

His eye goes marching on



THE GHOST OF A SOLE

Certainly I should never have allowed myself the luxury of hope. As Hubert Humphrey said after it was over, a man can't win if he doesn't campaign. I should not have been hurt, and certainly I shouldn't have been surprised at all, when I heard the results last night. And I have no right whatsoever to blame a man for not taking a third trip in that rat-race.

I told myself all that last night while I was wiping my eyes and blowing my nose. I've been telling myself the same thing this morning. Also, I've been telling myself, my party has a strong candidate, and so far as I know an able one. I really shouldn't have anything to complain about with Kennedy in the White House.

But I still think Stevenson would be better.

Watching the convention, especially watching the demonstrations, and considering the nominating and seconding speeches, it was easy to think that Stevenson had a chance. Senator Eugene McCarthy gave the most moving nomination, especially since it was completely ad-lib. The demonstration was the longest and by far the noisiest. Eleanor Roosevelt's seconding speech got the most complete attention --- the hall was quiet for the first time in three days. But the impressive sincerity of the whole business was a symptom of its weakness. A crowd of volunteers in the lobby sticking 1956 Stevenson posters over discarded Kennedy signs demonstrates a pure heart but only the strength of one-tenth, not the other way around.

And yet I'm going to keep the pin shaped like a shoe-sole. I've worn it for four years now, and I wouldn't like to discard it. It isn't completely meaningless. Besides, some day I might want to say "I told you so."

TAME FOGS AND WILD PRODUCERS

Approaching the tunnel through the hills between Orinda and Berkeley, the highway twists upward through a canyon. The clouds that frequently settle on the ridge had come lower that night last week, and rolled down the slopes toward me as I drove. I stole glances out the open window, watching puffs of cloud sould past. Then the stars were blotted away and I was in the midst of it: solid whiteneds across the road, full of

the wheeling cones of headlights. I slowed --- down to the speed limit that is seldom observed on that road --- and kept my eyes off the centerline while the fog whipped past in momentary rollings. Then I was in the tunnel and when I came out on the Berkeley side there was only a thin mist. Down on the level ground, the night was merely overcast. But the fog would be waiting for me, up there, when I went home. I knew that, because it was my fog.

I first noticed my ability to generate fogs just after Bela Lugosi died. I think it began then. I don't know how; I don't even exercise volition in it. Invariably, I notice first that there is fog, and later realize why. It used to be because I was writing or thinking of Bela Lugosi, or of vampires. How often have I looked up from a refractory manuscript (I never succeeded in writing that story) and seen the fog press against the window! I was obsessed for a time; the shadow of Lugosi passed and repassed in my dreams; I would spend the following day writing again, and look out again at the fog. The obsession is nearly gone; I seldom think of that face not quite like any other. But I have not yet forgotten and the power remains.

I hadn't been thinking about Lugosi on the night when I drove through the fog. But I'm sure the fog was mine . . . for I was going to Tony Boucher's house to see the television production of Conjure Wife.

Unlike the movie version (Weird Woman), it was excellent. It had a good cast and the script was faithful to the story in spite of unavoidable changes. The total effect was very much the same as that of the book. Where it was changed, it was because of television limitations: for instance, all scenes not in Professor Saylor's office or home were dropped, and the remaining scenes were rewritten to include as much of the other material as possible. It was necessary to cut out the section in which Tansy Saylor was driven to drown herself and her soulless body returned to recover the stolen soul. This was probably for three reasons --- the extra sets required, the difficulty of explanation, and the time. The show ran only an hour, and I doubt if a full-length movie could have done it adequately. One bit was added, with great success: in order to get the mathematical analysis of spells to prevent death, with a time limit of seven hours, Saylor has the equations he's derived put through an electronic brain on the pretext that it's a hyper-secret defense project. Also, quite irrelevant to the production itself, I was tickled to see Conjure Wife produced by a cosmetics manufacturer.

