

THE FANZINE THAT TALKS ABOUT FANS

is usually written and published on the second Friday of every month by Ted White, 1014 N. Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, VA 22046, and can always be obtained for The Usual, or donations of 20¢ stamps, but is Not For Sale. QWERTYUIOPress, June, moon, croon, spoon -- somewhere in there -- 1984.

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HELP! ENTROPY is setting in! It's the middle of June, and I've yet to get the last issue mailed out. I'm debating with myself: have I got enough material in me for eight pages this time? Sometimes I write an issue piecemeal over the course of a month. This time it's got to come out in one or two sittings. All of this is academic to you, of course; you hold in your hands the finished product; you know how many pages there are, and you already noticed that once again I've mailed out two issues together. A pretty shoddy way to maintain a "monthly" schedule, isn't it? That's my excuse?

Hey, no excuses. An explanation or two, certainly, but no excuses. #6 was produced on schedule. All that held it back was my curious inability to collate it. In desperation I did up the PONG Poll Results and, faced with yet more collating, collated the whole works at once, which was basically dumb and will foul up those who file their fanzines by special systems no end. My apologies. Next I bogged down on stapling. I mentioned this to Linda Blanchard when I was at her new house in Woodbridge for the first of her and rich's First Saturday meetings, the first Saturday in June. "I cannot get my fanzine out any more, Linda," I told her. "I need help." I fell to my knees, taking the opportunity to glance disingenuously at the cards she held -- we were playing pinochle at the time -- and pleaded with her, to wit: "Since you've gone my fanzines have gone uncollated." I told her that the PONG Poll Results in which she placed as the Best New Fan of 1983 and #2 Fan Face -- those PONG Poll Results -- sat in my basement, unstapled, unmailed. I appealed to her: "I appeal to you, Linda!" And got a firm "Maybe...."

Why am I reduced to this sorry state, whining and begging like a common neofan? I must plead to Sublimation. Sublime sublimation. Spring has sprung. The Sap has Risen. A middle-aged man's fancies turn away from fanac. Life renews itself.

Go out and look at the stars, man.

BARBARA AND THE BOHEMIANS: One of the ways in which I've managed to sublimate my need for fanac is with music. Old friends will feel little if any surprise at this announcement. I have been obsessed with music for longer than any of them have known me. When I first moved to New York it was not, after all, in search of a career in skiffy, but rather to slip into jazz via the back door of the jazz magazines. That I succeeded was confirmed for me recently when I bought a copy of Brian Priestley's Mingus--A Critical Biography (an excellent book) and found myself quoted, referenced, and indexed within its pages. (Another chance bit of immortality is a tape that has circulated through the jazz critics' fraternity and has been played on several radio stations, an interview I did with Eric Dolphy in 1960 or 61, which is apparently the only recorded interview with Dolphy, who died in 1964. The tape now has "Cult Statis," according to the Music Director of WPFW, Washington's Pacifica/jazz station....)

One or two of the readers of this fanzine will remember the original Barbara & The Bohemians -- one of those "Village folk-rock groups" which somehow achieved "Cult Status" without making any public appearances or recordings...which is just as well, since the band sounded lousy at its one rehearsal. Only Barbara could play her instrument (guitar) with anything approaching proficiency. I blush to admit that my clarinet playing was extremely limited -- to three or four notes in the lower register. But we used to joke about the band and soon word-of-mouth had done the job for us -- Barbara & The Bohemians is part of the legend of the mid-sixties.

Last summer at Westercon Sherry Gottlieb slipped me a card with an address scribbled on its back. "Here," she said. "Jan and Howie Moss just moved to your area. You ought to look them up -- they don't know anybody else out there." Sherry had introduced me to Jan at a Westercon several years earlier, and we'd become party-friends. I knew Howie less well, having met him only once, briefly, at the 1981 Westercon. Once back from San Jose, I called the number Sherry had scribbled on the card. Jan and Howie were living in Germantown, Maryland -- a twenty-mile hop-skip-and-jump up the freeway from here -- and the first time I visited them they showed me their musical instruments and shyly admitted to jamming together. Jan played keyboards, Howie guitar. I modestly mentioned that I played a little sax. We agreed that on my next visit I should bring my saxes.

