

THE LOVECRAFTSMAN

WINTER 1963-4

NUMBER 2

CORRESPONDENCE

We are in receipt of the following letter, which was forwarded to us by Mr Fritz Leiber, presently of Santa Barbara, California:

Dear Lovecraftsman:

Stuff and regurgitated nonsense! An end to these puling hints and subfractional revelations! The Old One "born of man and woman"? weighing only 237 pounds? confused with Elmer Fuddoo? Id, Shub-Niggurath! Now hear wisdom.

With antigravitic organs neutralized, Howard Phillips Lovecraft tipped the scales at 793 long tons and he topped the Empire State building by three yards in his stockinged tentacles. In short, he grossed a great deal, although he netted very little because of an unswerving soft-headed generosity toward ham authors everywhere. His diet was the flesh of all beings "highly organized enough to have looked on hell and known the meaning of what they saw," but he preferred as tidbits the bodies of movie starlets au naturel, and the brains of honors men, senior wranglers rated choicest -- which he would draw from their skulls as a whelk from its shell. However, he had an unaccountable aversion to seafood, ripping apart whales from gullet to tail wherever he swam across them and tossing the sundered halves to either side across the nearest islands.

His arm was so long (confer the long arm of the law, Dr Fu-Manchu, Sin-Sin-Wa, the hamadryad baboon, the Secret Service, the Spiders & Snakes, the Soong Sisters /Ha, you thought we were just fantasizing, didn't you?/, the Schutz Staffel, Street and Smith, Sturm und Ubersturm, undsoweiter)...so long was his arm, I say, that he could extend it into the next cosmos and then reach back and scratch the outermost rim of our own in a delicate fashion which thrilled to the uttermost the artistic sensibilities of the sensitive. Occasionally he employed as nomes-de-guerre Edgar Poe, Clark Smith, August Derleth, Robert Bloch, Edmund Wilson, Edmund Spenser, Alexander Pope, Pope Alexander, and Redd Boggs. Unquestionably he was the Shadow Over Providence, the Blight on College Hill, the Doom That Came to Brooklyn, and the Lurker on the Third Planet.

-- OLD ARKHAM SUBSCRIBER

At the bottom of this missive, Mr Leiber scribbles a postscript: "Who that old gentleman was that penned the above, I don't know. He rocketed in here fast and he left even more abruptly, leaving behind only a noisome stench of uncovered sea-bottom."

2 February 1964
1200, General Winnebago X. Shell Road
Shub-Niggurath, Ia.

Dear Mr. Boggs:

I found the LOVECRAFTSMAN of considerable interest. Journals of such scholarly devotion and reverent erudition are, sadly, altogether too rare. It is my pleasure to say, as a student of Lovecraft, that I can detect no factual error or interpretative asininity in your text, but I do feel space limitations resulting from an inexcusable parsimony prevented your touching on all of the interesting aspects of HPL the man.

I cannot, for my own part, entirely eliminate from my mind the thought that Lovecraft may have been in some way responsible for the dread "secret" weapon of the ape nation of Kala which for three decades preserved that central Congo kingdom of arboreal primates from the imperialists. I do not refer to the kingdom's chief item of export, dum-dum bullets, for these could readily be matched by outside forces, nor to the nation's secondary export of refined cereals (such as the renowned "Kala's Corn Flakes", etc.), for this was an effective threat only against helpless children. No, I have in mind, of course, the harrowing, unspeakable menace of that grisly product of apeiculture, the H Pill.

It is, I think, now generally known that when HPL wished to freshly imbue himself with horror, he would vacate his College Street demense in Providence for alien parts (his Brooklyn experience, bitterly distilled in "The Horror At Red Hook" -- a Red Hookcio ad absurdum of the elderly gentleman's xenophobia -- is a punned sterling example of this); accordingly, Lovecraft made sure that his African trip of 1928 took him into a portion, at least, of Kala, where it is known (from some 200 of HPL's letters of the period, written to some 200 correspondents, and all substantially the same text) that he conferred with Kalan officialdom in regard to psychological defenses. His suggestions, immediately marked, "Ape Secret" by the government, led to Lovecraft's being incarcerated in the national prison (jestingly termed, because of its size, a "Five-Kalan Jug") until he swore on a stack of Livingstone baubles that his lips were congealed.

After writing a not overly-hypocritical ode to the nation's prime minister (a prominent copper field tycoon named Uriah Ape), as well as coining a national slogan ("It takes an ape a-livin' to make a tree a home"), and penning a stirring Anrandthym celebrating the imagined permanent return of the National Hero to the Kalan jungle ("Tarzan Strips Forever"), HPL at last came home to Rhode Island to write, "The Demented Case of Unknown Kala," and -- for the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce -- the scholarly treatise, "Kala Fornication," or, "How to do it at Sunset in Vines." (This was later made into a horror film, starring the "Ogre's Double," Hugh Derleth, by R. K. O. Studios, whose name, interestingly, derives from the famed juvenile series, Ar Kham Comedies, which made the studio's fortune, as well as from the poem Lovecraft wrote for them, the "Ar Kham Ode," sometimes punningly and irreverently reduced to, "Our Commode.")

Shortly after Lovecraft's departure from the dark continent, a movie company on African location which chose to ignore Kala's formal forbidding of any cinematic use of its territory, found that its star had been attacked by a strange and fearful malady after eating a native delicacy (Wildebeest a la Elmo "Ape" Lincoln) which was quickly attributed by the Kalan defense minister to the nation's new defense weapon, the H Pill. The star (whose vehicle was released as "Trader Horn") gained a nickname from the experience which stuck to him throughout the remainder of his career, despite daily shavings from head to foot: "Hairy" Carey -- for, of course, although the title given the Kalan defense capsule suggested the initials of the man I believe responsible for setting Kalan science to the task of creating it, its name stands essentially for the graphically evident result of its ingestion by humans, Hyperpilosity.

But I have tried your patience (to say nothing of your ruddigore) overlong with this nomenclatural disquisition. I do look forward to your next issue. Up the Mythos!

*A thing not entirely the result of a
visionary anticipation of the Wonder
Stories letter column of a certain period.

William Ellsworth Blackbeard, EsqAR