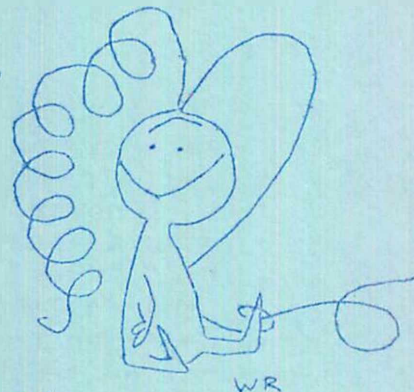
With any luck, the Moment of Fear series will be an outstanding one. Their next story (tonight, I must watch it) is by William Irish.

Now, about Weird Woman. That misbegotten monstrosity was

perpetrated by Universal. Lon Chaney starred in it, and I can't think of a single kind thing to say about it. The worst bit, though is not that they made a hash of a fine story, but that they demanded all rights. Fritz did keep book rights, but television was one of the rights included in the movie sale. I think it's disgusting that Universal was paid for the TV show of last week, and not Fritz. I don't suppose anything can be done about it.

MAILING COMMENTS

pretty-damn-quick; the deadline is far closer than I like it to be: today is Friday, July 29.



Here we go, then:

EGO BEAST Att: Ed Cox - To slightly beat an egg, put in a screw-top jar or ovaltine-shaker, and shake the bejeepers out of it. That is, until it has a uniform color and texture.

A FANZINE FOR Bradley - Thankee, ma'am, I feel all egoboosted. KAREN ANDERSON But I wonder what you recall as "green-gold tights"? Are you confused by the green/blue changeable skirt? // Yes, you've got the difference between tights and leotards correct. // Opera singers can't help being shaped that way; lungs, diaphragm, and abdominal muscles are on the verge of hypertrophy.

HELPER'S FANTASIA Wesson - Re masks: I saw the movie of a production of Oedipus Rex, done with masks; they had a really surprising play of expression. // Tell us, please, about this "Dojoji" --- I take it that it's more-or-less what I saw the visiting Kabuki troupe do as "Musume Dojoji," but the kabuki version has next-to-no plot. // I've read and enjoyed that collection by Edogawa Rampo.

ASCENT OF NEXT Ashworth - Re ropes, reminds me of how the Potomac (Washington DC area) Appalachian Trail Club (the Trail is a thousand-mile foot route from Maine to Georgia) Mountaineering Section - are we all together, now? - used to test ropes. They liked nylon for its strength and lightness, but the damn stuff stretches. They had a concrete weight that had some humanoid name, and to test a new rope they would tie it to Charlie or Ozzie or whatever its name was, get the lot up into a tree to a measured height, shove Ozzie overboard and see if the rope stretched enough to let him bash into the ground. // Is Redgalact the same as Beth Galart, in the

story about Gelert the faithful dog?// If you fall like the
Galle from heaven, are you strained?

SERCON'S BANE There's a ~~restaurant~~ in the Laurentian --- Boyd
Rasburn, what's the right name of that park? #---
which requires its patrons to wear jackets, but they've got a
closetfull to lend you. // Pepe le Moko was the hero of at least
three movies. The first two were called "Algeirs," and the o-
riginal French one starred Jean Gabin (mmmm). "Algeirs" II was
American made and had Charles Boyer (Come wis me to ze Casbah).
Third version, also American, entitled "Pepe le Moko."

CATCH TRAP Bradley - "Excerpt" with a C (from ex-cerptus, picked
out). // I hate a pretty big shading plate; also I
probably moved it a number of times doing the spiral nebula.
// I'm 27. // Fish and chips: the "chips" are more what we call
french fries, and the dish isn't genuine unless it's wrapped in
newspaper. // I like that word "Busbybodies."

WRAITH Ballard - I'll agree that a tad is under 5 and a lad is
over 10, but may run as high as 18-20 depending on the
age of the speaker. But what's a boy between 5 and 10? // If
you ever saw Miri you wouldn't think she was anybody's 15½ year
old twin brother.

