

YEZIDEE

№ 7

SAPS 67

This here that you have in your hot little hand is the 7th issue of YEZIDEE, which is butchered up by Dian Pelz, who used to be Dian Girard, and is eventually-when-I-get-around to-it sent out for trade and to people I want to get even with but is mostly intended for the 67th SAPS mailing. So there. Date at current is 3/17/63, and a happy St. Patrick's day to you!

This was a nice sized mailing. I read almost everything in it, just skipping certain comments I was fairly sure I would not find interesting. The majority of the mailing was quite interesting - thank you all. Now, I suppose we had better get on with the mailings comments. This, by the way, is being typed on an Underwood "Golden Touch" typer which belongs to the Physics Library at UCLA, and which Bruce won't touch with a ten foot pole because he says it cuts out all the o's. I only wish Calamity Jane would behave as well. I may trade my sleek little electric in on a cruddy old mechanical that does what you expect it to do.

#### COMMENTS ON THE 66th SAPS Mailing

HOBGOBLIN 11 I liked your informal conrep very much; believe me, the next one I tackle is going to be much along the same lines. I found the Discon report exhausting to write and I am reasonably sure that it echoed the lack of enthusiasm I felt while writing it.

ZED Delightful Karen, as always, especially "Sword Missing". I hope we will be seeing a lot more of this sort of thing in the mailings to come.

POT POURRI Your tour of Coventry Cathedral was very interesting, especially as I am currently enrolled in the second section of an art history course, which deals a good bit with architecture. With only your description to go by, the new cathedral sounds almost as much of a wreck as the old one. I almost got a rock for you with lots of fossil oysters in it, but I only had a hand pick and couldn't get a nice chunk. You know, there is nothing more frustrating than finding a nice fossil exposed right in the middle of a very hard two or three ton boulder.

DIE WIS Oh sure, I've been a Nero Wolfe fan for years, I caught the bug from my father. I think one of the things that always attracted me to the series was the way the character become so real that you could almost swear they are friends. Fritz, and Sol, and Orrie are so real that, in their own ways, they have become at least as interesting to me as Nero and Archie.

Sorry, but I didn't care too much for your reactions to the death of the president. Or, rather I didn't care to read them. I remember that you sent me a copy just post facto and my reaction then was just the same as it is now - which is why I never got around to replying to it. I guess I am rather too reserved to care to read anything as cathartic as this was.

OUTSIDERS Nice rambling zine, Wrai. Your writings are as distinctive as any handwriting. / K.L. - I have only one reaction to finding a Bug in the Bathtub, SQUATCH!

MIRAGE Very nice zine. Unfortunately, it is about the same size as WARHOON, and force of habit makes me want to comment on the cover and then review the rest by

weight. The History of Necronomicon was very interesting, and the fiction included seemed a bit rushed, but was enjoyable. Although it is unreasonable to expect something like this every mailing, I will hope. By the way, you may be interested to know that there was a discussion on Clark Ashton Smith at the LASFS a few weeks ago. It was quite bad (ie, dull) but may be published under the auspices of the LASFS. Generally, transcribed discussions are a bit more digestible than in the original.

WHEN THE GODS WOULD SUP they ought to make you the first course. You sir are an unmitigated, ill-mannered ass. You have more gall than I have ever heard of - to expect the target of your idiocys to publish your junk. I wish you would go the way of the lady you so much miss, I am sure the two of you have much in common. Discretion prohibits me from saying exactly what. Why don't you go hold your head in a bucket of cement for an hour or so?

CONJOBLEMENT Nice to have you with us. SAPS is friendly too, believe it or not. I like your illo on page four - hope to see lots more.

PLEASURE UNITS Ohhhh... don't be so nasty about poor John Carter - some of our best friends have laid eggs at times. You are right about the Burroughs that is exactly what I had in mind. I am afraid, however, that both he and Tolkien have been supplanted in my affections by Eddison.

LOKI Very nice, but not too commentable as far as I am concerned. Keep up the good work. (I was going to write "Valley Fandom Unite!" but Bruce got a sort of gleam in his eye so I hit him and left it out.)

TANDSTIKKERZEITUNG I don't really care what the title comes from. That is a very nice green paper. I like using colored papers in my zines. I've been toying with the idea of getting some of the florescent colors for a special occasion, but they are rather expensive. (I have a funny feeling that that word up above there ought to begin with a "fluo", but I am too lazy to look it up - besides, some of the colors are sort of flowery.) I don't start my serial chapters off with a summary because on New Years Day of 1963 I happened to read the Little Orphan Annie strip and found out that, by reading the yearly summary given on the First I could avoid having to read it the rest of the year. I don't believe in summaries, they remind me of the old fashioned chapter headings: Chapter 13, in which Lockhart finds himself imprisoned in a wine cask and, with the help of the beautiful Desdemona frees himself by using a dead mouse."

SLUG That's a cute little beastie on your cover. The Harry Moore story is great.

IGNATZ Speaking of things like cookies, I must tell you about the cake Bruce and I whumped together for the LASFS Diplomacy Corps. Diplomacy is a board game, played much like Strategy, in which seven players representing the seven major powers of Europe in 1914 (England, France, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, Italy and Germany) attempt to capture Supply Centers and eliminate opposing forces. It involves a lot of alliances and double crossing and is, therefore, the current fad at LASFS. Well, anyway, Bruce and I decided to make a cake to celebrate the fact that he, playing Italy, would be capturing another supply center for the first time in about 16 moves. I got a white cake mix and, after mixing it, divided the batter into four parts to be colored by food coloring. We set cooking foil rings in the center of the pans and poured the batter in two sections in each pan. It came out suprizingly well. When the slices were cut each one had a lovely four square assembly of bright rose, yellow, blue, and violet. I iced with chartruse butter icing, which bore the words, in forest green: "Lasciate ogni speranza..." I was really suprized when it turned out to be edible. It looked awful.

Awfully sorry to hear about the baby, Nan. I hope things are a lot better next time. Maybe they will be when you people come home where you belong.

MISTILY MEANDERING Well, hello there, Len! I thought you were a permanent fixture of N'APA. See, con report. Really.

POTTERY LEAFLET I dunno, I think you ought to get listed as at least half imoral. Hummmmm ... I wonder if Bruce would have any hesitancy about listing his own wife as imoral? I may miss a mailing just to find out... Naw, he'd hit me instead.

PORQUE? La revista de la biblioteca es muy interesante, pero prefiero mas oir las palabras suyas. Como Ud. vio, estoy estudiando a espanol otra vez. No es muy difiicil, que me interesaba mucho porque hasta tres anos que estudi lo. Nosotros tambien seramos en el campo el mez que viene. Estamos comprando una casa en Pacoima que esta, mas o menos, cuarenta y cinco minutos de Los Angeles por el "freeway". Tiene tres dormitorios, y uno de ellos usaramos para los libros, de que tenemos muchisimos. Solamente tenemos que esperar por el fin del "escrow". And may I point out for the benefit of Ed Baker that the forgoing is easily understandable by at least two active members of SAPS, so don't try it in esperanto.

PINO NOIR I have to admit that that cut is a bit odd. The figure on the back of the ass probably symbolizes the clergy who arn't paying any attention to the fact that the church is utilizing an indigestible concept to feed rubbish to the people. Off hand that is what it looks like, but the date makes it unlikely that it is really that violent a slam at the church. That just wasn't done. The elephant on the shield is probably a representation of the biblical behemoth, I can't make out the other objects too well. I guess that the act of masturbation symbolizes the fact that the clergy gets gratification out of the activities of the church. Then again, the whole thing may be the medeval version of a dirty postcard. It looks awfully Bosh-esque to me.

YEZIDEE That was a very bad color to use for that cover. Next time I'll know better!

SPELEOBEM Nice start on the Dusk Riders. Now just keep it up. I wish you had, or would take, the time to write more fiction.

DINKY BIRD I think it is awfully hard to define exactly what fantasy poetry is supposed to consist of. I always class much of Poe as fantasy, and a few selections of Kipling. You have to decide exactly what you want to include. I rather tend to class narrative poetry concerned with religious miracles as fantasy. There is also the very symbolic stuff, such as the one that opens "I saw a chapel all of gold" and is, I think, by Blake. A definition of fantasy poetry would have to be awfully limited to lead anyone to say there was very little of it. On the same subject, I just got around to reading the collected poems of Robert E. Howard. Although I am familiar enough with his novels I had either never realized, or had forgotten that he was also a poet. This turned out to be some of the best fantasy poetry I have read and I am sorry I didn't find it before. I especially liked "Heart of the Seas's Desire" and one which I think (not having the book at hand) is called the "Road to Rome".

I thought "Sylvie and Bruno" was very interesting. When, after the first two chapters, I learned to make the transitions as easily as the narrator I began to enjoy it very much. It has an odd, almost distracted quality, as if Carroll were busy thinking of something else as he wrote it. It might almost be a forerunner of "Stream of Conciousness" writing.

NUMBER ONE OF A SERIES WITH HENSCRATCHED TITLES To me the most interesting thing about the Japanese language is its decorative quality. The only language that I have seen that is more decorative is Arabic which is, of course, much more serpentine. I have been fascinated for a long time by the little glyphs which oriental art collectors attatch to screens as marks of posession. In some instances they are more interesting than the art.

RESIN The problem of an author's preference as to edition is an interesting one - in some cases I do not at all agree with authors in the choice of their own books. What they think was great and what I think was great may be two entirely different things. However, the information is interesting.

I don't think that you have enough of an understanding or appreciation of the literature of that time to be reading Burroughs. I don't mean that as a slam, I just mean that the style of literature between 1900 and 1935 is somewhat of an acquired taste. If you understand it it doesn't seem much different than a contemporary novel. You will find that the majority of the writers active during the time Burroughs was writing turned out books which either dound tossed together or belaboured. That was the way they were written then. Of course they were contrived, they sold very well that way.

I do object violently to some of those books you put down as mundane. The Burning Court is most certainly fantasy, the only thing is that you have to review the book at the end because the final chapter throws everything into a different light. The Man Who Was Thursday ... well, I mean really. What would you call it! Ayesha is most certainly fantasy. Go back and re-read it. What exactly do you expect from a fantasy story?

COCONINO Don't go getting nasty with me, little man. There are very few plays that have the censorship problems of movies. Almost invariably any good psychological play will have to be completely revamped before appearing in the movies. The general public, the "masses" I spoke of, are the people who are accustomed to go to the movies and to spend something between 50¢ and \$2.00 for their evenings entertainment. They very seldom read the critical reviews and are more influenced by billboard advertising than anything else. They like movies starring Eddie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds in light sex comedies, Tony Curtis being appealing, and an occasional psychological shocker which they then talk about for months. They have no knowledge of good or bad direction, stage setting, motivation, stage presence, or lighting. They would not notice a stage wait if you could drive a Mack truck through it. They don't care to read plays, and think most modern plays and playwrights are odd. The asking price for the cheapest play tickets is about \$1.50 to \$2.50, and there is no popcorn, candy or softdrinks sold in the foyer. I prefer it that way. You look over the list of movies that have been current during any given past year and you'll see just what I mean by "catering to the masses". How many science fiction films were being shown at one time? How many horror movies like Psycho? How many rock and roll movies? Yeah, and just how many medical and situation comedy shows are being aired at one time on TV? You cannot point to that large a percentage of plays on any one subject at one time, and it isn't because there are more movies. Its because movies in general have just one thought in their collective brain, and that is to cash in. Sure, I get a big laugh out of writers with a play that has a message, but at least they use a little originality in their thoughts and ideas in presenting drama. 'Now, that should satisfy your sweet little boy head. If you would spend just a few more minutes trying to understand what people mean instead of immediately jumping you would be a hell of a lot better off.

PINO CHARDONNAY Your repro is so beautiful it makes me want to cry. // Bob, you don't eat so terribly much. Anyone who has ever cooked much for a group can tell you that the portions listed on the side of a can are about equal to a child's portion. I understand that they are based on the government bureau of nutrition's standards or somesuch - healthful but not filling. Sort of like the concentrated dog food that has come out. You are supposed to give the animal two hamburger-sized patties of this stuff, which then takes care of the days requirement, Then I suppose you have to put up with his crying all night because his stomach is still empty???? // All I did was check the electrodes, Bob.

ENZYME The only comment I can remember about spinach is "Spinach, spinach, spinach!" from "Skin and Bones" by Thorne Smith. The hero shouts it because, due to an earlier incident, it is the most inane thing he can think of.

FLABBERGASTING Is the thing on your cover any relation to ginseng root? (Panax schinseng, or P. quinquefolium) Just as a note of curiosity, why did you consider the revealing of the face of the Bride of Frankenstein to be such a frightening scene? The bride was played by Elsa Lanchester who is, to my mind a very cute little trick. She wore no horror makeup - the only concession to horror being a lot of white drapery, electrodes at the throat, and having her hair, (and presumably the head beneath it) drawn back into a curly edition of an Egyptian headdress.

HOBGOBLIN No.12 Your short review of the Land That Time Forgot is particularly interesting as I was just talking about Burroughs to Dave Hulan. We came to the general conclusion that we both like Burroughs very much chiefly because of this suspension of disbelief. Intellectually you may realize that some of the events in the books are pretty ridiculous, but somehow, it doesn't seem to matter when you are reading them. Besides, where else can you find reading that is light enough that you can finish a 350 page novel in an hour and a half. // Your book reviews are much appreciated.

RETRO I sympathise with men who are violently anti white shirt and tie at dinner, but I for one see little reason to pay something like \$4.50 to slob around at an informal dinner. I enjoy wearing a ball or evening dress, and I think that most women do. The discon held a luncheon at the aforementioned price. They might as well have held a buffet and let people wander through in carpet slippers. I seriously doubt that one three hour session in a tie is going to kill you. You can dress like Walter Breen the next day to make up for it. If fans want to keep the Hugos meaning something they have got to 1) limit the number given, and 2) place them in the proper surroundings. I don't think that something that looks like an outdoor barbeque driven indoors by rain looks very serious or very interested in what is going on. Tell me, would you think very much of a banquet attended by men in walking shorts and women in muumuus, dungarees, and bathrobes? You might even wear a lavalava so you'd be sure not to be uncomfortable.

