

Nirvana

Vol. 5 No. 4 Issue 20

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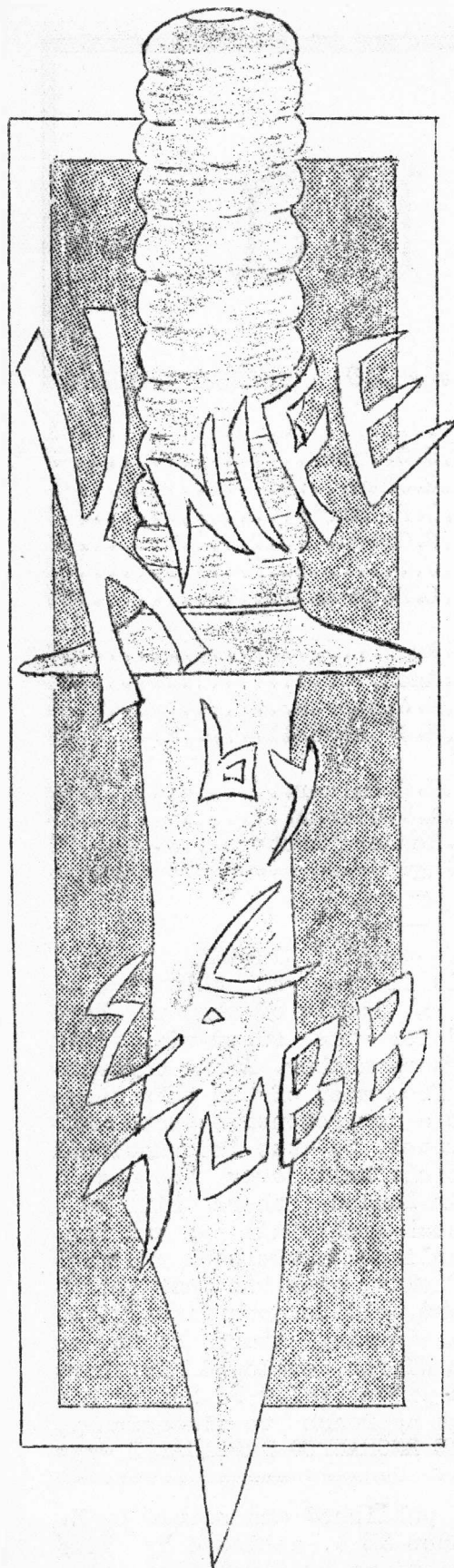
PROFIT & PROPHECY

Inasmuch as the pleasure and profit of publishing a fanmag come to an editor in the hearts of his readers and the satisfaction of his contributors, it is with no little gratification that we can, on the eve of the publication of our 5th anniversary issue, look back on 5 years of regular and punctual publication. Looking back is always a nostalgic process - if the vista of the years is good. In the case of NIRVANA the years have given forth their fruit in abundance, and the resulting wine has distilled a heavenly dew in our pages. Self-praise never paid the bills though --or does it? Ego-boo has paid off handsomely for at least one fan in

the life-time of NIRVANA.

It is fitting at this time to reveal a little of what we have planned for the super-size fifth anniversary number. Among contributions from most of the BNFs there will be a comprehensive photo section devoted to the International Conventions held over the past 3 years in London; there will be a full check-list of all s-f and fantasy published in the book and magazine fields over the last eight years, and, told for the first time, the fascinating story of how an obscure NI fan developed his short NIRVANA piece (Vol. 2, No. 2), on his hesitant approach to mimeography, into THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR ****

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THE KNIFE was a thin, tapered sliver of steel. Razor edged, needle-pointed, a knife designed for slashing, for thrusting, for throwing. The knife of a killer.
My knife.

I held it in my hand, letting the cold steel caress my naked thigh as I honed the paper-thin edge in an automatic reflex pattern. It was raining; the swollen belly of the sullen heavens had parted with a flash of thunder and spilled its guts on the earth below. It was cool and sweet, filling the air with its gentle murmurs, splashing from the low eaves, laughing as it fell.

I liked the rain. It reminded me of blood, of the red tide of liberated life, gushing from the piping like a fresh-made wound. Thick and red like an old rare wine.

He was slow in coming. I did not know his name or who he would be and so I waited, huddled in the shallow doorway, the knife kissing my thigh. Listening -----

The man came splashing down the alley, weaving a little, his breath heavy with the raw odour of alcohol. I tensed, the knife reluctantly leaving the warmth of my thigh and, as he came abreast, I stepped behind him. The heel of my left hand clamped beneath his jaw, the palm against his mouth, the tip of the index finger slipping into the socket of his right eye.

My right hand lifted the knife.

=====

It was still raining when I returned to the cave. I stepped carefully over the heaped rubble, my naked feet gripping the wet stones, and paused as I heard a murmur within. Two voices, one that of a man, the other that of a woman. The one voice was unfamiliar, the other.....

Rain fell against my bare teeth as I heard her laugh, sigh, murmur with sweet surrender. My woman. The woman who tended my care and administered to my wants, a poor thing I had taken in, fed, clothed after a fashion, beat rarely, and even when hungry harmed hardly at all.

My woman....with a man!

The knife adjusted itself to my hand as I entered the cave. I would face the man, show him with whom he had to deal, watch the fear and terror wash the lust from his face...and then.. I smiled as he turned towards me. Smiled, and poised the knife, giving him time to watch the play of light over the blade, the redness on its tip, the redness around my mouth. I smiled as I stood, not speaking, not moving, waiting for him to sag, to crumble, to whine. I enjoyed the moment to its full, it was as well I did.

He had a gun.