VANDY Cpulsons - I was brought up to believe that guns are load-
ed; and the house was full of them. I suppose now that
they weren't, but as a child I firmly believed it, and the idea
is still there when I handle any gun. // "Tularemia" j'adore, in
spite of my usual dislike for that kind of punning.

REJECTED CANON - Mmmm, it's lovely
(&TARGET FAPA) Eney - Killing in self-defense isn't thought of
as murder; this can be applied to the soldier
fighting in wartime.

BLEEN Grennell - That cover is the ultimate squirrel joke. //
When I lived there, it was pronounced more like Louv'l.
The v represents a schwa. The name that bugs me, tho, is Vlayo
(Vallejo) which ought to be Va-yay-ah. // The new cardboard
apple-cases are nice for most things, but no damn good for
bookshelves.

PHLOTSAM Economou - The Shalimar or, I believe, Gardens of Sha-
limar, is/are a park including lakes or canals, as I
recall. Located in Kashmir., The only source I can think of
isn't available to me at the moment: Halliburton's Royal Road
to Romance.

"The Big Three" Boggs - Monumental.

DAMBLING RAP Calkins - Come, now; Courtney's boat was named
"Hop Rattens."

THE FIRST HAMLET

by Poul Anderson

Where Øre Sound runs between Denmark and Sweden, and you stand on one shore to see the other rising across a narrow strait, lies Helsingør, which English-speaking peoples know as Elsinore. It is an old and lovely town, well worth a visit for its charm and its beer, and while there you must surely walk through the castle which dominates it. This is not the gloomy Gothic pile of Olivier, but a copper-spined Renaissance palace, light and airy, named Kronborg. Tradition says that Holger the Dane sleeps beneath it, to wake in the hour of his country's need; and here Shakespeare located his tragedy of Hamlet, the high point in the career of a master of language whose like will not be seen again.

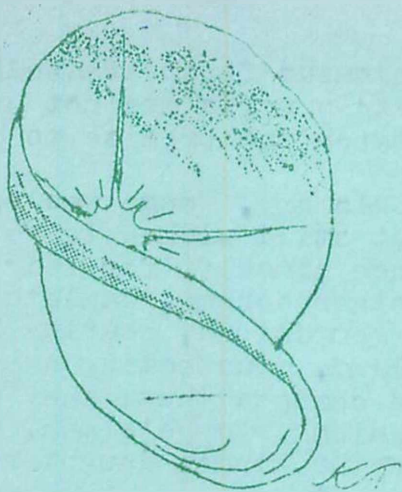
The Danes are a friendly people, always willing to oblige. Down in the dungeons of Kronborg they have erected a statue of slumbrous Holger; up above, the play Hamlet is given annually, and the prince's tomb has been built.

But once, cycling through the great moors of Jutland, I saw a small sign pointing down a narrow road to Hamlet's grave. There are, in fact, three or four traditional sites on the peninsula, mostly ancient barrows from pre-Christian times. Hamlet was not a polished gentleman from the green island to the east; he was a Jute in the wildest and bloodiest days of Northern heathendom.

Shakespeare wrote his tragedy about 1601, basing it on a story in the French of Belleforest; some scholars consider his masterpiece a rewrite of an earlier and much inferior play by someone else. He was never one to worry about anachronisms; clocks strike in Julius Caesar and cannon roar in King John. His Hamlet is a cultured man of the Renaissance, who has studied abroad, read and traveled widely, a man capable on the same day of criticizing theatrical technique and fighting a duel. He is not exactly the Freud-ridden dreamer some would have him --- he disposes of one enemy after another with neatness and dispatch; but surely thought inhibits him, he must be certain of justice before he can act.

It is interesting to look at his prototype, the original Hamlet.