That 48-point typer of Uncle Gods was used at a FAPA one-shot session held at the Coxes. Elmer wrote a little shaggy brick story for the zine - typing it on toilet paper run through the 48 point typer. I guess he does have a feeling for the proper place of things.

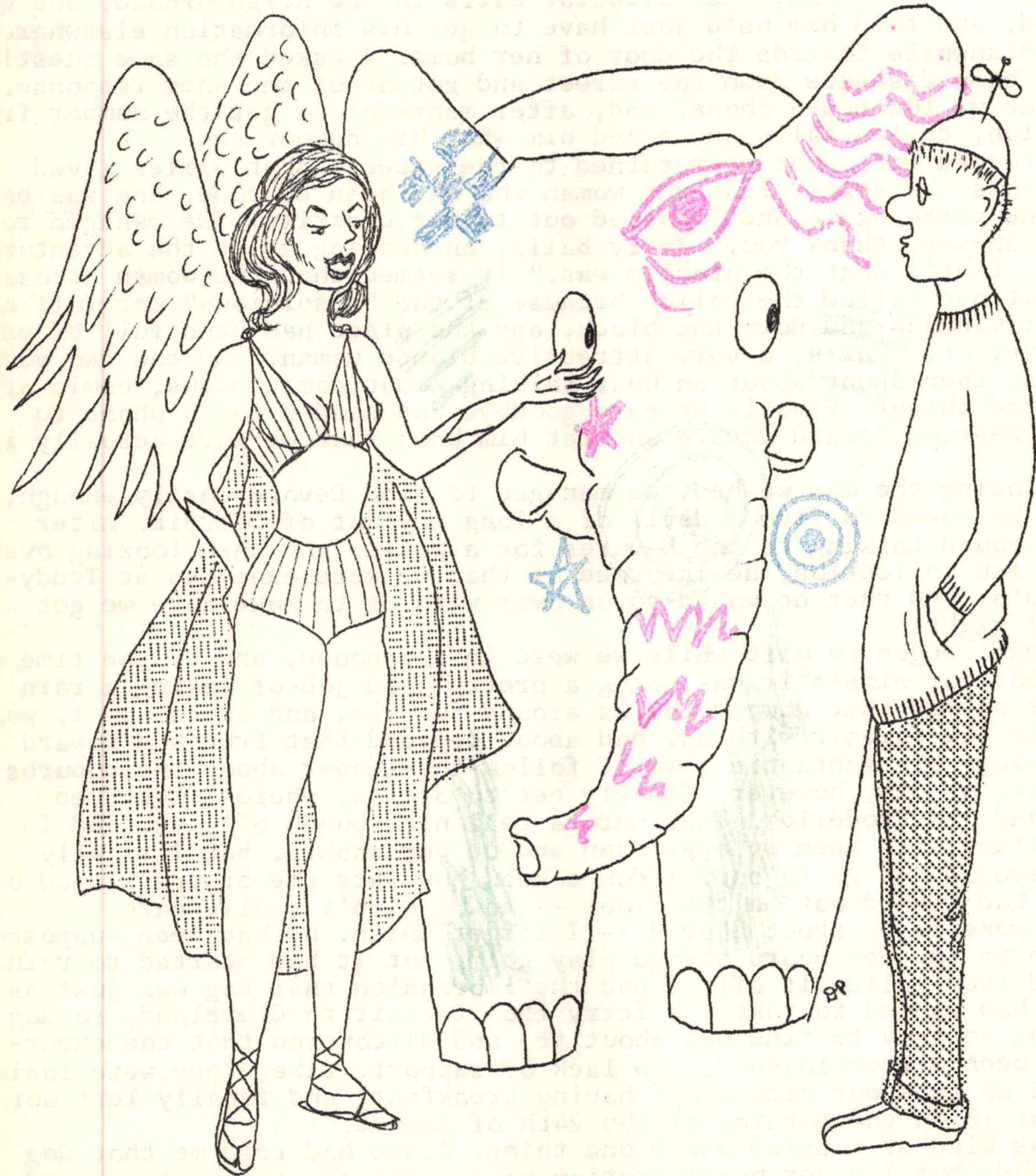
I really am sorry about the Westercon. Jack saw me there, but no one else did. I'll try to do better next time. Say, how about holding another con in Seattle so I can get to see that part of the country?

Puddles is a perfectly good machine - just has emotional problems. "Return to Saptan Place" much enjoyed, as was the artless artwork on your (shhhhh, anybody listening?) f-a-p-a (shhhh!) zine. Bruce showed me his copy.

Well, that's about it for mailing comments this issue, gang. At that, this is more than I generally find to comment on. Keep up the good work and let's all hope for, maybe not bigger because we don't want to insult the other apa too badly, but always better and better mailings - with lots of comment hooks.

# SAFARI SO GOOD

## PART 2



" 'Delirium tremens' - what did you think he was going as? "

After getting back to the US side of the border from our brief sojourn in Windsor, we headed over to Dick Schultz's home, as Ted wanted particularly to see him. Unfortunately, he was not home, and his mother said that she hadn't the slightest idea when he would get back. That's what comes of not arranging these little visits.

Both Fred and Bruce wanted to meet comic fan Jerry Bails, so we headed over to the street on which he lived, and tried to figure out which house it was, as we didn't have the number -- the street was only two blocks long. It was a warm night, and several people were sitting out on their front porches, so Bruce got out of the car and walked up to one house to ask if the lady knew a Doctor Bails in the neighborhood. She was most cold, and told him he'd just have to get his information elsewhere, sidling meanwhile towards the door of her home. I asked the same question of a man some distance down the street and got about the same response. After that we located a phone, and, after managing to get the number from Information, called Bails and asked him what his number was.

It turned out, when we returned to the street, that Bailes lived right across the street from the woman who had been so rude. She was back out on the porch again and I called out to her cheerily, "We managed to find him anyway, thank you." Jerry Bails, on hearing about the adventure, said "Oh, that's what the problem was." It seemed that the woman across the street had called the police because of the "suspicious" car full of people driving up and down the block, and the place had been full of cops.

We met Mrs. Bails, a very attractive blonde woman, and the two youngsters, and then spent about an hour talking about comic books, comic art, and related things. Finally we said goodbye and headed for a phone to call Big-Hearted Howard Devore and let him know that we were actually in town.

Following the map we had, we managed to find Devore easily enough, although he seems to live a devil of a long way out of Detroit. After sitting around talking to the Devores for a while, and then looking over Howard's fan collection, he informed us that we were expected at Teddybear Sims's, and that he would go on over with us to make sure we got there all right.

It had begun to mist while we were in the house, and by the time we started out for Sims's it was doing a pretty good job of faking a rain storm. It seemed that Howard led us around forever, and Bruce and I, who had Ted in the Corvair with us, had about decided that Fred and Howard were playing some fantastic game of follow-the-leader about the suburbs of Detroit. We did, however, finally get to Sims's, where I met Fred Prophet and Jim Broderick. They were a real nice bunch of guys, and I tried valiantly to keep my eyes open and be personable, but I finally had to give up and go to bed. I don't know how late the others stayed up -- Bruce had flaked out on the floor -- and I didn't really care.

Rog woke me up about 8 or 9 -- I forget which. He had been supposed to get up in the wee hours and go play golf, but it had started to rain again and they called it off. I had the impression that Rog was just as glad. We had wanted to take the ferry from Detroit to Cleveland, so Rog called the company to find out about it, and discovered that the excursion had been discontinued due to lack of support. Like, they were losing money. So we took our time about having breakfast, and finally left our host about 10 on the morning of the 24th of August.

I was kind of puzzled about one thing. Bruce had told me that Rog was married, but I never heard mention of a woman about the place, and there were no female personal effects in the house that I could see. I still don't know if he is married, separated, divorced, or just a grass bachelor. I can't really imagine anyone as nice looking as Sims being single.

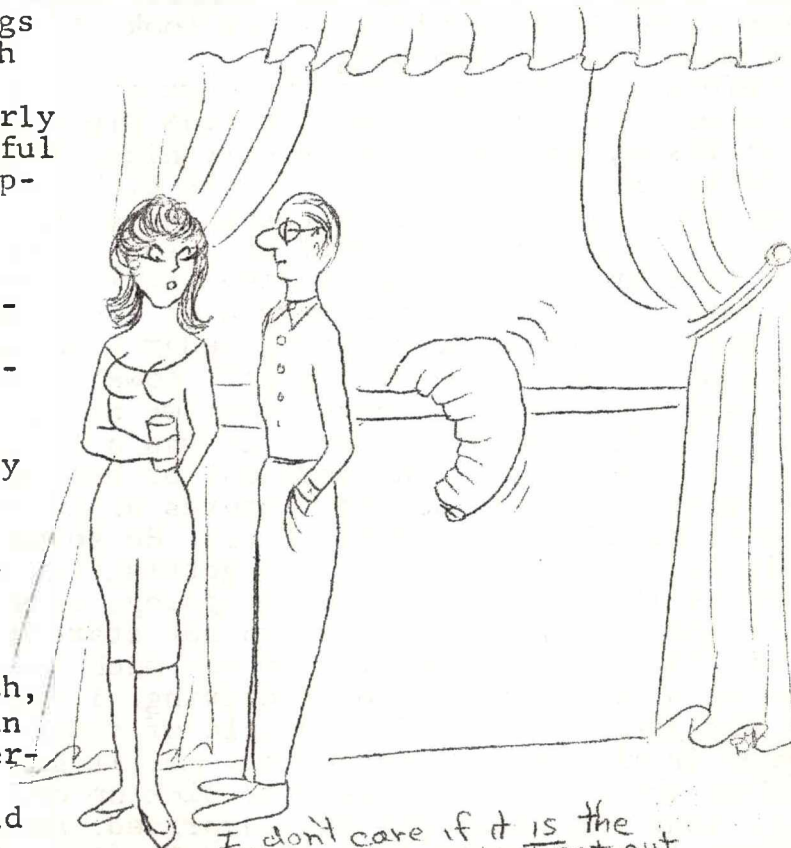


We drove on through Detroit and its outskirts - it's a grimy looking town - and finally out onto the open thoroughfares on our way to Cleveland. Sometimes when I think back on this trip I get the feeling that ninety percent of my life was spent behind the wheel.

When we finally got to Cleveland, I was driving. We pulled into a gas station and discovered we were on the wrong end of the city -- a situation somewhat comparable to being in Santa Monica when you want to be in Alhambra, or being in South Brooklyn when you want to go to the Cloisters. Accordingly, I gritted my teeth and plowed forward. We had decided that the best bet would be for us to catch Detroit Street and follow it. We had a devil of a time finding the street, and were not helped at all by Johnstone's "Trusty Native Guide" routine -- knowing virtually nothing about the city, he felt himself competent to direct us through it, and finally surpassed even himself when he pointed out a bridge over Superior Avenue as being "the famous Detroit Street Bridge." After a few misses and blind turns, we managed to get on the right street going in the right direction, and I told Ted that if he persisted in reading off all the block numbers -- we had several miles to go -- I would kill him.

When we finally got to Andre Norton's home, we parked and went to the door. We were about an hour late, which wasn't bad considering the distance we had come, but was still not good. The woman who opened the door and invited us in was a pleasant-faced woman of about 35, with soft brown hair worn fairly short, glasses, and a bustling manner. We were sort of wondering when we would be able to meet the invalid Miss Norton, but none of us said anything, and I stood in the doorway of the kitchen talking to the lady while she finished preparations for dinner, as Bruce, Ted, and Fred roamed around looking at the multitude of books in the living room. It was only after talking to her for a few minutes that I suddenly realized that this was Andre Norton, and that she was most certainly not the bedridden wraith I had expected to meet. This nice lady reminded me of someone's Aunt Mary as she hurried around dishing things up and chatting merrily with me.

After meeting her elderly mother, and having a wonderful dinner, we were all taken upstairs to see her library. She keeps all of her reference books in one room, and all of the fiction in another, a lovely system that I wish we had the room to follow. I got the impression from talking to Miss Norton that science fiction is only a means of earning a living as far as she is concerned. She is extremely interested in ancient history, archaeology, art, and many other subjects. She is a very charming person to talk with, and extremely intelligent in her discussions of the literature she is fond of. Finding that both Fred and I had certain interests that coincided with her own tastes, she gave each of us a book, which



I don't care if it is the 12th floor - he can just get out of it himself!

I thought was a very lovely gesture.