That's how it started. My friend and business partner, Matthew Moore (we co-own New Decade Productions Inc -- the friendly company whose bulk-mail permit brings you this fanzine if you live within the U.S.), happened to be along on that occasion, so Jan, or maybe Howie, suggested Matthew play with the rhythm machine they had.

By mid-winter we'd moved the location to my house, in order to take advantage of the equipment I have, both instrumental and recording. By that point we were good enough to make it worth recording our sessions.

Listening to the playbacks -- and to a tape of our "best" pieces -- underlined the fact that we needed more bottom to our sound: a bass player. No problem. I'd played our "best of" tape for Steve Brown (he of "Circus Hand" fame) and he suggested that he'd like to play bass with us. We went out and bought him a cheap bass and added him to the band.

By now we'd augmented it instrumentally. I played my alto and tenor saxes into a mike that fed an echoplex, creating a sound that is especially effective on the tenor. (The echoplex is destined to be replaced soon by a digital-delay unit with a 3.6-second delay.) To this I've added soprano recorder for flute-like effects. Matthew brought in a small Casio keyboard which is plugged into the main system (a Yamaha-Lesley amp of vast proportions) along with my PolyKorg and my newest acquisition, a Roland Organ/Strings synthesizer. Matthew also brought in a small xylophone which adds color to the ensemble sound. Steve has a flute which he plays occasionally. Howie has a number of effects pedals for his guitar, and Jan brings another Casio keyboard, which has, among other features, bass buttons and a rhythm unit. Matthew has replaced their Matel rhythm unit with a Roland/Boss Dr. Rhythm unit.

We get together Tuesday nights. When Jan and Howie can't make it, the three of us try out overdubbing schemes. And at odd moments when I'm moved to do it, I'll do my own overdubs. I've found I can't do more than one overdub on cassette (using two machines and a small mixer to blend the miked new material with the previously recorded track) without significantly degrading the sound on the earliest track, which is really limiting. However, shortly I expect to have a PCM module for my video-cassette recorder, which will convert it into a digital recorder. Two digital recorders can be used to do endless numbers of overdubs without any signal degradation or generational loss. When I have that, I'll have a first-rate (in terms of sound quality, anyway) recording studio in my house. I must confess, I lust af-



ter that even more than I do for an electro-stenciller. Maybe that helps to explain the breakdown in the previously machine-like production schedule of this fanzine.

So there we were, Sercon and I listening to a tape of ourselves, when Steve asked, "Say, what are we calling ourselves?"

There were the usual obvious jokes, as well as one or two less obvious takeoffs on that line, but after we'd gotten past them I had a sudden thought: "Well, the name we were going to use, 'The Fistfuckers', just doesn't seem appropriate to the music we're doing now. But if anyone has the right to revive a glorious name out of the past, I do. How about 'Barbara & the Bohemians'?"

One or two of you are going to chuckle at that, perhaps even wince in memory of that one miserable moment when we tried to live our dreams and failed, and I hope you'll find it within you to wish Barbara Mk II the success that Barbara Mk I never achieved.

So just what, exactly, is it that we play? "Rock," I reply with the calm assurance that surely such a broad term must cover the music we do. (When asked about my sax playing I always insist that I am "a rock sax player -- not a jazz sax player." The distinction is not lost on those who appreciate the difference.) At first we floundered about, playing stock blues (which, ultimately, we turned into the satiric "1929 Blues"), and pseudo-standards like "On Broadway" and "Secret Agent Man" and, ghod help us, "Spoonfull." From there we progressed to "Rock Lobster," which we mutated almost beyond recognition, and Roxy Music's "Bogus Man." We also stole a few riffs from the current incarnation of King Crimson. But now we appear to be evolving our own band style and sound.

What we do is to use minimalism for group improvisation. We will set up, arbitrarily, a three-note phrase (I have found that two notes will not provide everyone with enough material to work with), which is often stated initially on the xylophone and picked up by the keyboards and bass. The guitar embroiders it and the sax elaborates on it. Eventually full and engaging melodies emerge. (One of them bore an uncanny resemblance to "The Outro" on the Bonzo Dogs' Gorilla album -- the one in which all the band members, and then some, are introduced....) In the course of such modal excursions various of us may switch around on our instruments; I may play one of the saxes, the xylophone, or one of the keyboards, for instance.