This man is found in the Gesta Danorum of Saxo Grammaticus (ca. 1150-1206), a monk at the court of Valdemar the Victorious,



who set down in a lively if often mottled Latin the chronicles of his people. There is little point in dating his account of Amleth, there are too many anachronisms; one might guess about the fifth century, but could easily be wrong. We know only that it took place in a murky past age, when Odin and Thor were still abroad on earth and the Danes a barbarous race. But the yarn is a good swift-paced one, and it's a shame that I can give only a resume here.

Hrörek, King of Denmark, had his seat at Leidra on Sjaelland, and vassal kings elsewhere.

The subject ruler in Jutland was Gerdvendel; he probably lived near Jelling, in a country of rolling hills and thick woods. When he died, the kingdom was handed jointly to his sons, Horvendel and Fenge.

Horvendel was a brisk viking, who slew the King of Norway in single combat and eventually won Hrörek's daughter Geruth to wife. With her he begot Amleth, who apparently grew to young manhood undisturbed. But then Fenge murdered Horvendel, on pretense that his brother had harmed and threatened Geruth, and married the woman himself. (This was not considered incest in pagan times.) Amleth, having claim to the throne, would have been next in line for a knife between the ribs, but saved himself by feigning madness: let himself become filthy, acted strangely, and gave apparently senseless replies to all questions.

Fenge was not sure if this was faked or not, and decided to test him. He put a beautiful girl out in the forest and bade his men bring Amleth to her, on the natural assumption that no sane man could fail to take advantage of the opportunity. Warned by a foster-brother, the prince managed to shake the king's observers, lead the girl elsewhere, and enjoy himself in secret. He begged her not to betray him, and this she agreed to, being an old sweetheart of his. This nameless woman is perhaps the first Ophelia.

Still Fenge was uncertain. He made a pretence of going on a journey but set a spy in Geruth's chamber, feeling sure that Amleth would reveal himself to his own mother. Amleth did indeed go to her, but first jumped about crowing like a cock. While so bouncing on the bed, he felt the spy beneath it, stabbed him through the pallet, cut him up and cooked him, and fed him

to the swine. Thus hardily was Polonius first treated! Thereafter he reproached his mother (Saxo's words are not unlike Shakespeare's) and won her repentance and promise to help him.

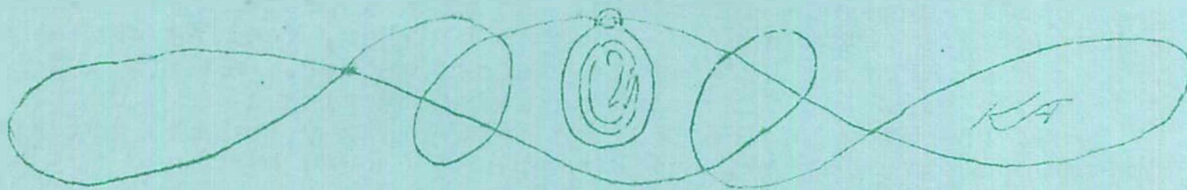
Returning and unable to find his spy, Fenge was reasonably convinced of Amleth's insanity, but still wished to get rid of him. He dared not murder the prince himself, for fear of Grandfather Hrörek, but hit on another scheme. Amleth was sent to the King of Britannia with two companions, bearing letters asking that he, the prince, be killed. Suspecting as much, Amleth secretly read the letters and changed them: they now requested the execution of his companions, Fenge's men, and that Amleth himself should be wedded to the king's daughter.

At the British court, Amleth was clever enough to reveal to the king how wise he was, without betraying his sanity to his companions. These were duly hanged, and the prince got the princess.

He came back, still pretending lunacy, and a feast was held. Cleaning his nails with his sword, he acted so clumsily that he cut himself, and the king's men nailed the sword in the scabbard. When everyone was dead drunk, Amleth, with Geruth's help, set fire to the hall; then he sought Fenge, who was asleep, changed swords, woke the king, and challenged him. Fenge could not draw the sword nailed in place, and Amleth killed him.