We left Miss Norton and her mother about 9:00, and headed back west toward Clyde, where we were supposed to spend the night with Ted's grandparents. It was a long drive, through narrow highways lined here and there with strange little frame houses. We stopped once at a gas station to use the restrooms, and found that the place was deserted. The gas station was well-lit, and its garage was open, the cafe next door was open and all its lights were on, and there was not a soul anywhere. Well, it was after midnight by then, so perhaps they had all changed into pumpkins. I wish the restrooms had. That was the only time during the entire trip I had fault to find with a Standard Station restroom. There were spider webs in the corners, and roaches running across the floor, and the plumbing underneath the hand basin was disconnected so that water ran out and made a large puddle on the floor. Brrrrr. We

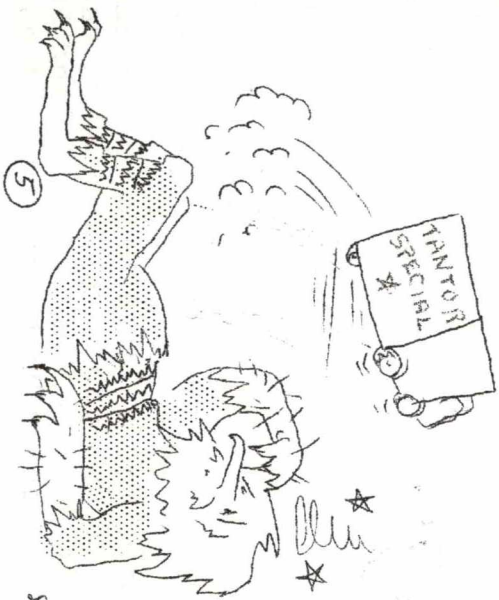
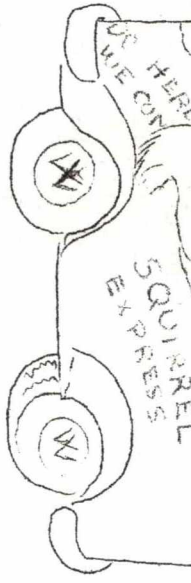
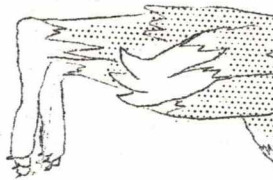
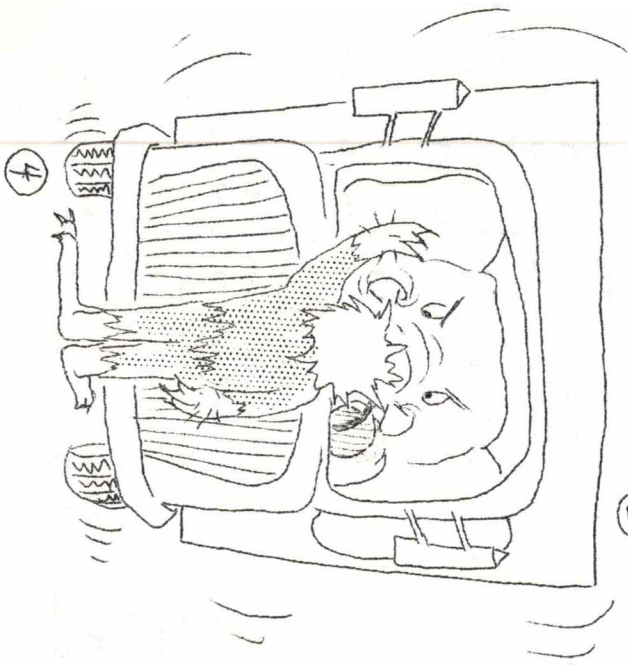
We finally reached Clyde around 12:45. It reminded me of an impressionistic painting of small towns in general: the town was tiny, and all of the houses were old, old, old. It had a strangely spooky sort of restfulness that made me feel that it would keep you there forever if you didn't watch it very carefully.

We got to Ted's grandparents' place at about 1:00, and almost immediately flaked out.

I got up fairly late the next morning, to find that the fellows had been up for some time and had had breakfast. Ted's grandmother, bless her heart, was doing the fellows' wash so they would all have something clean to wear. She washed my jumpsuit with Bruce's coveralls in the last wash, and hung the whole mess out to dry. Ted was busy running around looking at all the things he remembered from his last visit, and Fred, who had never been on a farm, was vitally interested in everything. Bruce and I just sat back, relaxed, and enjoyed the clean air. After a great lunch (I just cannot get used to the "dinner" and "supper" concept) of fried chicken with all the trimmings, we took off again, planning to drive into New York without stopping.

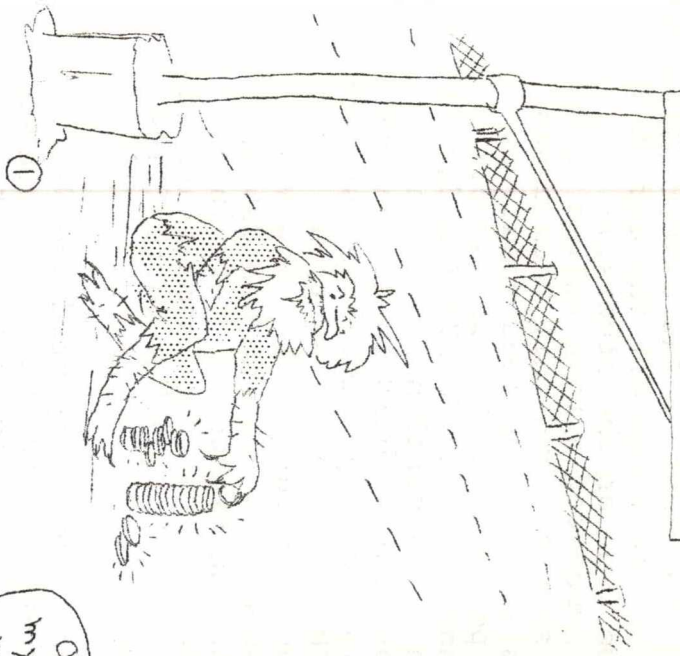
Before leaving Ohio, however, we stopped by the Cedar Point recreation area, which is not too far from Clyde. It's a sort of cheaper version of Disneyland, and really very nice. They have a bucket skyway, several "wild Mouse" rides, and a great timber race, in which the cars -- made to look like hollowed-out logs -- go shooting down a water-filled sluice. It looked like a devil of a lot of fun, but unfortunately we ran out of time and didn't get to ride it. They have a waxwork there which isn't very much, but also a very nice old-fashioned carousel and several other things which make visiting Cedar Point well worth while. We were walking down the middle of the park toward the cashier's office so Bruce could cash a traveler's check, when we noticed an odd statue in the middle of a little bed of flowers. It was a lovely griffen -- about five feet tall on its base, and made out of bronze which had weathered to a lovely green. We were taking pictures of it when a middle-aged man walked by and asked if we knew what it was. He seemed to be very gratified when we said it was a griffen. It was getting late in the afternoon, and I told Bruce that we had better get going, as I would probably have to do most of the driving and wanted to get started as soon as possible.

We hit the turnpike without too much difficulty, and started what was to be a very long seige of driving. I did do most of the driving, but Bruce and Fred spelled off a couple of times. Toward the wee hours, when everyone in the car was asleep but me, it got pretty lonesome, so I turned on the radio. I managed to pick up one station of good music that came in loud and clear and was surprized, at the first station break, to find that it originated from Montreal. (I discovered, by the time that we

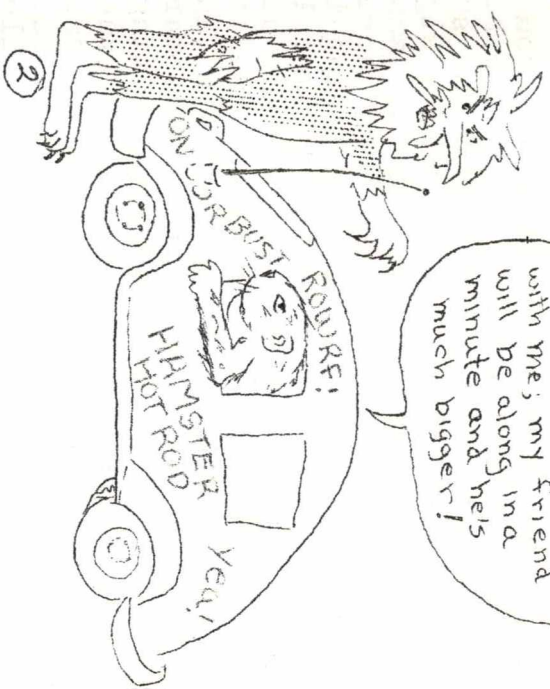


BRBP

Stop and pay Troll



Oh no! - Don't bother with me; my friend will be along in a minute and he's much bigger!



Oh no! - Don't bother with me, my friend will be along in a minute and he's much bigger!

drove out of the area after the convention, that most of the eastern stations that are not located in the big cities tend to go off the air at dusk -- which is probably why the skip is so long on the others.)

Ted and Bruce had spotted a sign that announced a town called King of Prussia, so they decided they wanted to stop off and mail themselves some postcards postmarked from there. I was somewhat dubious about anything with a name like that having its own postoffice, but we got off the turnpike and then played "Town, Town, Who's Got the Town?" The darned thing was hard to get to -- being at the end of several narrow, goat-tracky sort of roads -- and turned out to be just as hard to get out of. We did, however, find a post box, and were assured by a local gas station attendant that they would be postmarked with the name of the town. About this time Fred, who had been looking abstractedly out of the window at some red blinkers by a road construction, announced that he was dubbing Pennsylvania "The Land of the Expensive Blinking Lights." I refrained from asking why. A few days previously he had decided that some state we were passing through should be called "The Land of Squashed Butterflies With Sticky Feet." Fred has a tendency to worry me.

It was about 6:30 or 7:00 in the morning when we spotted the New York skyline. I am afraid I was rather crushing to Ted when he proceeded to goshwow over the view. I was in no mood to be particularly enthralled with something that looked entirely too much like the opening credits for a Superman film.

I pulled over to let someone else drive, only to discover that both Fred and Bruce were too sleepy to be much good, so I pulled back onto the highway and went on. As luck would have it we hit New York right in the middle of the morning rush hour. I tried to turn onto a bridge that Bruce indicated, only to find that a big sign specified No Passenger Cars. Eventually I hit a corner that was being monitored by a cop -- who took one look at our out-of-state license, another at my groggy face, and told us to pull over and let him tell us how to get where we wanted to go.

Just barely this side of exhaustion, I finally got to Ted White's place on 49th in Brooklyn -- fighting those lousy two-color traffic signals all the way. (New York has a lot of driving and street regulations that I still don't understand -- like jaywalking on the side streets, and being able to park in front of a fire plug as long as it is painted a different color than the others, and having days when you can park on the sides of the streets that are usually verboten -- sheesh!)

When we knocked at the door of Ted's place, we were admitted by a small girl with eyes like a Kean painting, who introduced herself as Sandi, and said that she would wake Ted. Our host, still sleepy-eyed and wearing a pair of zoris and a loose shirt, talked to us for about an hour or so, and then helped us cart in the luggage. I don't remember getting any sleep then, I think we all just decided what we wanted to do and then took off.

Ted took us down to the nearest subway terminal and directed us to the right train for the Bronx Zoo. Johnstone, Bruce, and I headed for the zoo, and Fred took off to look for comics and used-book stores.

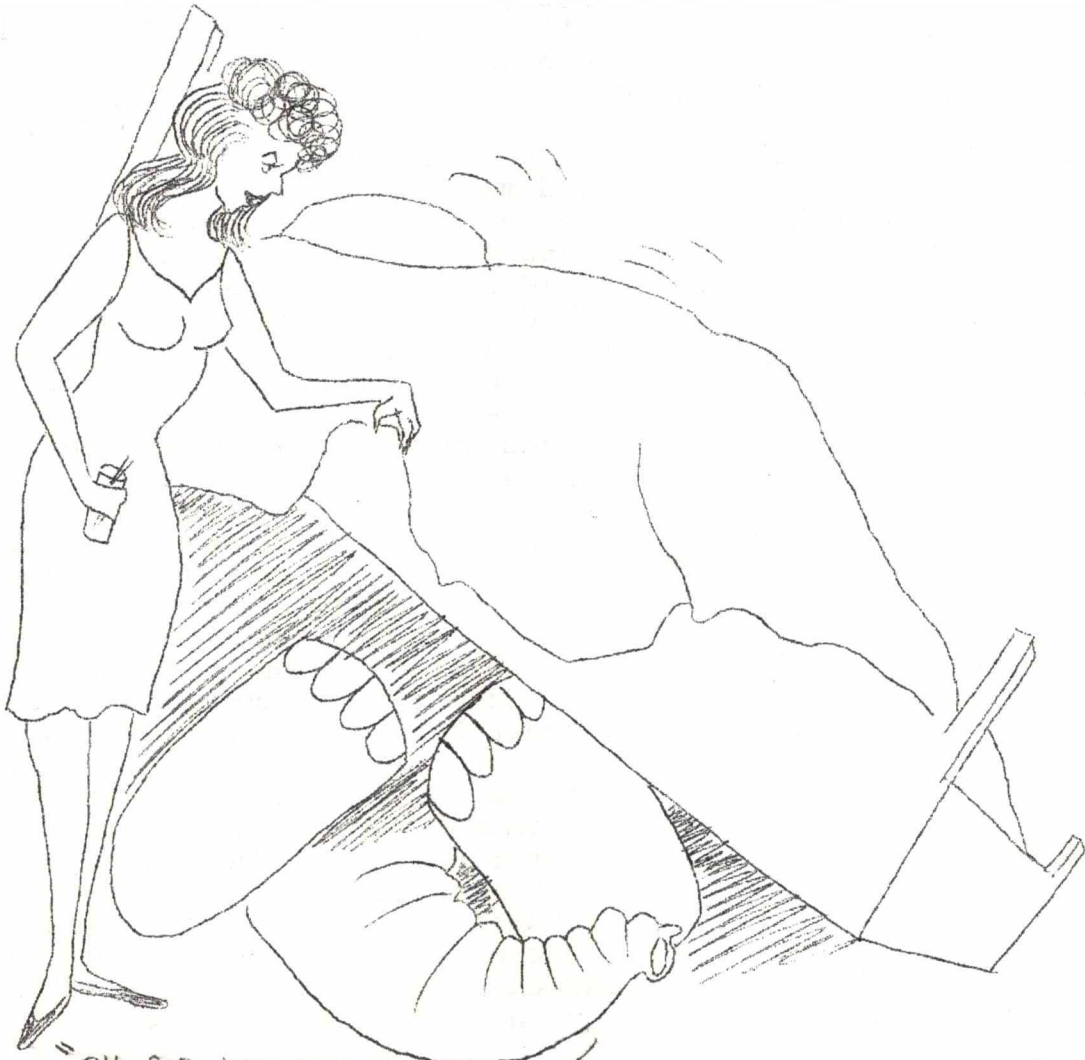
Johnstone had luncheon and dinner dates with two different girls, so he left us after we got out of the zoo. Bruce and I headed uptown (or maybe downtown - New York confuses me) where he ushered me into my first automat. It was a lot of fun -- a sort of mechanized cafeteria. We window-shopped for a while, and then tried to catch a tour to Bedloe's Island out of Battery Park. The tours had already stopped for the night, though, so we took the Staten Island Ferry instead. For 10¢ we rode out and back -- about an hour's trip. I don't care much for New York, but by

night from the ferry it was really a beautiful jewel.