We are, in many ways, a workshop, learning as we go.

It's more fun than putting out fanzines.

FANDOM AT THE MOMENT: I was going to write a section for this fanzine, maybe a month or so ago, to be titled, "The Game Players of Puerto Rico," and in it I was going to chide Richard Bergeron for the snide and catty references to Avedon which he'd scattered through WIZ #10. I was going to quote them -- line them up against the wall -- and then ask just what it was that Richard meant to imply with these remarks. Was he hinting that Avedon was dishonest, or that she cooked the results of the just-concluded TAFF race? Or was he just calling her, in his inimitable way, a slut? I intended to frame this as a conversation with my buddy, Wally "The Snake" Mind, which would allow me to work in a quote from one of Richard's letters ("All your conversations with Wally have struck me as coy and arch...."). I mention all this so you'll be able to appreciate what a fine thing "The Game Players of Puerto Rico" would have been, had I only written it.

What stopped me? Well, it was part of the same overall reason this fanzine has miserably failed to meet its schedule lately: a general malaise where fandom is concerned. I think it's the cumulative product of a lot of nips and bites from the curs of fandom.

Looking back on it, it strikes me that when, in the fall of 1980, Dan

and I started up PONG, I was really ready to put a lot of energy into fandom. I'd not been entirely gafia at any point in the seventies, but at that point I was coming off a year with HEAVY METAL in which I'd finally had the chance to do the Big Editor Bit with all its perks, a climax of sorts to my career in the editing biz, and I was ready for some recreation. What better than fanac? I suddenly had all the time in the world, and a strong inclination to get back into the fan side of fandom -- no more fanzine pieces about prodom -- with something really fannish. PONG was the result.

But not the only result. I also wrote copiously for other fanzines. On request, I wrote long searching "Whither Fandom" pieces, nostalgia pieces and fanhistory pieces. "Gee," I thought naively to myself, "this is fun. It's like when I was a kid and immersed in fanac -- only this time I can do it better."

So we did forty issues of PONG and called it a day. We got a lot of positive feedback on PONG (and it's still coming in: Bergeron in HTT#19: "Egoscian is a far cry from the beautifully crafted PONG"....), but I was amazed (I can be so naive) at the negative feedback PONG also generated.

What consistently galled me was that the criticisms were so inappropriate. When Brian Earl Somebody launched his briefly-famed "Sixth Fandom Fan" nonsense it was impossible to recognize PONG as the source of his complaints. Likewise Joseph Who's charge of PONG's obsession with fanhistory (fraudulently buttressed by Judith Why's research into "104 Historical References of Significance in PONG") struck us like a good poke in the eye. But all that's fanhistory now, isn't it?

Well, okay, we occasionally stuck our necks out, and we occasionally got into arguments. We expected that. Arguments occur. You work through them to the other side. And for the most part that happened.

But fandom's curs don't engage in arguments. They engage in snide innuendo, in sly nudges, and once in a while in denunciations. If you do them the putative favor of writing them a letter, saying, in effect, "Hey now -- what's this all about, anyway?" you aren't favored with a reply. Instead a few phrases wrenched violently from context may be slipped into print in a transparent attempt to make you appear the fool, or, worse, the recipient may just write you a haughty note informing you that your threats won't deter him or her from his or her self-appointed mission to rid the world of your sort of fanac ("What threats?" you're thinking at this point), that the very fact that you wrote a personal letter rather than a public blast in your fanzine is a sign of how slimey you are, you dishonest sneak -- what are you, afraid to be seen doing this in public? -- and from now on he or she isn't going to accept any mail from you.

Let me give you an example of how this works. Recently a correspondent sent me a xerox of a letter from a correspondent of his. (No names.) He thought I should see what was being said about me. Here's a sample:

"Last week I was told of a letter in XYSYTER from Martyn Taylor, relating how an irate neighbor brought a misdelivered letter from one Ted White, admonishing Martyn to make sure such filth was correctly delivered in future. I'll assume it was a joke (although I wasn't told it was). Still, it sums up Ted's fanac." There was a lot more, in which my kind of fanac was characterised as "dead wrong," but I think that sample gives a clear indication of the thinking involved. (By an odd coincidence, the day after I wrote to Martyn to find out what had happened and what the real story was, my copy of XYSYTER #5 arrived with the letter in question. As Martyn noted in his reply to my query, "Your letter was correctly addressed, but incorrectly delivered, therefore the culprit was the postman. It was not opened, except by me, and when it was opened its contents were found to be civilised chat couched in your customary affable words. The fact that [/u>Martyn's neighbor/ called it 'filthy' can only have been caused by her state of mind



at the time, or maybe the totempole decorations US airletters used to carry. The letter could have been from anyone....")