The prince hid himself next morning to listen how his people would react to the burning of the hall. It sounded favorable, so he stood forth and addressed them (Saxo puts a long speech in his mouth.), and they hailed him king.

With his affairs in order, he had a great shield made on which his exploits were depicted, then sailed to Britannia to visit his wife and father-in-law. But the latter was a foster-brother of Fenge; they had sworn to avenge each other's death. Dissimulating, the British king asked Amleth to go to Scotland and court queen Hermintrude on his behalf --- he knew her chastity was of the bloodthirsty sort which let no suitor return alive.



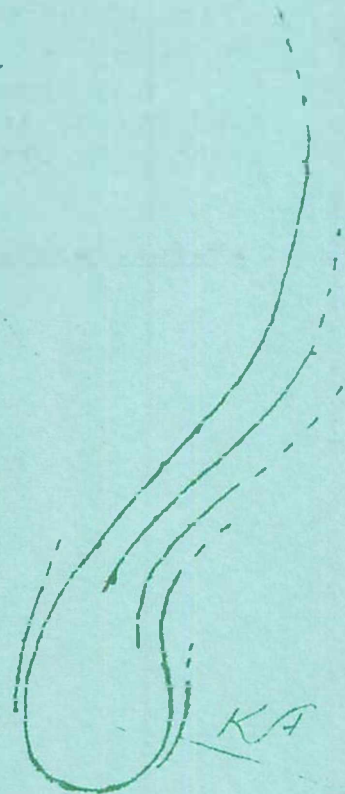
Amleth, though not unaware of the king's intentions, agreed and led a party north. They were sleeping not far from Hermintrude's castle when a spy of hers came and stole Amleth's shield and his letters from the king. The queen, seeing from the shield what manner of man this was, ordered the spy to return the things; Amleth, who was awake by then but pretending sleep, captured him. Thereafter the Danes proceeded to the castle, where Hermintrude made them welcome and offered her own hand and realm to Amleth. He accepted the bribe cheerfully.

Riding back to Britannia with a following, they met his first wife. She was still in love with him and warned that her father was planning to betray him. Amleth entered the castle anyhow, with a sword beneath his clothes --- it saved his life when the king suddenly stabbed him, and he escaped back to Hermintrude and his men. From there he sent the captured Scottish spy to tell the king how matters stood --- Hermintrude had stolen the letters herself and done her own courting, so it was all her fault!

The somewhat ungallant expedient did not work. The British king pursued with a great army, and many of Amleth's men fell in battle. After dark, though, he set the bodies up again, so that at dawn the British thought he had gotten reinforcements and fled. Thereafter Amleth returned safely to Jutland with both his wives.

Meanwhile Hrörek had died and his son Vigleth was now over-king in Denmark. This was a hard-boiled sort, "who in Amleth's absence had held an ungodly house with his mother and taken all her royal treasures, on the excuse that her son, by setting himself on the Jutish throne, had infringed the rights of the Leidra king, who alone could give and take the kingly title in Denmark." Amleth returned a soft answer, paid Vigleth the best share of his booty from the west, and bided his time.

Presently he saw his chance to revolt, and drove Vigleth from the realm. But the king raised an army and came back, challenging Amleth to do battle. It must have been an overwhelming force, for the Jute knew he would die if he met it---