In the drug store at the ferry terminal, we picked up a much-wanted spray bottle of hair tint to disguise the bleach job Bruce was sporting until the convention. Finally we went on back to Ted's, where we met Lee Thorin -- who informed us that she had just been disowned by her parents. Lee impressed me as sort of a cute little trick, but I figured she was going to go blind if she didn't brush the hair away from over her right eye. She really doesn't look at all like Veronica Lake. Pretty early in the morning I decided that I had better get some sleep before I fell over, so I bid adieu to the mob and trudged downstairs where we had laid out our sleeping-bags.

The next day, the 27th of August, Bruce had planned to visit his relatives in New Jersey, so I armed myself with a map of the subway and ventured out by myself to try to locate the Metropolitan Museum of Art, promising to be back early, as we were expected at a party being given by the Carrs that night.

The museum was a great place with some really wonderful exhibits, and I wish that I could have had another couple of days to go there. As it was I had to make it a rather fast tour. I had lunch in the museum cafeteria -- making the mistake of getting a plate of fruit jello that must have been subsidized by General Rubber. After lunch I finished touring the museum, and, with my usual luck, managed to pick up a young fellow who said that he really enjoyed the museum more when he was with someone, and wouldn't I maybe like to go for a walk in the park with him, or maybe go out for a cup of coffee? Oh, well, I guess I attract them. Eventually I pleaded the lateness of the afternoon, and hopped a subway back to the Whites'. I caught a sandwich at a greasy spoon not too far from 4)th Street (and was very surprized when it



"OH FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE - SHE SAID HE WAS A RAT"

turned out to taste good in spite of the appearance of the man who fixed it) and then walked over to a little cafe to talk with the Whites and sip a glass of soda when it turned out that they hadn't eaten yet either. We were joined on this dinner jaunt by Gary Deindorfer and John Koning, who had just gotten in from wherever it is they come from. Deindorfer turned out to be a rather nice-looking young fellow, and Koning looked exactly like a young version of Louis Heyward. Bruce hadn't turned up yet, so we assumed that he would meet us at the Carrs, and finally took off about 7:00.

When we got to the Carrs, whose place is at the apex of thousands of flights of stairs, Bruce was there already, together with Lee Thorin, Esther Stanton Davis (for whom I had already been prepared) and Esther's boyfriend/husband/lover Henry Dupree. When Fred showed up, and Ted some-time later, the party rounded out to about eleven people -- it was a nice, small, friendly gathering, and very much enjoyed. I remember one very funny incident when Walter Breen called up and Lee yelped frantically, "Don't tell him I'm here, he'll come up!" and looked for all the world like she wanted to hide from the telephone. It seemed that a year or so previous, Walter had taken a great fancy to her (she would have been about 15 or 16) and wrote her long letters saying that he loved her, and why was she treating him this way, etc., etc. Lee had no desire to resume the conversation. Walter, however, did not come up, and Lee nursed herself flirting with Deindorfer and Koning.

I had bought a long string of blue beads on the way home from the museum that day, and Esther Davis came up to me with eyes wide and forefinger rigid, and informed me hoarsely that I had better not put those beads in my mouth or they would kill me, being prepared with a dye made of some obscure poison. I was on the point of asking her if I looked like the type who would be using a necklace for a teething ring, but I was afraid she might say yes, so I didn't. It turned out that Esther Davis was a fortune-telling nut. She eventually got around to me, looked at one palm, widened her eyes in dismay and murmured something about "you poor thing." (I never once heard her say anything about anyone's future; she always widened her eyes in dismay and then murmured something like the above.) Carol Carr, seeing that I had the one necklace, gave me two other, similar ones, saying that she had a lot of them and never wore those two. I accepted them happily; I love long, dangly necklaces. Carol is a tall, willowy girl, with shoulder-length black hair and almond eyes, and looks like she might be able to play Nefretete without any trouble at all.

We eventually left the party, and Bruce and I drove on over to the Whites', where we sacked out for the night.

The morning of the 28th of August, it was discovered that Ted's large folding suitcase had been lifted by person or persons unknown, and he set out to try and replace some of the contents. Bruce and I headed out into the wilds of the city to try to locate the darned "Diplomacy" game we had been trailing ever since we left Los Angeles. We finally did locate it in New York -- at F. A. O. Schwartz, which carries everything from playing cards to working sailboats big enough to carry an adult.

Then Bruce decided that we should go climb the Statue of Liberty, so we caught the subway and headed for ~~the~~ tour terminal at Battery Park. That is, we tried to head for the terminal. Bruce, armed with the only map, stepped onto a train at the last minute, and then waved sadly to me as I stood on the platform watching him whizzzz away. It took me 45 minutes to get down to the park, as I hadn't the vaguest idea whether I wanted to go Uptown, Downtown, or where. I had the vague idea that I wanted the subway line that was marked with one particular color, but that isn't really much help. At any rate, I finally got to the terminal

-- at the opposite end than I had expected -- and walked over to the Statue of Liberty tour building, to find Bruce in a phone booth yakking with someone. We got on the last boat out to the Statue of Liberty, and valiantly set out to climb the thing. I felt all right about it until we got to the last 12 stories, a little less than half way up. The first ten flights of stairs lead up to the top of the pedestal, and are concrete, straight, and broad. The final 12 flights, which lead up to the head of the statue, are combined into a narrow-tread spiral staircase of iron. I am leery of stairs anyway, but by the time I had gotten that far up I figured I might as well go ahead. There wasn't really much danger of falling, as the people were packed in so tightly there wasn't more than a few inches of free space at a time. I was really rather disappointed with the view from the top, as the openings are all narrow and heavily screened, but, after all, now I can say I did it.

We hurried on back to town after the excursion, as Ted (Johnstone, that is) had told us that Jock Root would be taking us to dinner. Luckily both Bruce and I were a trifle dubious of the statement. Ted, as usual, did not seem to understand the difference between "taking" someone to dinner and "joining" someone for dinner. It turned out that Jock knew of this nice Chinese place, and he, Ted, Bruce and I, Fred, and Sylvia Dees (who had just gotten into town) were all supposed to go there for dinner. (Why, I don't really know.) Bruce doesn't care for Chinese food, but he made do quite well with some spareribs, sampling now and then off of the six different Chinese dishes we were trading back and forth. After the dinner (which was quite good, although the restaurant looked like it might serve cockroach soup), we headed by taxi over to Esther Stanton Davis's, where there was to be a party.

This party consisted roughly of the same people, with the addition of Adrienne Martine, Jock Root, Sylvia Dees, and Leslie Gerber in lieu of the Carrs and Whites -- maybe there is some vicious feud going on there we didn't know about. Esther Davis got onto a fortune-telling kick again, prophesizing dire days ahead for anyone who would let her lay out the cards for them. I kept quiet and played with a deck of cards -- coming up with spades and hearts as I usually do, over and over again. Instead of keeping quiet, Deindorfer chose to display the fact that he was an ass -- berating the assembled company for listening to the little show Esther was putting on, and being generally nasty and out-of-place in a company which, although it might not have believed in what was being done, was having a lot of fun doing it.

Gerber tried to be the life of the party, and came running out of the kitchen with a shook-up bottle of soda in his fly, letting it squirt all over the rug and furniture, and yelling "Help, help!" I had been told that Gerber had changed a good deal from the fellow I had read about in fanzines, and that he was really a very nice guy; and had matured considerably. I guess they meant that he is an even bigger ass. (He followed the soda gag by flinging himself on the sofa and screaming, "Help, help, I'm an epileptic!" -- which I have been given to understand was his current Walter Breen joke, and which I did not think was one bit funny.) Esther, showing remarkable self-control, just told him to clean up the mess -- I think I'd have bashed him over the head with his very own soda bottle.

We eventually got tired and, together with Fred, left the party about 1 or 2 a.m. We hadn't brought the car, of course, and had to take the subway. Strangely enough, the opening to the subway was open, but once we got downstairs we found a heavy iron grating, well-padlocked, separating us from the trains. We had all thought that subway stops were open 24 hrs a day, but evidently they aren't. We finally found one that was open several blocks up the street, and, after walking through a gang of the



p.16/ roughest-looking dykes I have ever seen -- complete with motorcycles, caught a train for Brooklyn and the Whites'.

We had planned to leave about 9 or 10 in the morning, as I remember, Bruce had to get up earlier, as he was supposed to back over to the Carrs' and pick up some material for the FANTHOLOGY. He got back with the stuff, routed the rest of us out of bed, and finally got the show on the road by ten -- which will never cease to amaze me. We started up, drove around the block, and passed by an empty lot -- where Johnstone yelled for us to stop. He had suddenly spotted the remains of his suitcase lying on the ground. We stopped for him to pick it up -- all there was was a piece of the wood and metal of the frame and a scrap of the tartan material -- and trotted over to the local fuzz shop where he dropped it off. The thieves had evidently slashed it as soon as they could, and abandoned the wreckage, which is probably why they took Ted's -- it being cloth and easier to slash than the leather ones belonging to the rest of us.

After he got out of the station, we headed on out of the city and south toward DC. The rain storm that had been trailing us clear across country caught up with us again in New Jersey, and we drove through sprinkles for the majority of the day. I don't recall too much about the drive down. The scenery was about par for a farming area that specialized in dairies and limited acreage -- sort of eh-h-h. I do remember crossing over the bridge that spans the Delaware. It was a long, curving thing that looked like about three straight bridges had been butted up together. The composition was that funny sort of metal stripping that makes a loud metallic hummmmmmm when you drive over it. It always makes me expect a sensation like you get from those shock machines in the penny arcade. I also remember stopping at a Howard Johnson's that sported a



"We don't care if he is having fun!"

DP

fancy motel in addition to its eatery. We walked in, looked for a table, and then were halted by a hostess who purred that she would show us to a table in just a minute. Running into a hostess in what I consider a coffee shop always ruffles my feathers anyway, and to top it off, she was being chewed out by a man who was very unhappy about the charges on his check. This did not give rise to feelings of confidence in the joint, and when the man snarled "You'll be sorry" to us on his way out, Ted responded that we already were, and the four of us about-faced and walked out. We drove on south, and finally stopped at another nice coffee shop, which I think was one of the Toddle House chain. (Naturally, we had occasion to stop at other Howard Johnsons on the way back, and the first one we hit got a long list of complaints about the previous one.) Aside from that particular incident, I have never had much to complain about in a Howard Johnson eatery. Considering that they have a captive clientele, they put out surprisingly good meals. Of course, we seldom had a full meal there (except for Johnstone, who always eats like food is going off the market), but their service and sandwiches were always more than passable.

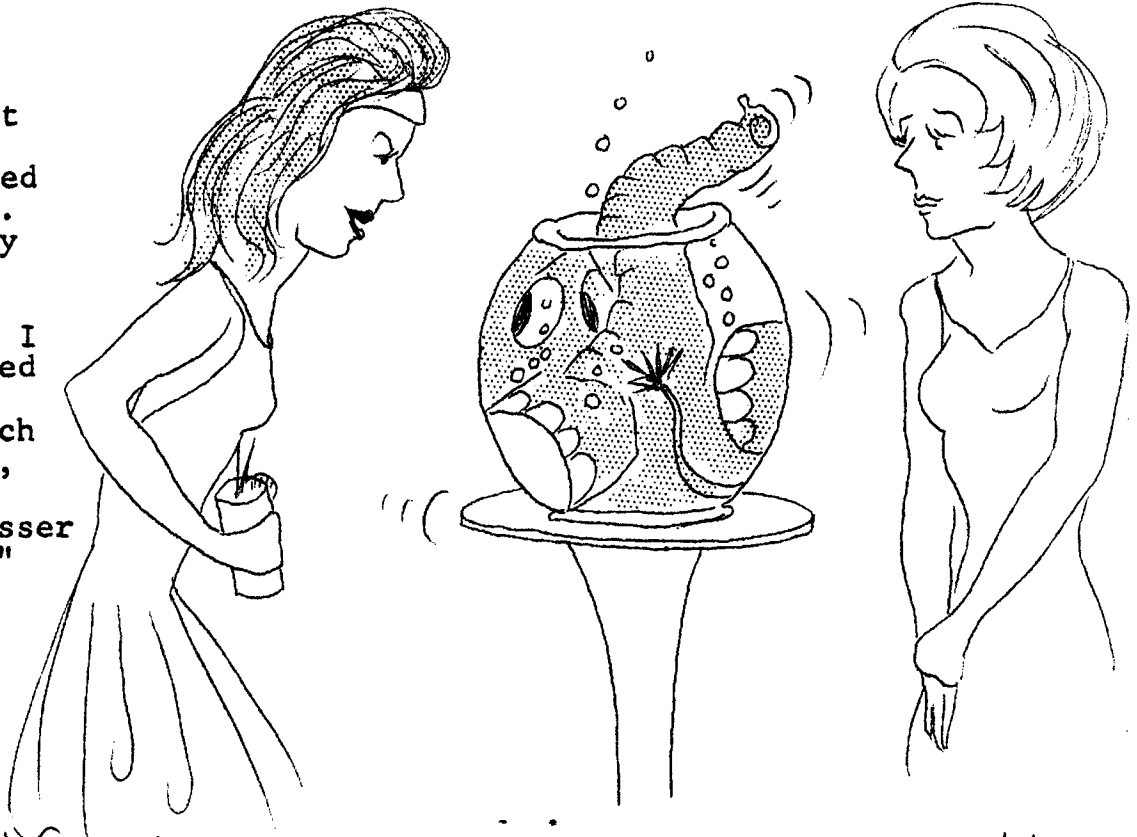
We switched over just outside of Washington, and I let Bruce take the wheel. The weather had pretty much cleared up by the time we crossed the District border, so all we really had to contend with was the traffic, but that was plenty as far as I was concerned, and I was perfectly happy to let Bruce fight the traffic circles and one-way streets that abound in the metropolitan area.

