FLY by Edward Crispin
London: Gollancz, 1944. 7/6.
Reviewer's rating: enthusiastic

Anyone who wishes to know what "blood curdling" means has but to read "The Case of the Gilded Fly" late at night in a lonely house. There is in it a ghost story which creates the afraid-to-look-over-your-shoulder feeling exquisitely.

THE DEVIL IN CRYSTAL by Louis Marlow
London: Faber & Faber, 1944. 6/-
Reviewer's rating: panned vigorously

This short novel is, unfortunately, in a key that always lends itself to a spurious effect of depth. It is about a writer who, in 1943, suddenly finds himself back in 1922, repeating everything he did then, but also watching himself in the act of repetition of memory.

CALLING LORD BLACKSHIRT by Bruce Graeme
London: Hutchinson, 1944, 7/6
Reviewer's rating: noncommittal

Keeping abreast of these stirring times is not enough for Mr Graeme. In his latest thriller he moves ahead of them. His heroes are ex-pilots from a fighter squadron, demobilized after the war and engaged in perilously unmasking drug-traffickers.

PEACE IN NOBODY'S TIME by George Boroden
London: Hutchinson, 1944. 8/6
Review: enthusiastic

This is the story of James Brotherby, who from a quite ordinary man became dictator of Bolonia and who, after the surgeons had found a cure for the germ of megalomania, became a quite ordinary man again. He had been, as a matter of fact, a traveller in monumental masonry and funeral furnishings until the great Skrupp, Bolonia's most prodigious film magnate, chose to look for a leader for the Common Man's party. And so, to serve Skrupp's designs in the matter of Princess Precious Motion Pictures, Inc., James somehow brought about an era of peace and plenty in Bolonia simply by being most dictatorially himself.

FIRST BROADCAST STORIES edited by Hilton Brown
London: Faber and Faber, 1944. 9/6
Reviewer's rating: favorable

A collection of fifty-one short stories, all of them written for broadcasting. Many of them are pleasant reading. They are of all sorts and kinds --- the humorous story, the dramatic story, the sentimental story, the macabre, the fantastic. There are Welsh, Scots and Irish stories, also regional varieties of English as well as English generally. As for the technique of stories written for broadcasting, the anecdotal is evidently the safest help, while the intimately colloquial style of the late "A. J. Alan" plainly goes a long way.

Among stories that especially catch the eye --- the chances are that they caught the listener's ear in something of the same way --- is one by Lord Dunsany that is delightfully light, easy in manner and funny; one by Mr. Frank O'Connor that is similarly light and racy; Mr. S. L. Bensusan's tales of Essex rustics; and the unexaggeratedly plain and affecting "The Silver Cornet", by "Bartimeus". But there are others which in a different way are only a little less interesting, and in any case mention should perhaps be made of the names of Mr. Martin Armstrong, Mr. H. E. Bates, Mr. Gerald Bullett, Mr. Arthur Calder-Marshall, Mr. A. E. Coppard, Mr. B. L. Jacot, Mr. Gwyn Jones, Mr. Sean O'Faoláin and Mr. L. A. G. Strong.

LIFE AND DEATH OF THE WICKED LADY SKELTON by Magdalen King-Hall
London: Peter Davies, 1944. 8/6
Reviewer's rating: enthusiastic

The first half of this book is a good ghost story with all the appropriate manifestations, told with a fine reticence of description which is well calculated to make each individual hair rise on the reader's head. There is one particular scene where a little boy is aware of something following him in the garden which strikes a specially refined note of horror. All this is in the best tradition of authenticated stories of hauntings and is so well done that it builds up to the climax of the second part of the book, where the story of the ghost when she was a living woman is told.

Barbara Skelton came to Maryot Cells as the very young wife of a rich, stolid, and middle-aged husband. She was a very beautiful and very spoiled girl, thoroughly bored by the humdrum routine of a quiet country life, but at first maintaining the decorum that was expected of her. Then, one night, as a revenge on a tiresome sister-in-law, she disguises herself as a highwayman, and robbed the lady on her journey along a lonely road. She found the excitement of the affair stimulating and took to it as a regular occupation in the nights of spring and autumn, finding herself led on into several peculiarly dreadful crimes which quite exceeded the standards of the professional robber with whom she worked as a partner. In the end, after a career of calculated callousness, she fell genuinely in love --- but it was perhaps as well for her that this love affair ended in her death, for it could scarcely have been carried on without more crimes which would have turned her, if possible, into a still more malevolent ghost. Miss King-Hall states that the story is based on a real lady of the 17th century who actually "took to the road" and later haunted her own home, but she has added enough from her own imagination to create a vivid, horrifying, and entirely original tale.