

JANUS

An Eleventh Hour Publication, issued for the FAPA by Pfc. Paul Spencer and Pvt. Russ Whitman at Selfridge Field, Mich. Mailing address: 88 Ardmore Rd., West Hartford, Conn. This is Vol. 1, No. 1, Fall, 1944.

COMPOSED ON THE STENCIL

An Editorial

by The Spence

Of all times to start a fanzine, Russ and I have probably chosen the worst, for we both expect to leave for overseas very shortly. But we ran across a mimeograph and some stencils, so we decided to give you a foretaste of the sort of dish we may serve up after the war. FooFoo willing, we may even manage to get something more accomplished before then.

JANUS is to consist of all sorts of odds and ends by the two of us, but mainly fiction; we hope to make it much more elaborate in the future -- this issue is being slapped together at a moment's notice, and, incidentally, since neither of us has had much mimeo experience it may well be practically illegible. (Yes, I know "pratically" is wrong, but we have no correction fluid; you can safely expect more such errors this time.)

We have other plans as well. I hope to issue a magazine of ramblings when I'm a civilian again, and Russ and I have detailed plans for another fiction mag of a very novel type. Moreover, we have in mind a very large project, as yet purely in the realm of speculation, but quite possible. Lest it fail to materialize, I won't raise your hopes by telling you what it is; suffice it that if we go through with it, fandom will no doubt enshrine our names in its Hall of Fame. (Gee, I'm getting all het up about it myself!) Just watch BONFIRE for particulars, for we hope to work on it with NFFF assistance, though we haven't approached Evans about it as yet, pending further investigation of the possibilities. If the NFFF vetoes the idea, we'll probably do it all by our lonesome twosome. It involves, to drop a broad hint, book publishing.

Doubtless you've been wondering just who this Russ Whitman may be. Well, he's a fellow cryptographer, greatly interested in writing, and especially in fantasy, though the only prozine he's read is UNK, which he liked very much. We've collaborated on a couple of yarns, one for our projected other fapazine, and one non-fantasy. I've been working on Russ with hopes of getting him interested in fandom, and so far he has reacted quite satisfactorily. Investigation has revealed no tendrils, but that, you will recall, is not a sure sign. Now I'll let Russ speak for himself:

James Russell Whitman taking over momentarily--Age 20 years, two days at the time present--six feet two--lean as a Seven Up bottleneck, and sentimental as hell over Gershwin, Haggard, and Errol Flynn. And although it is damn near impossible to frequent fantasy settings--exceptions being my nightly daymare and my monthly epileptic, I take pride in developing other fiction from actual incidents and 'grottoes' I have sensuously been wedlocked with--don't end your sentence, my dear, she told me, "with a proposition." As you may during some curious hour in the morning discover, I despise convention, paragraphs, and so-called movie experts whose reviews I have lately read, who ignorantly forgot to mention that Rene Clair--screen Playright, wrote "I Married a You-Know-What," before the late "It Happened Tomorrow," and after "The Ghost Goes West." It reminded me of the reviews several months ago involving Turhan Bey, which proclaimed with trumpets ablare that "Here is a new screen personality --a new find!--See him make love in his first picture!" Actually he had menaced with a large knife and turban many times before with Charlie Chan, George Raft, and Radio Patrol, a Universal serial of some five years ago. Incidentally, the type of review I am criticizing is very common--even in Fantasy Fiction Field.--My pet peeve--Sorry--Warning--don't read "The Last Nazi," by Esc--no matter what the trash man says....One of those small editions I hope to continue publishing

THE FATAL HOUR

by Russ Thirer

"All is for the glory of God," said the dwarfed changeling, as he bowed low before the image of the great and terrible Kar. "Kar must be worshipped in all humility, with long suffering and the patience of an infidel."

The odd creature continued bowing low before his god, unaware that he was being watched from a point far above his limited vision.

Unlikely that the human could hear the tiny being's prayer, notwithstanding that it was muttered in another language. But the human observed with amusement from his terrific height of six feet--then his smile changed suddenly to a frown.