Bruce dumped us at the Statler, and we sat on the luggage while he found a place to stash the car for the weekend. When he got back, we checked in, and, after dumping our suitcases (and sleeping bags -- I always wonder why the hotels don't object), we jogged down into the lobby to see who was there. It was the afternoon of the 29th of August, two days before the con actually started (and, incidentally, my 21st birthday), but there were already quite a few people there. I had seen Pavlat and Scithers while we were waiting for Bruce to come back from parking the car, but there were quite a few fans in the lobby that I didn't know at all. One whom I did know -- Dick Eney -- rushed right past Bruce, who had washed the black hair spray out of his hair and beard just before coming down to the lobby, and asked me where Bruce was. We had a lot of fun with that dye job. People expect to see women with their hair some strange shade, but are never prepared to see a man with a dye job.

The next day, the 30th, Bruce and I went down to the Art Show Room to see if we could help Buck and Juanita Coulson set the stuff up. Bruce, Ron, and a couple of other guys set up the stands, and then Bruce and I did most of the placing of the artwork while Juanita and Buck tried to make some order out of the chaotic pile of material they had on hand. They had to label and price the pieces, and I think even mat some. I know that they were still accepting entries and entry fees that morning.

While I was hanging the artwork, who should turn up but Esther Davis. She greeted me as though I was the last person in the world she expected to see at the convention. What the devil did she think I had come East for, I wonder? I sincerely believe that the woman is totally nuts. A nice, amiable nut, you understand, but N-U-T-S. The only other thing I remember about that morning that was sort of funny was when Roger Sims came dashing up to me with fire in his eyes and announced that I had hung one of his non-representational paintings upside-down. I apologized through my laughter. He hadn't signed them, and there was absolutely no indication that either side was the top. I could have hung it sideways and never known the difference. So much for non-representational artwork.

There wasn't too much in the show that appealed to me personally. It was all pretty good -- which is surprising in any amateur show. I particularly liked Sylvia Dees's "Witch Boy" (which took two prizes), and a pair of paintings by Prosser called "Familiar" and "Too Damned Familiar." Larry Ivie had a very nice painting entered called "Princess of the Leopards" which I liked, but not enough to have wanted to hang it.



"for sheer determination--you take the cake!"

(Good thing -- none of the Ivie work was for sale.) There was one I bought at the show -- Eddie Jones's "Conan the Cimmerian." The only other thing that I particularly liked was "Mananan's Castle," a very dark pastel by Don Simpson. It already belonged to me and Bruce, though, so I didn't have to worry about it. I had matted all of the Simpson artwork that was entered, and Don had specified that Bruce and I could have one out of the batch he sent us as fee for matting and transporting the others. We were in perfect agreement as to which one we wanted, and, although I felt kind of bad about accepting such a good piece of art for such a little bit of work, took "Mananan's Castle." (I understand that a good many people at the show were griping about none of the good artwork ever getting past the L.A. fans, which isn't really true.)

The following day, the convention officially began. I listened in on a few of the programs, but there really wasn't too much that interested me, so I spent most of my time just walking around talking to people, or checking in at the art show to see if any help was needed.

The masquerade was scheduled for that evening, and Bruce and I and Ted got dressed early so that we could go on down before the hall got too crowded. There were a lot of very nice costumes at the Discon, and the handling of the event was really excellent. The only thing that worried me a bit was having to walk down a short series of steps after parading across the platform. In the mask I was wearing, I could see very little beyond what was squarely in front of me, but it turned out that two sturdy con committeemen were stationed at the steps and helped the girls down. Having lived through the turmoil at the Chicon, the setup at the Discon came as a real relief. All of the costumes had an equal chance to be seen and admired, and there was ample chance to catch pictures of them. It is one of the most heartbreaking things to be unable to photograph costumes that you know perfectly well will never be seen again. I think my favorite among the costumes present was Judy Lawrence's feathery regalia as a character from After Doomsday. It was a beautifully done creation in green plumes, and probably about as much work had gone into

it as went into Bruce's Heavy Trooper costume for the Westercon. I like to see costumes that work and thought have gone into, and this was one of the best examples. Our trio picked up a prize as "Judges' Choice -- Best Group," and I think the prime reason was that Bruce looked so very imposing in his fur-trimmed tunic with that four-foot broadsword at his side.

After the masquerade, Randy Garrett invited Brice to a party being given in his room, and I exercised a woman's prerogative and tagged along. That's one nice thing about being a girl -- very few people kick you out of parties. The party consisted mostly of people I knew just by sight, but Fritz Leiber turned up later, and I settled down and talked to him. It was a fairly small party, and turned to the singing of drinking songs. Drinking songs, mixed with drink, and sprinkled lightly with happy pros, make a nice warm gathering really enjoyable to me.

That party pretty well took care of the night of the 31st, and the next day there was more program and then the banquet. This time the "banquet" was a luncheon given at 2:00. I bitterly object to this sort of thing -- especially when I have to pay a banquet price for lunch. I think if the convention is going to give out the Hugos during lunch, they might as well put them in the business session or something. I like to have a banquet where I can wear a nice evening dress and see the fans neat and tidy for a change. I sincerely doubt that wearing a tie is going to cause any man to die of suffocation, and if their wives are willing to struggle into girdles to wear slinky sheaths, they should be willing to go along with the deal. (Oh well, the little bit of yelping from this corner probably isn't going to help -- but maybe I'll wear a muumuu and color-coordinated rollers in my hair to the next afternoon "banquet" they hold.)

I remember that the morning of the 1st some rather plump broad with a New York accent was running around telling people they ought to all get together and climb the Washington Monument the next morning at 6 or so. When Ruth Kyle and I and a couple of other femmes standing by the elevator indicated that we weren't interested, she yelled "Chicken!" and went on with the little mob of adherents she had collected. My main reaction was "Well, who the hell do you think you are?" and Bruce, noticing that one of her followers was a new SAPS waiting-lister, promised dire retribution.

That night, long after the banquet, we went to a party in Ron Ellik's suite that was so jammed with people it took about twenty minutes to push, crowd, and thread your way from one room to the other. Phil Harrell, Fred Patten's woshipping acolyte, was there, and I took the opportunity to ask him how he pronounced his last name. He informed me that he had always sort of liked Harrell, with the accent on the first syllable, but he kind of liked Harrell too, and did I know that people in the North generally pronounced it with the accented first syllable and Southerners usually accented the final syllable, and therefore you could pretty much tell where someone was from by the way the way he pronounced Phil's last name. I tried for about five more minutes, and never did get an answer, so I guess you can call him anything you like. (Heh, heh, heh.)

The 2nd of September we helped a little with the dismantling of the art show, and then walked around talking to a few people before they disappeared into the wilderness of mundania. There was not much scheduled for the morning, about the only thing being a little skit put on by some of the pros -- Randy Garrett, Judy Merrill, Fritz Leiber, H. Beam Piper, and Gordy Dickson -- and Don Studebaker, which was kind of cute, but largely inaudible. This was one of the reasons we were hoping the con

would put out a transcription of the programs; a lot of good lines get lost in the shuffle otherwise.

We stayed at the hotel that night, and then the next morning made arrangements to have the car lubed while the four of us (Bruce, myself, Ted, and Fred) with the addition of Sylvia Dees, went over to climb the Washington Monument. This took about half an hour, and was, as far as I was concerned, a much better deal than the Statue of Liberty. You could get some good pictures, and a great view, from the top. The others flew down in about six minutes, but I took my time and walked down leisurely. I don't care for stairs anyway, and hate to go down a long flight of them, but as long as people don't try to hurry me it is all right.

After we got down from the Monument, we walked on over to the Lincoln Memorial, losing Sylvia on the way as she had to catch a bus. The Memorial really lived up to expectations, as it was fully as solemn and sedately imposing as the photographs of it show. I have to admit, however, that I really liked the Jefferson Memorial, which we saw next, much better. After visiting the Lincoln Memorial, we caught a bus back to pick up the car, and then drove the car over to the Jefferson Memorial. It was just about sunset when we got there, and the last rays of the sun came through the Memorial and hit the statue inside with a beautiful bronze glow. My light meter said there wasn't enough light, but I gambled, and found out later that I had been rewarded with a truly beautiful shot. Sometimes it does pay to gamble.

For the next hour or so, while the light lasted, we tried to find a bookshop for Fred, but none of the ones we stopped at had too much that he cared for. There wasn't too much during this trip that Fred showed much desire to buy, being, unlike the rest of us, a rather thrifty soul. He had bought one item -- the cover illo of "The Stolen Dormouse" which was being auctioned off at the con. The amount of money he paid for it rather flabbergasted me, as I didn't care at all for the painting, but Fred was delighted with owning a real Rogers, and I guess that is all that matters.

We were going to spend the night with George Scithers, so we started out in the general direction of his place and spent about the next two hours looking for it. We could tell by the map where we were, and where we wanted to be, but there didn't seem to be any connection. Finally I spotted a thin line on the map running almost exactly where we wanted to go -- it said "Private Road - Military Reservation." It was pretty late at night, so we turned onto the thing, figuring all they could do would be to shoot us. Driving along slowly for a little while, we finally came to the Club House -- the reservation being some sort of officers' country club -- and stopped to see if there was anyone around. I figured that they would either 1) tell us to get the devil off of their road and tell us how to get where we wanted to be by using normal streets, or 2) let us get on through. The chances of them being really nasty to tourists were very slight, especially since it was a lone and defenseless girl who went to ask directions. As it turned out, however, there was no one anywhere around, not even a caretaker. So we calmly motored on through their little reservation and out the other side. After a little more difficulty we managed to locate the right house and tramped on in just about the time it started to sprinkle rain. I think that rainstorm had just been waiting for us to come out of the hotel and get on the road again.

Both George and Dick Eney were there, and we sat up talking about conventions, the Cult, and the local dirty gossip for a few hours, finally sacking out in various places around the house. (As added insurance against being called to task for repeating any of our conversation that

night, Dick taped it all. After the first nervous looks at the infernal machine that was taking down all of our incriminating statements, we all went on blithely raking this and that person over the coals as usual.)

The next morning we took off early and headed in the general direction of West Virginia. The houses began to thin out, and pretty soon we were rolling along through some very pretty country scenery. The roads were very hilly, and after several hours we asked a man at a gas station, where we happened to stop, if we were getting toward the end of the mountains. He informed us that we were just about out of the mountains -- and then we drove through the same country for the next three hours. I wonder what he calls mountains?

It was about mid-day, and I was driving, when we drove through a section that was fenced off in large parcels with some horses grazing on the crest of a hill. The animals were quite large, and I commented that one was probably a dray horse. In perfect chorus my chums called out, "Oh no, it's a bwown horse!" If I hadn't been driving I'd have killed them. That's what is called "walking into one."

About the middle of the mountains we began to notice a strange sound as the car was moving -- sort of like running over loose gravel -- but as we couldn't locate it we kept on travelling. I remember that we went through many of those little towns that one would think had died out at the turn of the century. They all had their eccentricities of directions, and I recall that one of them did not have standardization of their traffic lights. Some of the signals had the yellow at the top, some in the middle, and one or two at the bottom; this made for rather nerve-wracking driving. The noise began to get worse, and sounded like someone throwing walnuts into a garbage disposal. We finally pulled into a gas station, and the attendant immediately said, "Got a bad bearing, huh?" "Yeah," we said, "where's the nearest place we can get it fixed?" He told us that we would have to take it to Cincinatti, which was about 50 miles from where we happened to be by then. I figured that we had better go on, as I was afraid that if we stopped the bearing might freeze up and we would be stranded 20 miles from nowhere.

I kept on driving, and after about 30 minutes Fred woke up and asked where we were. I told him we were about 20 miles out of Cincinatti. "Well," he said, "what's the name of the town?" Bruce told him what it was, and then asked if that meant any more to hom than the distance from our destination. Sometimes I fear for Fearless Fred's mind.

Eventually we did get to Cincinatti, and stopped at a gas station that offered complete service and was about the only one open at that time of morning. The attendant said that he might be able to fix it, depending on exactly what was wrong with it. It was something about whether or not he would have to pull the wheel or somesuch. We borrowed a piece of his partially grassy parking lot and spread out our sleeping bags to catch a little sleep before the morning. We were just across from the railroad yard, and when I heard the loud shriek of an engine I figured I wasn't going to get much sleep. As it turned out, that one whistle was the last one I heard until I woke up the next morning.

