



" I TAUGHT HIM TO LAUGH "

by CHARLES BURBEE

(From Shangri-L'Affaires #37, August 1947)

This is the story of Francis T Laney, the fun-loving Laney, Laney the gay, the innocent, the heartless, filled with the sadness and sorrow and joy of the young, crammed with the ineffable lilt of youth....

Towner was not always like that. No, indeed. At one time he was wild, tempestuous, rising to towering rages at no provocation, a titan of irascibility. Maybe you remember him that way.

He's different now. A changed man. Not the same at all. He is just like I said in the first paragraph. I will explain the miracle.

I saw this character some years ago and said to myself that here was a fine upstanding hulk of a man who could be developed into such as described in paragraph one.

Now, after all these years, the subtle influences of my delightful personality have worked their wonders. Towner is no longer irascible, loud, ruthless, vindictive, and all those other things. He is as calm and normal and kind as anybody you'll see this side of the pale.

My subtle personality has wrought these changes in his mind. I taught him to laugh. I taught his heart to wear wings. I weaned him away from fandom, lest he drown in its murky backwaters. I weaned him away from fantasy, lest he be lost in outer space. I gave (or lent) him a sense of humor. The things he says now are as funny as the things I say. They are often the same things.

It struck him all at once. He was plunging along, lost in thought, when he stopped short, as though he'd hit a wall. His eyes jerked wide and he turned to me and said, "You've made a man out of me, by God!"

I complimented him on his sharpness in perceiving it.

"My God," he said. "You came to my rescue. There I was, lost to the world, sinking deeper into fandom -- it must have started when you caused me to drop Acolyte, without refunding the subscription money...your subtle curative powers have traced lines of true power on my brain...Here I am, free! Free! Do you hear? Free! And you were the cause of it all!"

I shrugged. "Oh, it was nothing."

"Oh, but it was!" cried F Towner Laney, the Free. "You saved me from a fate worse than death. You are my guru, my messiah, my savior." His eyes were shining with worship.

"Oh hell, Laney," I said. "Come to your senses."

"But you saved me from fandom!" he cried. "Now I want to be just like you. You saved me from fandom and its horrors. You are my God."

"You may be right," I said, "but I hate this adulation. After all, I'm only human," I said. "Or am I?"

"Guru! Master!" Laney cried, in an ecstasy of realization and self-abasement as he found himself in the Presence.

"God, Laney," I said. "Wake up. Come to your senses. Tell you what. I hate to see you with this mad mood on you. Run off to the desert somewhere and commune with the firmament -- "

"Which You made!" he cried.

" -- commune with nature and so forth until you have seen the Light of Infinite Power and Peace and Will. Go forth, my son."

"I will!" he cried. "I will!"

And he did. He went to Palm Springs next day and took a woman with him.

A SHORT COURSE IN ART

by BOB TUCKER

(From Le Zombie #63, July 1948)

Fans who draw women, nude or clothed, for fanzines simply don't know a damned thing about women. The ignorance of these artists is terrible, as the first glance at their nude illustration will reveal. The features they place on the women are out of shape, badly proportioned, and untrue to life. Their fond illusions discolor artistic judgment.

Consider the bust most usually seen in fanzines, the healthy looking object to the right labeled "A". Artists who put this type of bust on female figures are due for a shock when they get around to studying their first woman; a woman's muscles will not support such a weight at such an angle. The "B" exhibit is the correct one for the size indicated, even though it may offend the artistic senses.

And watch the height and build of their figures. Only a fairly short, well-padded girl can have "B". Tall, thin women possess "C", "D", "E", or "F" and nothing else. If it appears to be something else, do not be fooled, it is only a gimmick known as a "falsie" and pictured in "G". Nature will not give a tall or thin girl a healthy bust; the artist, to be lifelike, must follow nature's lines.

Conversely, a short and fat girl is represented with "E" or "H", usually the latter depending upon her glandular activity. While few such fat figures ever appear in fanzine illustrations, it is well to note this for future reference.

Figure "E" probably represents the average American girl and should be followed in fanzine illustrations; for it will be noted that where girls appear in the picture alongside a man, a machine or an animal, the height given the girl by the artist indicates her to be average, or normal. Less than five feet, six inches, for a certainty, hence figure "E" is correct for this average or normal build. Figure "C" sometimes appears on such women but does not lend itself readily to good picturization. Figure "F" is found on the Oriental girl, but rarely in America.

In studying female figures in fanzines, you will note that women artists do not make these mistakes; some of the very best published nudes have been drawn by women, and the male artists will do well to study, even copy, the feminine illustrator. To some degree it is also true that the male artist who has studied a live model will be more faithful in reproducing the correct proportions on paper, although all too soon he too tends to slip away from rigid natural busts and distort the illustration for the sake of romanticism. This tendency must be held in check and the artist must force himself to remain close to nature's model.

Figure "I" indicates an elderly lady. Skip it.