As the changeling bowed again and again before the great lizard, neither saw the human or the image before which he was bending. Slowly the lizard's belly began to expand and contract--smoke came in wisps, then clouds, and before the tiny changeling realized what was happening, the lizard had bared his gleaming teeth, at the same time belching forth fiery flames.

That was when Professor Davis started his foot--on the chameleon. He didn't intend to kill it--He merely could not stand to see it gobble up the poor little changeling.

Nevertheless he had killed it--It was then that he picked up the horned changeling.

As a Professor of Biology, Davis knew that he must take the 'thing' back to the laboratory. He had read of such creatures--Now--

The weak frail look--the trembling--the thing was so small and helpless

Professor Davis could hardly guess that the changeling was definitely not afraid. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been afraid of the human, but this incident represented to the creature what Lincoln's assassination meant to America. His sorrow was surpassed only by the intense anger he felt--the extreme craving for total and irrevocable revenge. Kar was gone--no longer would he belch forth the exalted fire, the most holy flame.

But, instead of showing his anger, the changeling pretended fear--revenge would be his--

"Free me, oh human!" a tiny voice tinkled.

"Such a helpless little fellow," the Professor chuckled. Yet, I intend no harm to him--and to think that he can speak--unless my ears deceive me"

"Free me, oh man, and I will give you power over Time--"

Professor Davis looked down at the

witching animal. It could be going--

"But how do I know you are telling me the truth," Davis stuttered. In his thought, "If only he were--"

"Listen, oh man! I will give you the power to control time for the space of one hour--for one hour you may stop all motion while you yourself will be free to do anything you please--Only free me."

"Is it then a promise?"

"It is a promise."

The Professor venterly laid the watch on the ground--walked away, and the creature wept over the body of her.

It was fifty years later in the hills of Harlow--where tendrils of clinging, enormous grasses mingled with the roots of the forest--it was there that Professor Davis--

wanted--had packed with every conceivable type of reptile--he dreamed many nights of the collection he might one day attain--most of all he dreamed of finding the King of King Cobras--He took his time--it would have to be a perfect specimen.

More often than not, he would go from camp into the jungle unaccompanied, with only a pistol and a knife to inspect the carnival of traps he had set for--

"King Cobra!" he gasped--only the huge snake had settled upon the cover of the trap--just above the Professor's head it moved back and forth--struck before Davis realized what had happened.

Davis fired the pistol, but it was too late--the reptile was dead--but the hideous fang-marks were swelling rapidly--it would only be a few minutes--he reached for his anti-venom kit--not there--he had carelessly left it behind--there must be something he could do--

"Now," he cried. "I want time to stop now!"--

There was a swift gust of wind--swept by--then quiet--never had he heard such quiet--even in the jungle. The leaves stopped dancing in the breeze--the birds were poised candidly in mid-air--

He noticed no more. He must get to the nearest village--too far back to camp--The wound has ceased its swelling--it would until--

And so he ran as he had never run before--he had nothing to fear--Doctor Lunnally would be there caring for the sick at his mission--he passed a frozen tiger--he would be there--the anti-venom would be there.

He reached the village--only five men--he laughed at fate--

He found the door locked--he tried on the door--"DOOR IS LOCKED"

THE FIGURE IN THE DOORWAY

by Paul Farrow

63 Laurel Street, Deerfield, Conn., doesn't sound like a haunted house, does it? Nor does it look like one being a very conventional, rather new single-family dwelling of white stucco with blue trimmings -- an exceedingly middle-class suburban home. This house is, nonetheless, haunted.

For that matter, Dan Morgan was not the sort of person one usually thinks of in connection with hauntings. He was young -- not quite thirty -- and his dark hair had receded over his temples to make him look more like a young man who is prematurely balding. His dark beard, showing through his generally smooth-shaven skin, would have given him a somewhat "tough" appearance had his features not been so ~~thoroughly~~ thoroughly respectable. He had blue eyes, Irish eyes, from the Celtic streak in his mother's side of the family. He was an instructor at Baldwin College, and when his maternal aunt passed away and left the house to him he was more pleased than anything else, since he knew his aunt only very slightly, and the house was only twenty minutes' walk from the college.