Of course, our anonymous (but not to me) correspondent hadn't himself seen Martyn's letter in XYSTER -- he'd heard of it from someone else -- and the facts of the matter weren't of primary importance to him. Rather, the fact that someone somewhere had somehow described a letter from me as "filth" was what struck our correspondent as important -- because it confirmed his own belief that my fanac was "filth" and "dead wrong."

So far this jerk has been operating under the cloak of private correspondence to spread his slanders. When investigated, he emerges as the primary goad to a number of my more prominent, and more prominently fuggheaded critics, like Brian Earl Whosis. No wonder he sees sinister motives in a private letter from me: his own, if published, would certainly change fandom's image of him as a noncontroversial Nice Guy sorta fan.

It's a bit disquieting to discover that there lurks out there in fandom, in a fan of whom one would least expect such things, someone who has determined that his Mission in fandom is to tear me down and discredit me. Or, as he puts it, "I'm certainly not trying to dictate to anyone how they must conduct fanac, but I have a right to point out that I think a certain kind of fanac is dead wrong. I simply cannot see how a penchant for over-reaction and nastiness is in any way helpful to Fandom. I would hate to be a neo, deciding whether fandom is something I cared to participate in, with nothing to judge by but Ted's unanswered stream of vitriol."

Was this fan the victim of my "unanswered [?]" stream of vitriol? You may well ask, and from his reaction you'd think so, wouldn't you? But, no. I've never criticized him. He simply looked searchingly at my fanac (my "Lost in Oz" epic in SIKANDER, especially) and found it lacking. He decided, this fan did, that my fanac was "totally beyond the bounds of acceptable behavior. I really haven't the slightest interest in what Ted has to say in egoscan. I expect in time he will scream himself hoarse."

This is not an up-front argument which can be hashed out, worked through and emerged from on the far side as friends, or at least with mutual respect. This is some sort of covert war, fought in the jungles of private letters to willing believers, sneaky and unanswerable, known only subsequently by the fallout and perhaps untraceable to the source.

Well, shit. I got news for Mr. Good Guy: his brand of fanac is unacceptable to me. It's hypocritical. It's dishonest. It's sleazy. And it's making fandom -- or aspects of it -- unpleasant for me. It's not going to force me out of fandom -- he's not big enough to pull that off -- but it has had a chilling effect on me.

When I sit down to write one of these issues I have in the past approached the task with joy. Much of that joy is lacking right now, and I think it shows. It's like riding a bicycle down a country lane, enjoying the ride and the air, and suddenly finding a pack of mongrels barking and snapping at your heels. The fun goes out of it. The pleasure of an honest engagement with a worthy fan -- like, say, Richard Bergeron -- over an issue he has raised is diminished by the sudden thought of how the curs will treat it all, with their yipping and yapping (no doubt it would please them enormously if Bergeron and I were perceived to be at odds). Then comes the resolution that I'll not give fandom's curs that opportunity -- and with it the realisation that I've still allowed the fuckers to diminish my pleasure in fandom.

And that's fandom at the moment, for me.

JOY TO THE WORLD: Fortunately, others have kept more brightly polished Shields of Umor, and one such fan is Chuch Harris, who writes:

"The best thing in egoscan was La Hibbert mistaking you for Walter Him-

self. This is our latest Brit fan phenomenon and strikes more fear and trembling into more hearts than D West ever did.

"She is a big lass...well over 200 lb of British beef from what I'm told. (No, delete beef; she is a rabid vegetarian.) But no sense of humour, no sense of the ridiculous, just this terrible terrible earnestness.

"I am just her helpless plaything.

"She sent me her almost unreadable fmz, SIC BISCUIT, and like a fool I tried to comment on the little bits I could decipher.

"It wasn't much. I got the vegetarian bit and a flyer on the brutalisation of sheep. She thinks they are exploited by geneticists. They are deformed by selective breeding. They have little short legs instead of long legs like gazelles or giraffes or suchlike.