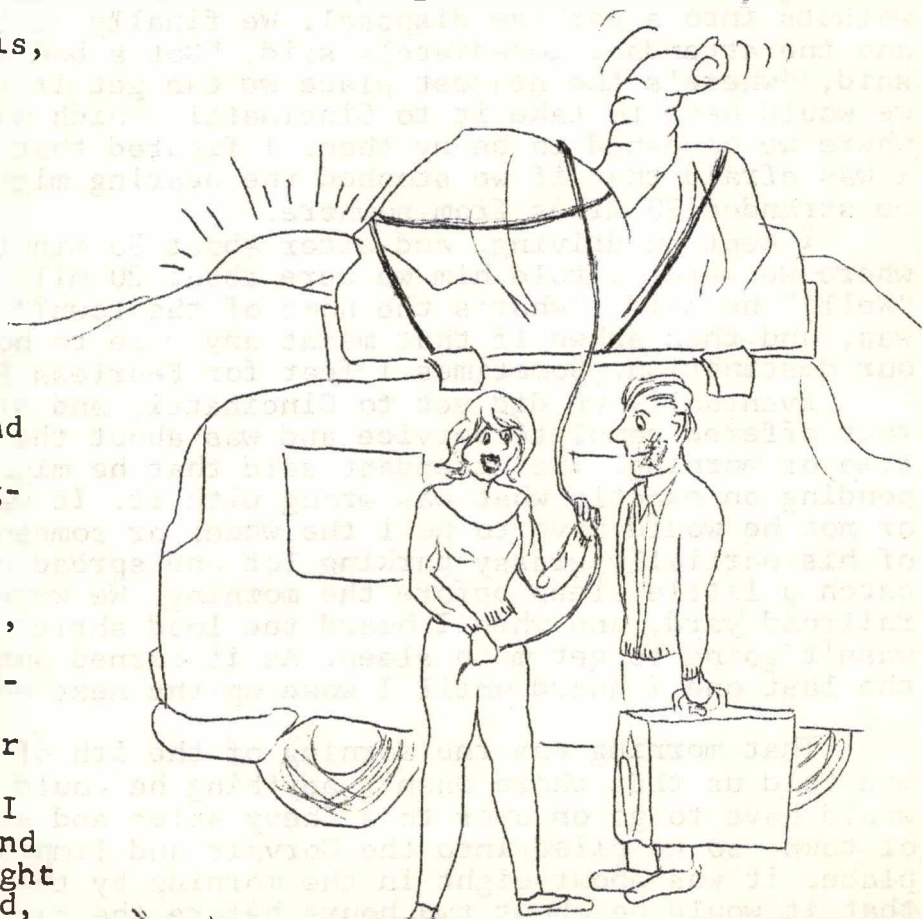
That morning was the morning of the 5th of September, the station man told us that there wasn't anything he could do for us, and that we would have to go on over to a Chevy sales and service on the other side of town, so we piled into the Corvair and limped on over to the Chevy place. It was about eight in the morning by then, and the mechanics said that it would be about two hours before the car would be ready, so we headed off to get some breakfast. The place we ended up at turned out to

be a bar with a grill. I am not in the habit of frequenting bars, so the idea of getting breakfast in one was a bit foreign to me, but the food wasn't bad and the service was prompt. After breakfast, Bruce and I headed back to the repair place to sit around and wait, while Fred took off to look for comics in the local drug store. I don't know where old Furry-Foot went. Eventually the car was fixed, and, after the usual hassle over payment with an out-of-state check, we were soon back on the road again.

We drove on through some lovely country. I especially remember Indiana, which has some very lovely areas. We passed the usual series of signs advertising a roadside business, and one particular series seemed to drag on forever. Eventually we got to the place itself, which turned out to be bigger than most and which was advertising sorghum. I picked up a bottle for my father, who has always been crazy about sorghum, and Bruce bought three white rabbit skins for about \$1.57 each. Ted picked up a little leather purse for his fiancee, after he decided that the gloves he wanted to get her might not fit. It was a nice stop, and gave us all an excuse to stretch our legs.

Soon after that we began looking for a place to have dinner, and eventually wound up in a town called Lawrence. I don't even remember what state it was in. I do remember the town's name, because Ted commented something about it being the same as the last name of the girl he had gotten cozy with at the con. Lawrence had one or two grills, and one smorgasbord restaurant. Bruce, Ted, and I decided to try the smorgasbord, while Fred decided that he wasn't hungry and would rather go looking for comics again. The smorgasbord turned out to be a really good choice. The price was very reasonable -- about \$1.00 or \$1.15 -- for all you could eat, complete with a drink of some sort, and dessert. I had to bypass dessert, but Ted was game and managed to stuff down what he later said was very good rice pudding (at least I think it was rice pudding.) So on we went, driving and driving.

We pulled into St. Louis, Missouri, late that night, and stopped to catch a late cup of coffee before picking up Highway 66. When we came out of the coffee shop, the car flatly refused to turn over. After a bit of looking and prodding, we decided to call Triple-A to see what the trouble might be. Bruce and I headed down the road to find a phone, and I told Fred and Ted to stay with the car and all our luggage. Ted gave us something about why couldn't he come too, and we told them both that there was, first of all, no sense in more than two of us going, and secondly, someone had to stay with the car and two people would be safer than one alone. I thought we had that about settled when I heard the crunch of gravel and looked around to see Fred right behind us. "No, Fred," I said,



"That's funny - he was here just a minute ago."

"stay here!" He turned back, and I got the mental image of an unhappy little cocker pup being forced to go home alone. The Triple-A man came soon after we called, and, as luck would have it, the car started right off. Perverse little machines.

Highway 66, it turns out, starts at the west side of Joplin. We drove on for a while from St. Louis, and then, just before we hit the highway, decided to turn off and look for a place to spend the night. I got off the highway and and drove around for quite a while. My passengers, especially Johnstone, were getting a trifle tired of ambling around when I located the entrance to a real, honest-to-goodness roadside camp. I know that a lot of people plan ahead to where they are going to stop, but I have always felt that the chances of your being able to get exactly to where you want to be when you want to be there, over a distance of four hundred miles or so, is pretty slight. We had our trusty Triple-A campground guide -- but we used it only once.

The next morning we picked up Highway 66 and kited on through Missouri. The road was pretty darned good for a pleasant change, and we made good time. It began to get awfully hot, though, and got so where I really prayed for night to come with cooler air. We finally got into Amarillo and stopped there for dinner. I treated myself to fried catfish, which I had never had before, and promptly decided that I would not go out of my way to have it again. (Since then, however, my favorite aunt has said that the only place to have catfish is the deep South -- so maybe I'll give it another chance sometime.)

When we got out of Texas and into New Mexico the roads changed radically for the worse. I would be willing to bet that the only place on the continental U.S. that has worse roads than New Mexico is Utah, and brother, that ain't saying much.

The night of the 6th we spent with those faithful and neverfailingly generous hosts the Tacketts. I certainly wish they would come out here for a change so we could at least try to make up for the wonderful hospitality they have always shown us.

The next day, the 7th, we decided that we might as well drive straight through to Los Angeles, and avoid sleeping out another night. Ted had wanted to stop off and see the Meteor Crater area, but a quick poll revealed that the rest of us would only be interested in seeing it from the air, so we decided to bypass it. We did stop at the entrance to the Petrified Forest, where we had lunch and picked up a couple souvenirs for people at home. However, it turned out that a ride through the monument would take us an extra hour or so, and we decided to leave it for another time.

We drove on towards Flagstaff, and found to our relief that, being in the mountains of northern Arizona, Flagstaff is noticeably cooler than the areas we had just been through. I do remember one thing that was very funny. Ever since we started this trip we had been seeing signs saying "Warning, Deer Crossing," or simply "Watch Out For Deer" from Utah through Minnesota, down across West Virginia and then back through the West. Arizona tried to get high hat on us with "Danger of Collision With Deer." (We never did see any deer around these signs, on the whole trip.)

I drove into Kingman for dinner, and then turned the wheel over to Bruce. I tried to get some sleep, but along about ten o'clock, after Bruce had been driving for an hour or so, I finally asked him if I were going nuts or something. The car felt like the inside of an oven, and I thought I had come down with something really serious. I hadn't, though.



We had just hit the Mojave Desert, and the temperature had soared up into the hundreds, even that late at night. Thank God we had planned and managed to hit the desert late at night. In the daytime, and without a cooler, I think we would all have been sick with the heat.

I took over again in Needles, and drove on into Los Angeles. By the time Ted and Fred had been dropped off, it was about dawn, and I was really glad that we were finally off of our time table, and I could get a real night's (or day's) sleep.

Going across country by car, having to sleep while someone else was driving, and the driving itself was a completely new experience for me; I had never driven for such extended periods before. However, now that I know that I can do it with very little discomfort, I am really looking forward to the next trip. After having come back from Chicago by Greyhound, and having driven to and from Discon by car, I'll take the latter anytime. There is nothing to beat being able to see the country, and being able to stop when and where you want. There is a lot of the country I haven't seen, and Fandom is going to give me a good excuse to take off and see it. I sure am glad of FIAWOL. Maybe, if Detroit gets the con, I'll even get to see Canada! Until next time, then -- happy fanning!

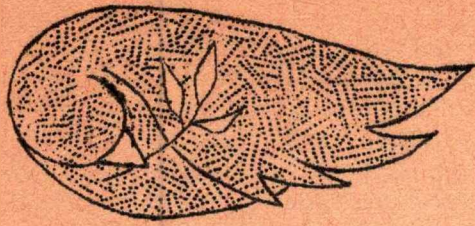
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Well, I guess that about takes care of things for this mailing. Much thanks goes to My Lord, the Elephant for the stenciling of this. As a matter of fact, I would be ashamed to let you all know just how much of it he did stencil for me. And, since I am on the subject of elephants, my mother just brought a lovely recipe to my attention: "A hole should be dug in the earth, about four feet deep and two feet six inches in diameter, the sides of which should be perpendicular; in this a large fire should be lighted and kept burning for four or five hours, with a continual supply of wood, so that the walls become red hot. At the expiration of the blaze, the foot should be laid upon the glowing embers, {this is an elephant foot, in case you havent guessed.} and the hole should be covered closely with thick pieces of greenwood laid parallel together to form a ceiling; this should be covered with wet grass, and the hole should be plastered with mud, and stamped down lightly to retain the heat. Upon the mud a quantity of earth should be heaped, and the oven should not be opened for thirty hours or more. At the expiration of that time, the foot will be perfectly baked and the sole will separate like a shore and expose a delicate substance that, with a little oil and vinegar, together with an allowance of pepper and salt, is a delicious dinner that will serve about 50 men." The forgoing was reprinted in the little local paper, and the original came from a book written by a certain Sir Samuel White Baker in London in 1867. It is assumed that the gentleman knew something about elephant feet first hand. Until next mailing then; May the goddess of the crossroads watch over you.

AFTERTHOUGHT - Things Discovered While Desperate: nail polish works just great as a thinner for corflu, but don't use too much or the resulting substance will take the wax off of the stencil.

Best;

Duan Pelz



# Annals of Shalar

## Chapter III

In the days that followed, Nargwer and Sturan were tutored by the two ancients, and in the evenings they walked about the palace with King Seele, or with his son Finfalle. Sometimes they were left to themselves, and then Nargwer made his way to the armorers', where he hefted the heavy battleswords, or to the court where he made jest with the noblewomen there. Sturan kept to the library when he could, poring over ancient volumes whose parchments were split with age, and straining his eyes over the faded lines of maps that depicted places he had never even heard of. On one of these days he asked Fecklous, the taller of the two librarians, if the library held much to do with Clare, and the man waved his arm toward the far wall, where several thousand books stood on the shelves.

"Did you not know, my friend, that our city was born of Clare?" he asked. "We are the keepers of the path and we guarded the road for those who travelled from the mother city. Our heritage is of Clare, and those books you see are the works of the scribes of Clare."

Sturan walked over to the shelves and looked across and then up at the tier upon tier of volumes. The library was a huge room, immediately behind the throne room. It had two arched windows that commanded a view of the depths of the valley immediately behind the palace, and it extended up for nearly a full two floors. Aside from the two windows, and a door at either end, the walls were filled completely with books from floor to carved ceiling. For the first time since he had begun coming into the room to learn the language of Reft, Sturan noticed the ceiling and gasped in admiration for the artisan who had created it. It was a mass of carved figures, intertwining with one another until the ceiling seemed a pit filled with writhing figures. There were full-bodied women mated with demons, and warriors twined with gods, and beasts that stalked the edges of the walls. Noticing his interest, Fecklous peered at the shelved books and then extracted a huge volume which, after much thumbing, he opened and handed to Sturan. "The wood for that ceiling was carved in Clare itself, and brought over the fields and mountains by hundreds of men and beasts of burden -- see, here in this history you may read of how it was done."

Sturan managed to laboriously translate the first few paragraphs, and then turned the book over to look at the title imprinted on the spine. "The History of the Founding of Reft," it was called, and written by someone who had not been important enough to have his name imprinted on it.

"Tell me," he asked the old man, "What do you know of the death of Clare, and of... the woman called Sharlain?" The old man made the sign to avert evil, and muttered that he knew very little indeed. "Tell me what you do know," Sturan insisted. "My companion and I follow a path marked with a dove holding a branch in its beak, and we would know what it means."

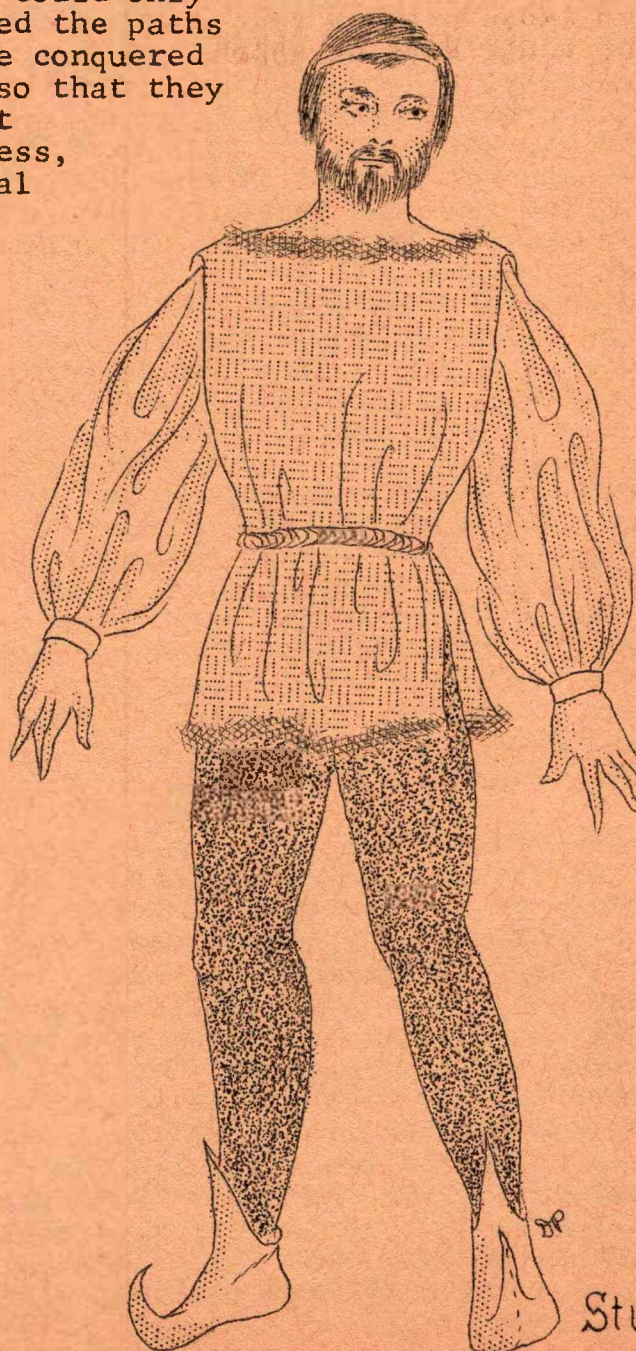
"You are foolish men to follow a path laid down by forces you know nothing of," the old man said, looking deep into Sturan's eyes. He sighed and turned to replace the book. "Come with me and I shall tell you what I can." He turned and led the way to a small alcove in the adjoining chamber, where an immense book lay closed on a stand. The volume was easily as thick as a man's forearm is long, with a stained and blackened binding

and a massive ornate lock. The old man hauled a key out of his robe and unlocked the book, turning it to the first page, where the title and date were written in large letters on the yellowed parchment. "This is written in a tongue I know little of," Fecklous said, "and I have been many years in the translating of it. It is the story of the downfall of Clare, written by a stranger who lived at the time but who was not of our people." Sturan smiled softly and touched the crumbling volume with a gentle finger. He read the title easily, for it was written in the archaic form of that language spoken by his own people in Shelun, but the thought came to him of the years spent over it by the ancient man who stood at his side, and he said, "What does it say, Old One?" With trembling fingers the old man turned a few pages and then closed the book. "It tells," he said, "that there was a King who ruled Clare, and he had two children. One of them was a girl and she was called Sharlain, and the other, a boy, was called Archos. Now the rulers of Clare were versed in many things, not the least of which was sorcery, and the girl knew secrets that even her father could only dream of. With her magic she marked the paths of roads across the world, and she conquered the cities that stood in the way so that they bowed their heads before the might of Clare. She was a warrior princess, and people trembled before her seal -- a dove bearing the branch of peace.