"It's rather large for one person, of course," he said to no-one in particular when he visited the place for the first time. The words sounded very loud, as words will when spoken in an empty house. "Still, I can hardly turn it down, and there's the convenience, and the furniture." It came with all his aunt's furnishings, you see, ready for immediate occupancy. Dan resolved to advertise for a housekeeper, and also for roomers. Meanwhile he decided, he might as well stay there however lonely it might be. So he moved his meager belongings in from his boarding-house room, laid in a month's supply of easily-cooked food, cleaned the place up a bit, mowed the lawn, and made 63 Laurel Street his home.

The first night of his occupancy, he snuggled into a big double-bed -- presumably the one in which his aunt had died -- with a delicious sense of proprietorship and luxury. "Ah," he murmured contentedly "all I need is a pretty wife and I'm all set." Then, perversely, he started worrying about the taxes and upkeep. Midway in his calculations his thoughts began to wander, and finally dissolved into the nothingness of sleep.

He couldn't have been asleep very long when of a sudden he was foggily awake, heart thudding. He listened, wondering what had roused him. A board creaked. Crickets chirruped. "Damn," said the house's new owner succinctly, and rolled over.

In that position he was facing one of the room's doors; his scalp tingled and perspiration dampened his pyjamas as he saw by the moon rays streaming through the window that someone stood in the doorway. Dan froze, unable to do more than stare; and the more he stared the less he liked what he saw.

The figure was that of a radiantly healthy man of middle age. He was dressed in blue-and-white pyjamas, over which was a deep red dressing-gown tied tight about his waist with a scarlet cord. His hair was grey, that shade of grey which gives a man an irrational kind of dignity; his face was rather soft-looking but, be it repeated, exceedingly healthy. And he looked at Dan benevolently, with a smile of the greatest sweetness. Dan thought that smile was the most hideous thing he had ever seen; its kindness was -- excessive, disturbingly so. It was a cruel smile, simply because it was so implausibly friendly. Dan thought of a man speaking soothing words as he approached some farmyard fowl, axe behind his back. This figure carried no weapon; but yet it was somehow menacing. Dan was given time only to feel, briefly and poignantly, this loathing fear, for abruptly the figure was no longer there.

A moment later Dan rose unsteadily, switched on the light, donned his dressing gown, and softly entered the bedroom on which the now-vacant doorway opened. Teeth clenched, he turned on the light; the room showed no sign of occupancy. Dan went out on the landing; it was deserted; so was the bathroom. He wished for a revolver; but, weaponless, descended the stairs and searched the house, then, swiftly, the cellar. No-one.

Dan slept little for the rest of that night.

After a shower and breakfast, however, he realized quite clearly that the visit had been just that -- a floating dream conjured up by his still half-sleeping mind. He strolled to the college feeling almost happy, in fact, to have been gay, if he'd had more sleep, and if that curious dream had stuck in his mind like a thorn. Particularly that smile. . . .

That night he slept very soundly indeed.

(Continued on next page)

The following day was Sunday, and he got around at home, all morning, reading the paper and listening to the radio. At noon he went out to a restaurant for a Sunday dinner, and the afternoon he spent killing in his $\frac{3}{4}$ warty backyard, strapped to the waist. The evening passed in some sort of two ads for the next night's paper -- one for a housekeeper, the other for roomers. He went to bed feeling quite content with existence.

"Ah, nothing like taking it easy," he muttered happily as he rolled into a comfortable position and closed his eyes luxuriously.

He couldn't sleep; possibly had been taking it a little too easy. After an hour of tossing he made some restless comments on the situation, rose, got a book from downstairs, slumped into bed with it, and lost himself in the mazes of the plot. It was a fascinating book, and he read it from cover to cover without looking up. When he did look up, some three hours later and still wide awake, he saw the figure in the doorway.