"Now, as you well know, I am an English Gentleman. I respect our glorious womanhood. I wrote a pretty little helpful letter. I didn't deride her. I didn't call her an obtuse cow spouting a farrago of nonsense. I told her in a friendly and reasonable manner that the wild species of sheep have much the same legs as domesticated varieties; that a geneticist's target would be long meaty legs instead of short stubby ones. I wondered if she was thinking about unshorn sheep who, with their fleece almost touching the ground, would appear to have short legs....

"Nope, I was wrong, she said. Her geography teacher, her biology teacher and her common sense had combined to convince her that it was so. Farmers had bred their sheep for short legs to stop the beasts running around or running away. She was not thinking of unshorn sheep.

"I thought, 'Christ! I've copped a tarter.' I consulted Arfer Thomson, who was comical to an extreme but not very helpful. I decided I didn't want to get involved. I told her I didn't care if the little fuckers were on stilts. I would concede defeat. I would not argue with her native genius or her biology teacher or the geography chap. I told her -- since she asked -- that D West was not, to my knowledge, homosexual.

"She told me there was a place in America where men (and uterus-less women) can be made pregnant...don't know exactly where; it is of no interest to her.

"Well, you can't always turn the other cheek and, egged on by ATom, I told her of the Scots geneticist who was breeding new varieties of sheep for hill-farms. These have little stubby front legs and long hindlegs, making it easier for them to graze uphill. They were having problems reversing the genes to provide a completely opposite type for downhill grazers....

"I told her I loved vegetarians. I fully approve of them. (A bit of the old grovelling here to get me off the bloody sheep hook.) The nut cutlet mob, I told her, are gentle decent people well deserving my warm regard. If it weren't for their self-sacrifice the fine piece of sirloin I was about to gobble -- at the medium-rare stage -- would have cost me a second mortgage instead of half a day's pay. For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful, and God bless you, Joy forever.

"Chacun a son gout of course -- but in all my vast experience I have never seen a girl who wasn't more responsive, more delectable and a more charming creature with 12 ounces of Aberdeen Angus tucked away safely inside her. (To avoid any Vegan misunderstanding, I told her, the Aberdeen Angus is the famous breed of steak-producing steer. Not one of the better-endowed members of Scottish fandom.)

"Back she comes: 'Happily I've never had to bribe someone to give me their company (or other things) so I wouldn't know about the effect of meat on a girl.' The only Angus she knows is a weedy sort of bloke.

"Then Terry Hill upset her at the Seacon. She told me he said, 'Go Screw.' (And she hopes this doesn't shock me.) Apparently Terry wants to trade all his fan output for all the output of Joy and Dave Rowley (whom



she lives with). She thinks he ought to comment on her zines as well.

"I tell her that the Golden Rule of fandom is 'You show me yours, I'll show you mine,' but she must make her own evaluation of the comparative worth of MICROWAVE and SIC BISCUIT.

"I sent her an ATomillo and Terry Hill's address. It's about time someone else shared the burden. Whatever you do, Ted, try not to mention sheep."

SPACE JAZZ: You know, we all put up with a lot of crap in our lives. As someone famous once said, "Life is not fair." But sometimes the unfairness of life becomes a genuine outrage.

Consider me, an over-the-hill, retired skiffy writer. Out of seventeen published books I have only one or two in print at the moment -- and if it weren't for the Japanese and their wonderful royalty checks, I might even be forced out of retirement -- and over at AMAZING George Scithers and his gnomes are busily rewriting history to exclude my ten-year hitch ("Here, we have the directions that Elinor Mavor and Arthur Bernhard had given the magazine: almost anything is fit subject for AMAZING, and that freedom lets us use serials, solidly fantastic fantasy, sword & sorcery...." --George Scithers in response to a letter, comparing his approach at ASIMOV'S and at AMAZING, in the Sept., 1984 AMAZING. Serials the magazine has almost always had; Mavor & Bernhard's gift to AMAZING was to merge it with FANTASTIC -- the spine still reads "AMAZING/FANTASTIC" -- whence came the "solidly fantastic fantasy, sword & sorcery"....).