"Now the King grew old, as men do, and he chose his son to sit upon the throne and rule after him. The son was a fair youth, and well-loved by his sister, who pledged her allegiance to him. But he was not loved by his blind and crippled cousin, who coveted the throne of Clare for himself. This cousin was named Jamar, and he was as evil as he was malformed. He plotted the death of the king, and of the boy, and thought that he could take Sharlain for his queen to make his hold on the throne secure. Jamar was as skilled as Sharlain in the ways of sorcery, but he was evil, and it was said that he entertained strange guests in his chambers at night."

"Go on," Sturan prompted, settling himself on a tall, rebacked chair that stood in the corner.

"I...I cannot be sure, for the words are blurred and crumbled where the paper has fallen to bits, but it seems that Jamar sent out a weird to fall upon the King and his son which made them rot away whilst



Sturan

living, but he was careless, and Sharlain caught the feel of his mind as it strove to bring the final end to his victims. Like a hawk instead of the dove she favored, Sharlain sent out her spirit to grapple with his, and they strove mightily there in the dark nothingness of the spirit world. Slashing out with all the power that he had, Jamar disrupted the forces that held Clare on the surface of the sea, and the island broke in two like a brittle shard of clay and sank into the sea. He wrenched his mind away from the raging talons of Sharlain's spirit and left her alone to mourn over her dead. Sharlain did not die, for her body lay asleep by the seashore of another land far from Clare, and Jamar stole the body of a man far away, leaving his own to perish with those he had killed. Sickened by the death of her people, Sharlain pledged a slow and lingering death to her cousin, and searched the world over like a vengeful spirit. But Jamar knew well that she sought him, and he remained silent in the body he had chosen.

"So Sharlain built a temple, and in it she lay down to sleep. From time to time she sent out her soul to seek the man she would kill, but she could not feel him anywhere in the world, and still she sleeps, safe from death and the ravages of time.

"And what of Jamar?" Sturan asked. "Does he sleep, too, fearing that his cousin will find him otherwise?"

"No one knows," the old man said, "and I pray that no one finds out, for in this book are the runes that summon the spirit of Sharlain to perform her vengeance." W

"Will you let me see them?" asked Sturan. "I am curious to know what might summon a witch."

"No, my friend, you know not the power that you might release through the world, and I am unwilling to test the worth of these words. I think that you mock me for believing this story, but I say to you that the evil of which this tome speaks is real, and I wish that I could forget the spells and counter-spells that I have read in it. It was written by one who knew." The old man shook his head softly and carefully re-locked the book. Sturan hastened to assure him that he was not being mocked, and the two, talking, walked back into the library.

That evening, as Sturan and Nargwer walked towards the chambers of the King, where they had been invited to dine, Sturan told his companion all that he had learned.

"I have learned something interesting too," replied Nargwer. "I stopped by the kitchens on my way back from the armorers', and one of the wenches was telling me that food is taken to the upper floor of the palace and left in charge of a man whom lives up there, and who returns the empty plates later."

"So strange?" smiled Sturan. "The man has to eat."

"Yes," said Nargwer, "but enough food for three?"

The men fell silent then, as they came close to the royal apartments. A servant bowed low, and opened the doors to admit them. Inside, King Seele smiled his greeting from a huge couch with carved arms, where he sat beside a strange woman with white hair and beautiful clear blue eyes. Prince Finfalle lounged back in a red-upholstered armchair and waved a friendly hand.

"Pray be seated," the King said, as Nargwer and Sturan entered. It had never seemed to bother him that Sturan chose not to bow, and that Nargwer's reverences were most perfunctory. There was little of ceremony about Seele's court, but there was no doubt in anyone's mind that he was a King in every sense of the word. "You have been here for two months, my friends, and now that you can speak our tongue I feel it is time that you meet my Queen, the mother of my children. Our people call

her 'Snow Bird.'" He looked down affectionately at the woman beside him. She was in her middle years, but thin and well-favored as a maid. "My Lady Daywen, this man is Sturan of Shelun." Sturan rose to bow before her, and then took the hand she extended to him and raised it to his lips. To his surprise she drew him toward her, and lifted her other hand to touch his bearded cheek and then run lovely tapering fingers over his face. Sturan looked full into her eyes then, and realized that she was blind.

"I would be pleased to be at My Lady's service," he said, softly.

Her voice was so soft, well-modulated alto as she answered, "You are welcome in our city, Sturan of Shelun. May you be happy with your stay." Her royal husband then presented Nargwer, and the five of them began their dinner. After the meal, Seele dismissed them, and together with Prince Finfalle they roamed through the palace, chattering idly as they went.

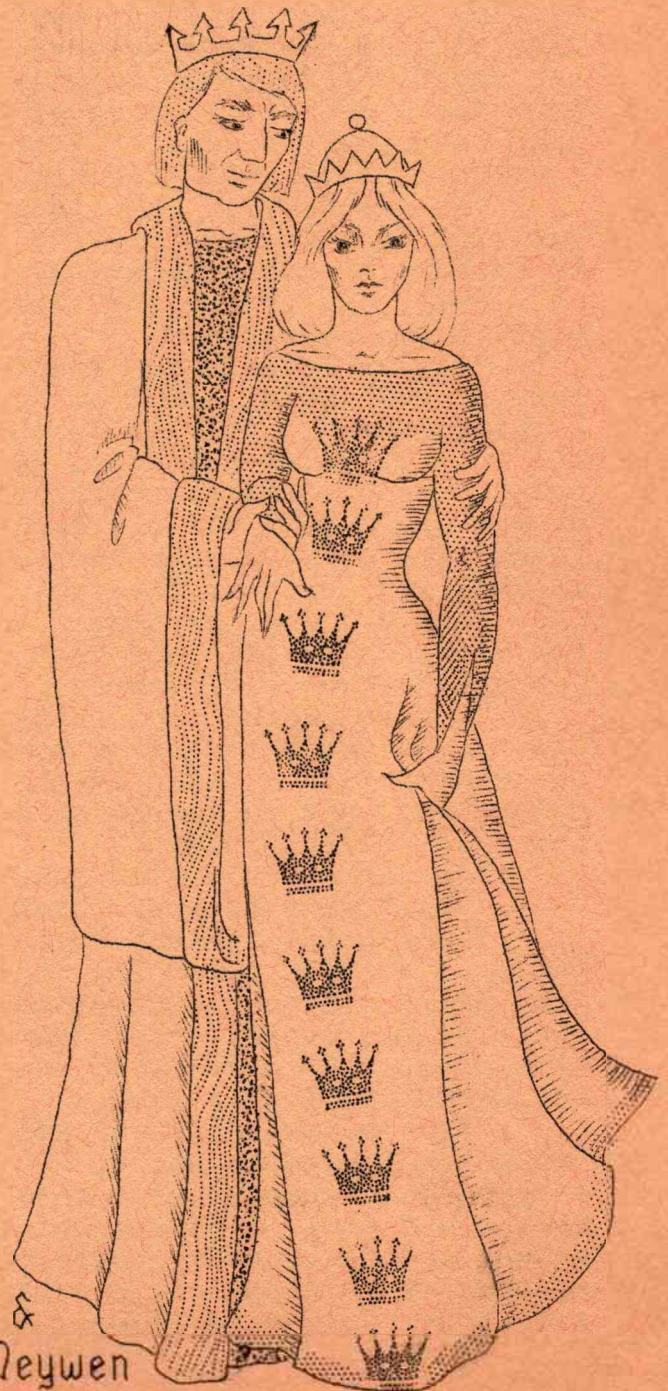
"I am disappointed," said Nargwer, "that the Princess Glatteis was not at dinner with us. I had hoped to pay my compliments to her."

Finfalle turned to look Nargwer squarely in the eyes, and said, "My friend, as you value your life, keep away from my sister." Seeing the growing frown on the other's face, he added, "I could not care less that you think well of her, nor could my father, I assure you, but Glatteis is not like other women."

"She seemed a normal enough young woman, if loveliness like hers can be called normal," broke in Sturan.

"You do not know," said Finfalle. "The people call her a witch." He leaned against the wall as if in great weariness. "My friends, I curse the day I was born into this family. If the gods were kind they would end my life instead of letting me live with this weight on my heart. I can only pray to you, stay away from the Lady Glatteis, and when the time comes for you to go from this city, go without looking back!" With that, he whirled and strode from them, his dress cape clutched tightly about him.

For the next few days the Prince seemed to avoid them, but when they finally met and the matter was not brought up again, he resumed his friendly companionship. Nargwer tried to meet the Princess, but she passed him by with unseeing eyes, and often had the eagle with her which ruffled its wings and opened its beak whenever he passed. It was Sturan to whom she spoke finally, stopping in the middle of her passage to the great stairs.



Seele &  
Daywen

"You have not sought to speak with me. Do you not find me fair?" she asked hautilly. Sturan bowed low, a mocking smile on his face. "I find you as fair, Milady, as might any man who has a wife accounted one of the most beautiful women in the world." She looked her displeasure and swept by him without another word.

"You have earned yourself some most unpleasant days," came a voice from behind him, and he turned to see Finfalle, who had just stepped out from an adjoining chamber.

"I doubt that the displeasure of the Princess your sister will inconvenience me much," he laughed.

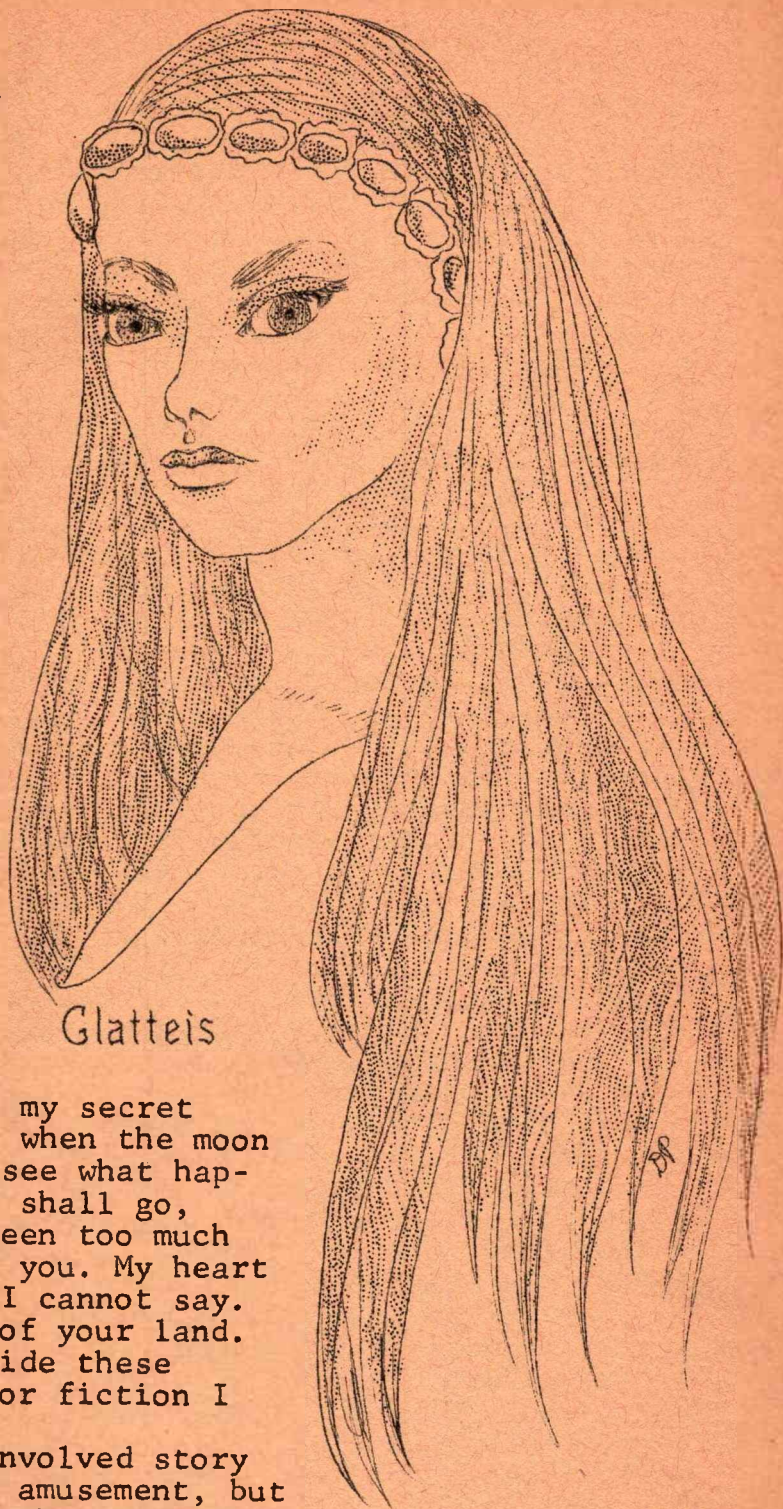
Finfalle shrugged. "If I were you I would watch where I step and what I eat, nonetheless."