The grey-haired, prosperous-looking man was smiling just as warmly as before, and as seconds ticked away on Dan's wristwatch he became aware of the man's peculiar fixity, as though it had always been so and always would be, and that man did nothing but stand and smile benevolently at occupants of this bed.

Since the figure stood there speaking very real and solid, and showed, this time, no tendency to vanish, Dan gathered his courage about him and said in a startlingly hoarse voice, "Who are you?"

The figure smiled kindly, in silence.

Suddenly Dan realized what was so perilous about the man: in the thirty seconds or so he had stood before Dan's gaze, he had not breathed!

And as the awe-struck young man grasped this first ~~flashing~~ thought, the figure, still smiling, said the word about its name.

-- There are, when you come to think of it, innumerable things in life for which no one has found an explanation. Push any known fact far enough back and you come upon the unknown. We are not always sure of our own motivations, let alone nature's, or things -- beyond nature. There is, then, an exceptional pointlessness to the fact that Monday morning found young Dan Moscar ~~lying in bed~~ a corpse; and to the mystery of what agent strangled him and even of who did the strangling we have, perhaps, at least a partial answer. We must, however, retire in bafflement, utter and complete, before his strange, his absurdly out-of-place, his hauntingly unnatural smile.

THE END

* * * * *

And here we are, out of material, but, what reassures, not out of space. It seems appropriate to apologize for the sundry ~~and~~ technical errors and other deficiencies of this ~~thing~~. The ~~editors~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~book~~ ~~mean~~ ~~of~~ ~~print~~, ~~format~~, ~~etc.~~ are ~~traced~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~people~~ ~~with~~ ~~which~~ ~~this~~ ~~was~~ ~~published~~. The ~~editors~~ ~~are~~ ~~responsible~~ ~~for~~ ~~at~~ ~~least~~ ~~a~~ ~~certain~~ ~~part~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~failures~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~material~~ ~~offered~~. Next time, wherever there will be such, we at least hope to present something ~~more~~ ~~interesting~~ ~~than~~ ~~any~~ ~~other~~. Though you never can tell.

More space, eh? Please. Oh, you another little fan job? -- The space -- got done today was the recording requested by some of the latest BOPERS. For the information of such disasterly reports as are not NFFS members, The Old Joe suggested that each fan make a record, giving personal data, to be sent to the LASTS for preservation unto posterity. Presumably the collected records will wind up in the Foundation. How about the rest of you joining me in this? I see no reason why it should be restricted to NFFSers, either. In any event, I don't want my poor little record to be lost.

The NFFS is really not a very good and if you're not a member you have no excuse -- not you'll regret it, I ~~am~~ ~~sure~~ ~~to~~ ~~say~~. I, in case you're not a member, am not official Recruiter or anything like that -- just a rank and file member, so enthusiastic about the potentialities of a ~~number~~ ~~of~~ ~~things~~ ~~that~~ ~~I~~ ~~can't~~ ~~wait~~ ~~anybody~~ ~~to~~ ~~get~~ ~~in~~ ~~on~~ ~~it~~. The more active members, the more ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~things~~ ~~can~~ ~~be~~ ~~a~~ ~~complained~~, and I do mean big.

Fantasy films recently witnessed: "The Mummy's Ghost" and "The Canterville Ghost." The Lon Chaney film is notable for its surprisingly unconvictional and really hair-raising ending. The other I'll refer forward to with great glee, inasmuch as I'd read the "Scar Tilt" story and considered it excellent film material. That material, I expect to say, ~~has~~ ~~not~~ ~~yet~~ ~~been~~ ~~exploited~~; the present film completely nullifies his opportunity, but by making Tilden's ~~ghost~~ ~~and~~ ~~putting~~ ~~him~~ ~~in~~ ~~a~~ ~~modern~~ ~~setting~~, with a satisfactory ending. ~~Doc~~. Footnote grants that kindlier treatment be accorded "The Picture of Lorian Gray".