In contrast, there's L. Ron Hubbard, a flamboyant pulp hack who concocted a synthesis of Theosophy and psychoanalysis, got fabulously wealthy running his own pseudo-religion, and has come back to Our Field to buy himself best-sellerdom and whatever awards may be lying loosely about. I have to admire Hubbard for coming back to his earlier love after achieving success in the Big Town, even if I am appalled at what he's doing. Those who sold themselves to Hubbard, like the Trimbles, earn only my passing contempt. Collaborators can be found anywhere.

These thoughts are occasioned by a UPI report which found its way into the pages of The Washington POST on July 12th under the heading, "Scientologist Said to Divert \$100 Million." --

"NEW YORK, July 11 (UPI) -- The reclusive founder of the Church of Scientology diverted more than \$100 million from the cult-like organization into his foreign bank accounts, former church officials said in interviews.

"The former senior church officials told The New York TIMES that L. Ron Hubbard directed them to establish a series of shell corporations to channel many of the church's resources to his overseas accounts. Most of the money was on deposit in Luxembourg and Liechtenstein, they said.

"Meanwhile, the church's president, Heber Jentzsch, today called the charges 'garbage' and said, 'This is all false stuff....'"

So far, nothing very exciting -- or surprising. But, several paragraphs further down: "Howard D. Schomer, a former Scientologist who was an executive of a firm alleged to be controlled by Hubbard, said he had been told a major task of its staff was to convert assets of the church to Hubbard.

"Schomer said Hubbard's assets grew from \$10 million to \$44 million in the first six months he worked for Authors Services, a company founded by Hubbard."

Get this: Hubbard set up a company -- Authors Services -- solely to promote Battlefield Earth, both in dealing with publishers and in dealing directly with the public. And Authors Services was given more than forty-four million bucks to do this.

This puts vanity publishing on a whole new level.

Do you begin to see my complaint -- and that of every other lowlife scrivener of skiffy?

CURTIS CLEMMER REVEALED: You'll recall that a few issues ago I was wondering who Curtis Clemmer, the Fan,GoH of next year's Lunacon, really was. The vast majority of you knew nothing more about him than I did myself -- virtually nothing -- but both Debbie Notkin and Ross Pavlac spoke up for him. Pavlac points out that "Curt has been working art shows in the Midwest for a number of years at quite a number of Midwestern regionals (since about 1974). He is on the board of directors of ISFIC, the parent corporate body of Windycon. He has worked on several Windycons in various capacities.

"Perhaps a more significant credential is that he is one of the members of the board of directors of Chicon IV. In fact, he was one of the original directors of Chicon IV, recruited in 1978 by Larry Propp soon after he convinced Bob Hillis and me to join him and ValeF Edeiken in mounting the bid for the 1982 Worldcon. Curt was the manager of the Finance Division of Chicon IV, and was responsible for recruiting some of our key personnel, both in Finance and for other divisions. In conjunction with Bob Hillis and some of the other Finance Division staff, Curt was responsible for setting up the financial controls for Chicon IV, which (among other factors) helped us to avoid the dangers that ConStellation succumbed to.

"Hopefully the above credentials will make you feel a little more comfortable about the choice of Curt. That's certainly as much or more than many regional fan GoHs have contributed to fandom." Too true.

Debbie Notkin adds: "Since fanzine fans and convention fans are fragmenting apart at least somewhat, it seems only logical that convention fans will know each other and honor each other. If fanzine fans want to make a dent in that trend, they will have to either participate in running conventions, or honor each other in fanzines. And, if you don't think gofers are worth honoring in some way, try putting on a convention without them."

Actually, it's not that hard. Any typical regional con with attendance somewhere between one and two thousand can be run efficiently with a total staff of less than a dozen.

There's something happening here, as the older fan-types who both put on cons and were involved in fanzines (myself among them, let it be noted) are replaced on the concons by fans whose whole experience and picture of fandom revolves around conventions. Pavlac cites virtues for Clemmer which seem to have more in common with the Harvard Business School than with the recreational creativity of traditional fandom. I'm not knocking the fact that Chicon IV avoided bankruptcy and if Clemmer deserves some of the credit for that, I'll join the applause. But is this what fandom is truly about: honoring prudent finances? Is this now the acme, the pinnacle of fandom?

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"It's so difficult to criticize perfection..."  
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