HERE AT LAST IS THE INNER SECRET OF HOW WALT WILLIS BUILT UP SLANT FROM ABSOLUTE OBSCURITY TO COMPLETE OBLIVION. THE MOST EAGERLY AWAITED FAN-ARTICLE OF 1954!! NIRVANA PROUDLY PRESENTS YET ANOTHER 'EXCLUSIVE' :

THE WILLIS WAY PART I.

— BY BOB SHAW —

I MEET WILLIS



I walked up the "path"

In the otherwise fair city of Belfast there is a long, gloomy track called the Upper Newtownards Road. (Rumour has it that it leads Newtownards). It is lined with large, gloomy houses, and in the largest and gloomiest of the lot resides Walt Willis. The first time I ever stood outside the Willis garden gate in the rain and stared at the impenetrable wall of grass and weeds that constitutes Walt's lawn I wondered whether or not I should go home. Many are the times since that I have laughed at myself for having these doubts----of course

I should have gone home.

I opened the gate and stepped inside (here I might add that just inside the gateway of 170 is a cleverly positioned hole, roughly six inches deep, which is always kept full of muddy water.) A few hours later I stood on the doorstep ringing the bell and bottoms of my trousers, after a safari up the garden 'path'---having got safari I didn't want to go back.

I rang the bell again.

I rang the bell fiercely.

I rang the bell and knocked the door simultaneously, and then both at once. I hurled myself at the door, kicking it, ringing the bell, thumping with my fists and banging my head against the knocker. Just as I fell back, bleeding and exhausted, a very pretty girl opened the door and said, "I thought I heard somebody knocking."

It was while in this state of despair that I first met.....

WILLIS THE MAN

---and I've been that way ever since. Having exhausted the topic of Willis the Man, let us proceed to deal with his personal appearance.

Walt's favourite apparel consists of an old, well-patched windcheater, and an old, well-patched pair of trousers, and an old, well-patched pair of carpet slippers. He also wears an old face, but Walt's hasn't a patch on it.

The only other salient points about his appearance are that he stands very far from the razor when shaving and that his comb must have had pyhorrea. As you may have noted, he is very careless about his dress, about his

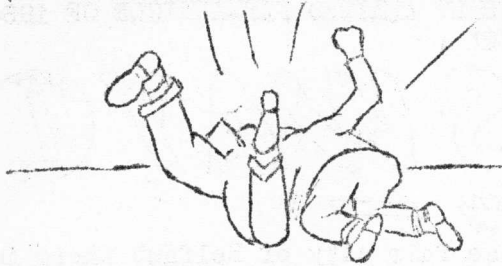
meals, about everything except books. He is even careless about money--careless about how he gets it! Which brings me to the account of how.....

WILLIS, JAMES & I FIND A BOB

We were out for a walk along one of the pleasant avenues that surprisingly abound near Walt's house. As usual the talk was on a very high plane----oxygen masks and the Nebular Hypothesis or something. Probably something.

"The mind of the average man," said Walt, "is so mundane." James

and I agreed whole-heartedly.



spring----Walt I had ruled out, as he was still talking about how our thoughts must be elevated above the grind of modern existence. Throwing restraint to the winds I let out a triumphant cry and sprang. My hand closed over Walt's fist. He stood up and looked at me reproachfully. Shamefaced, I continued the walk.

"The mind of modern man," said Walt, "is so mercenary."

WILLIS MOWS THE LAWN

We were sitting doing practically nothing. I was reading a copy of PLANET. I like reading PLANET because it gives me a pleasant feeling that I could earn money writing s-f.

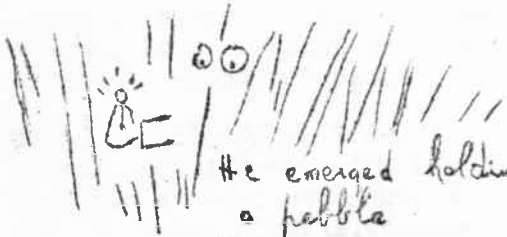
Suddenly, Walt jumped up. "I'm going to mow the lawn," he said. James and I looked suitably impressed, we all tripped down the stairs (one of the stair rods is loose), and bounced out into the afternoon sunlight.

Walt disappeared around the side of his house, and came back trailing a large lawnmower behind him. He looked rather startled when he saw James and I draped comfortably on the rug on the step-----I think he expected us to help. As an associate editor, I don't mind acting as a sort of censor and cutting down his corn, but I draw the line at cutting down his grass.

Giving us a disgusted look, he trundled the lawnmower up to where the 'lawn' began. The mower mounted the grass and weeds and bounced along the tangled mass several inches above the ground. Approximately four pieces of grass about half-an-inch long popped into the tin. Walt stopped shoving. He mopped away some perspiration and some sweat and glared at the place where there should have been a clean-cut swathe. Suddenly he gave a cry and dived into the mass, and emerged holding a small pebble about a quarter of an inch in diameter.

"Very nearly broke the mower on that," he exclaimed, with the air of an expert. "I doubt if it would be safe to do any mower work."

This sounded rather feeble to us. James asked me whether I thought Walt had planted the stone there. I replied that I thought even Walt would know that stones don't grow, and that it was probably a residue from Space Raid. This was a game that had developed when James remarked that the measuring cup out of



He emerged holding a pebble

NOTICE!

To commemorate the holding of the Super-ManCon '54 a 'Combozine' is to be published, consisting of specimens from each British fanzine publisher. As a token of goodwill the first 4 pages of this issue of NIRVANA will therefore be duplicated in a single colour and included in the Combozine, to carry our best wishes to readers and non-readers. We would remind the latter that contributions and subscriptions are by invitation only, and we regret that we cannot supply past or future copies of NIRVANA under any other circumstances. Please do not ask us....a refusal might embarrass.