Sturan looked at him carefully. "You are serious. Why do you fear your sister, and what is it about your family that fills you with horror?" Nargwer came into the hall as Sturan spoke, and came to stand at his companion's elbow, looking silently at Finfalle.

"I cannot tell you; it is not my secret alone. But I will tell you this -- when the moon is full, go to the west tower and see what happens there by moonlight. Perhaps I shall go, too, though I doubt it -- I have seen too much already. Do not press me, I beg of you. My heart is already sick with those things I cannot say. Come, tell me of your people, and of your land. I have read much of the world outside these mountains, but whether it is fact or fiction I cannot say."

So Nargwer began a long and involved story of the kind men tell for their own amusement, but through their laughter the eyes of the three were cold and hard.

The full of the moon came in three days, and the evening found Sturan and Nargwer waiting behind the tapestries at the entrance to the icy tower on the west of the palace. There was no glass in the windows of the tower, and snow drifted through the clouds to cast long bars of light on the floor. It was nearly midnight when they heard the sound of footsteps on the stairs. The door opened and the Princess Glatteis stepped inside, her light garments whipping in the icy blasts of wind. She showed no signs of discomfort, even though her arms and shoulders were nearly bare, and the drifting particles of snow sifted across her white, white skin and into the cleft of her bosom. She carried an unlit



black candle in one hand, and a cloth-wrapped bundle in the crook of her other arm. From their vantage point the two men watched her walk to a waist-high rectangle of stone that stood against the far wall, and place the candle in a tall stone candlestick holder that stood there. There was a large oval silver plate on the stone before the candlestick, and there, after casting aside the wrappings that covered it, she placed the object she had carried. It moved feebly on the cold metal, and cried thinly, and they saw that it was a baby, not more than a few weeks old. Nargwer made a movement to step out, and Sturan caught his arm, holding him tightly.

Glatteis lit the candle, which flickered in the wind but, strangely, stayed alight. Sinking to her knees before the stone altar, she opened her arms wide, and, her eyes fixed on the candle, began to chant in a clear, cold voice. The light of the candle glanced off of something in her right hand, and they saw that she held a knife. Faster and louder grew her chanting, and as it grew, so did the light from the candle, until it seemed to fill the chamber with a strangely ominous light. In the strange half light and half darkness above the altar, a shape began to resolve out of the nothingness.

Glatteis fixed her eyes on it as she rose from the floor, and, still chanting her eerie spell, plunged the knife into the baby. It cried out once and then was still. The light in the chamber twisted and writhed, and filled the room with shapes that danced and postured obscenely. From the mists above the altar the shape flowed across the body and blood of the child and into the chamber to surround Glatteis with a shape that mercifully could not be seen in details. She arched her body toward the thing, and, laughing exultantly, ripped the clothing from her body. Her body shown in the flickering light and glinted with an unearthly whiteness through the misty form of the demon that moved to possess her. The figures that had seemed only fantasies of the light became real now, and danced around the demon and its mate, filling the chamber with what seemed hundreds of hideous and obscene shapes, and danced and intertwined and coupled without shame or pause. There were those that bore the shapes of animals and the heads of men, and others that could not lay claim to being anything that lived under the sun. Some had paws, and some slimy feet like slugs, and others had talons that scraped across the stones of the floor in an awful, rhythmic paean of passion and evil. In the center of this madness Glatteis heaved and writhed with the passion of her mating, and Nargwer, sickened, turned his eyes to the wall and would not look again.

On and on the revel went, and it seemed as though a passionate, agonizing music accompanied the creatures in their dance. Piping high, and sometimes blending with the wail of the snowy wind, it called and urged and demanded. Sturan clenched his fists and stared out into the room, the cords standing out on his throat as he fought against the call of the revel before him. At last the first rays of color touched the morning sky, and with wails of grief the monsters faded away into the air, and Glatteis, her hellish partner gone, sank exhausted to the floor. For a while she remained there, and then, getting to her feet, she caught up the tattered garment she had flung aside, gathered it about her, and stumbled from the chamber. The two men remained hidden for a while, and finally, when there was no sound, stepped out of their cramped hiding place and walked silently to their chambers.

They each slept until nearly noon, and then met in the chamber beside the great staircase. Nargwer's face was drawn and gray, and Sturan fingered the sword that hung by his side. Neither of them was willing to mention what had taken place the night before, so they walked about

silently, thinking. It was late in the afternoon when they met Finfalle, who had come to find them. He looked carefully at their faces and asked, "Did you enjoy the little pageant, my friends?"

"She is a witch out of the darkest hell," Nargwer muttered hoarsely. Finfalle laughed wryly and asked Sturan, "And you -- did you enjoy the sight of my sister's pure and glistening loveliness mated to... to..." His voice broke, and he looked away from them for a minute.

"What of your father?" asked Sturan. "And what of the people? Surely they cannot...?"

"Cannot condone it? Oh gods, if you understood! Come with me and let me show you the rest of the shame of my family!" He turned, and, without looking back to see if they followed, led the way up the huge staircase and into the upper story of the palace. Down musty halls, and through rooms coated with dust he led them, until they came to a huge door that was barred and chained, and sealed with the royal seal. Here Finfalle turned left, and led the way to a small door that was set inconspicuously into the wall. A huge key was in the lock, and he turned it and gestured for them to enter.

A sudden burst of stench came swelling out of the room and they gagged and retched. The room was fairly well lit by several long windows along the outside wall, and they could see that the space had been cut down in some way by a long row of vertical bars that were obviously very ancient and measured over a man's height from base to top. Suddenly there was a wild shriek, and something hit the bars in front of them, yammering and screaming and shaking at the bars.

Sturan and Nargwer stepped backwards, but Finfalle remained where he was, hunched barely inches out of reach of the thing that clawed at his chest. He lifted his voice to be heard over the noise. "Here, my friends, you see the Lady Mullen, sister to my mother the Snow Bird of Reft, and my esteemed aunt. As it falls to the women of our family to entertain the spirits of the darkness, so it became the duty of my aunt, and here you see the result!" The creature, in what they now realized was a large cage, screamed obscenities at him, and the spittle ran down its filthy chin.

Finfalle moved on to the next cage, where he stood for a while without speaking. Finally saying, "And here is the Lady Sigoyna. Beloved of her family she was, and sought after by men. Sister to Glatteis and myself, she lives here now -- an empty husk." Inside the second cage was a girl whose body was strangely twisted and distorted. Her brown hair hung in filthy tangled rats, and she hunched over, crooning to herself, as she walked around and around the confines of her barred world. She took notice of either them or her aunt who screamed in the next cage, and continued to walk ceaselessly.

"The other cages," said the Prince emotionlessly as he walked back towards the door, "are empty now. I can still remember when they held my grandmother, and yet another aunt." Once outside, Finfalle relocked the door and then stood there watching, as his two companions gasped at the clean air and still gagged at the smell they had just left. "Do you see now why I wish I had never been born?"

"Your mother...", said Sturan, "she never...?"

"No, those who go to that hellish revel must be perfect, and my mother's eyes are dead," said Finfalle, the muscles of his jaws tight.

"My friend, how long has this gone on? Why must your family pay this deadly tribute to evil?" asked Nargwer, still shaken by what he had seen.

"It happened over four hundred years ago. The man who was King then, the fourth or fifth of our family to rule, surprised one of the



village women in the midst of those terrible preparations, and in horror ordered her slain. With her dying breath, she summoned up the demon you saw last night, and it smashed through the city crushing people into pulp like a potter might knead his clay. When the thing had done, only a quarter of the people were still alive, and the city, except for this palace and two or three other buildings, lay in ruins. It was then that the demand was made -- that a woman from the royal family must be always at the service of the monster, or it would kill again, and this time no one would survive. So it has been, and we bear our burden so that our people will not die."

"Can you not leave this place, go elsewhere?" Sturan asked.

Finfalle smiled wearily. "We are the gate keepers, here we must stay to keep this city alive until such time as we are set free."

"Set free, set free by Clare?" asked Nargwer. "Clare is dead, and you will never hear word from it that your vigil is over."

"Then here we must remain -- forever," Finfalle said, Dropping his head onto his breast he led the way silently out of the maze of rooms and back to the lower level of the palace.

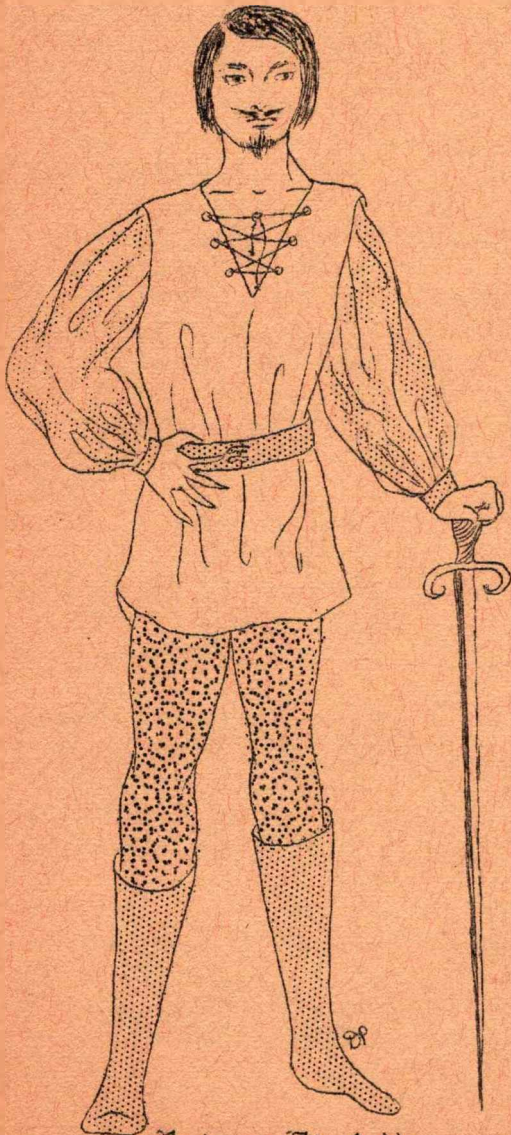
Sturan had been thoughtful after hearing Finfalle's story, and now he was silent, following the other two as they made their way down the great staircase. At the bottom he caught up with Finfalle and, placing a restraining hand on his arm, asked, "Your sister is the last of the women of your family, is she not? What happens if she too...?"

Finfalle looked at him with icy eyes. "The word is 'when,' not 'if'" he said, and then smiled wryly. "I would suggest that you leave as soon as possible if you do not wish to find out."

For the next few months Nargwer and Sturan watched Glatteis carefully on the rare occasions that they saw her. She seemed to grow gayer and more restless as the days went by. She began to laugh shrilly, and the eagle that had been her pride no longer rode on her arm. One of the chambermaids found it, its neck wrung, lying in the throne room. The thundering snow storms of the winter began to give way to light flurries, and then even those began to cease and the sun shone more warmly.

Then one day there was a terrible shrieking in the corridors, and Nargwer and Sturan ran toward the sound to find Glatteis standing over a servant with a bloody knife in her hand, laughing insanely. They tried to grab her, but she ran as they reached for her and disappeared down the hall. They found Finfalle and told him what had happened, and he ground his nails into the palms of his hands. "The full moon is in seven nights, my friends. Hurry, hurry while you still have the chance. The spring thaw is begun, and you can make it across the mountains if you are strong."

Sturan rubbed his hand across the pommel of his sword. "Finfalle, come with us," he said.



Prince Finfalle

"I cannot, my friend. I wish that I could," Finfalle said, his head low and the words tight in his throat. "I am my father's only son, I cannot leave. Go, go as soon as you can, and remember that I have called you my friends and that there was no mockery in the words."

They stayed and pleaded with him, but he would not change his mind, and in the end they left him there, head sunk in his hands. The next morning Sturan went to the library and asked his tutor where two places might be located. A day and a half the old man spent looking and finally he was able to give Sturan two maps. The way marked on one went to the east, and the other to the north, and both of them were based only on old legends and the clouded memories of an old, old man. Nargwer and Sturan took their leave of the King, telling him that they could not delay any longer, and saw how age had suddenly come into his face. His wife, the Queen, was still as softly beautiful, and she wished them the luck of the gods on their journey.

The night before they left, Sturan stole into the room that adjoined the library, with a candle in his hand and a sharp knife tucked into his belt. A few hours later he returned to his room, with certain yellowed pages held carefully in his hand.

The morning they left was the day before the full of the moon, and, provisioned with fruits and dried meats, they made their way out through the gates of the city and onto the thawing snow of the mountain path. They looked back once, and saw the lean figure of Finfalle standing by the gate watching them go. He waved once, and they lifted their hands in salute, and then hurried away without looking back.

The next evening, as they hunted for a place to spend the night, they saw a ruddy glow in the sky behind them, but neither of them said anything, and, eyes averted, they kept on their way.

The following evening, they saw a figure some distance behind them, and watched as it trudged through the snow. Finally it reached the perimeter of light cast by their fire, and here it stopped, panting with weariness. Sturan and Nargwer both sprang to their feet and led the man over to sit by the fire. He sat for a while, eyes closed, and then said, "May the gods forgive me, my friends -- I did not have the courage to stay."

TO BE CONTINUED





Talisman Press  
publication No.9