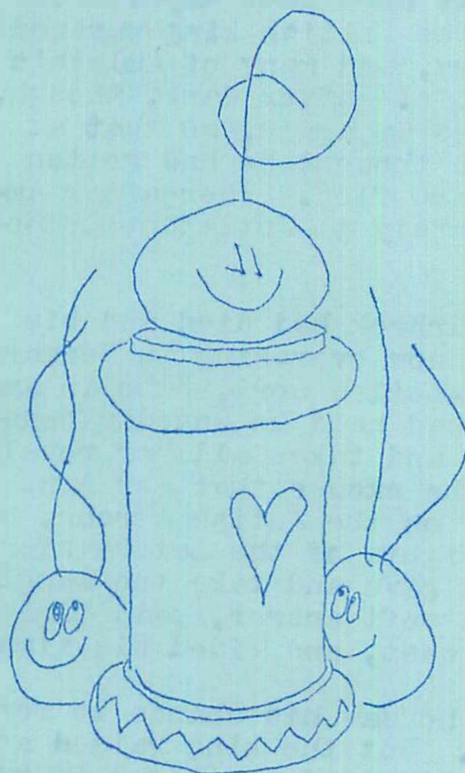


yet, death before dishonor, however inconsistent it might seem with all he had done ere now.

He wished to make provision for his beloved Hermintrude, and looked about after a good husband for her, even before he went to war. But she refused this, swearing she would rather die with him than live without him.

So Amleth met Vagleth in Jutland, and was slain; Hermintrude at once let herself be captured and went to bed with the winner, which gives Saxo a chance for one of the little sermons he is so fond of.

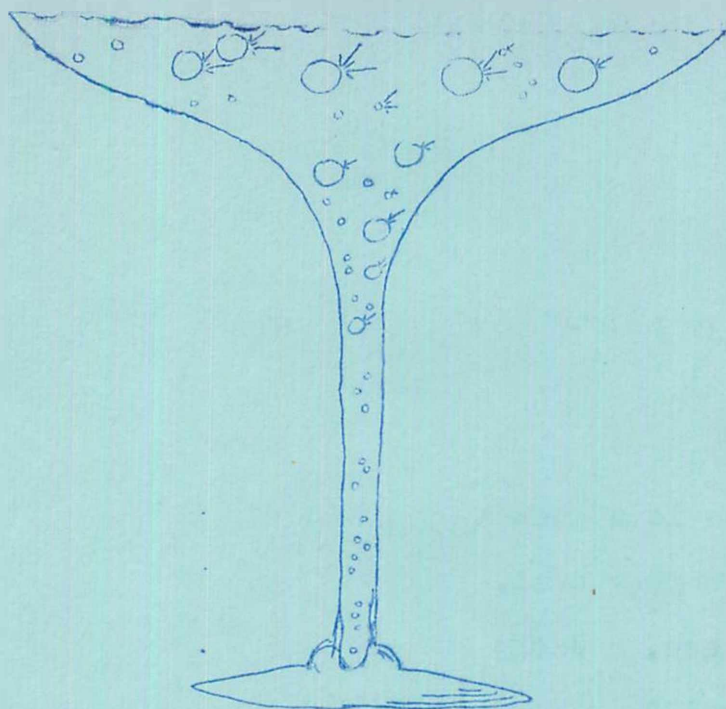
And here ends the saga of Amleth Horvendelsson --- a raw and bloody tale with little chivalry, but more than a ghost of that work which all the world loves.



JACK OF EAGLES

Some say the deck they use is stacked;
We'll cut the cards before they deal.
A knave's their ace; our ace, a Jack;
Riddle, riddle, who can tell?





HECTOR HUGH MUNRO

(KIA, France, 1916)

And now like Omar, Saki too, alas
To pour star-sparkling wines no more shall pass;
But though we drink them all, we still shall find
In all their number, not one empty glass.

CELESTIALS Evans - Clayton Rawson's magician-detective was The Great Merlini. I remember the novel you're thinking of, but there was never any real supernatural or magic in his stories. There was one very nice short-story involving what appeared to be midget ET's with disintegrators and teleportation which turned out to be one of the most ingenious and interesting fake-locked-room stories I've read. Rawson himself, by the way, is a good magician.

SECRET MYTHOS Parker - I've already got my animal identity; I'm a bat. // When the Gibsons and the Grahams were driving down to the Solacon, Honey kept pestering Robbie to tell her what my costume would be. I'd kept it a secret but Robbie had come in without warning when the whole thing was spread out on the floor. Robbie kept telling Honey that I was going as an old bat, and this infuriated Honey. Little did she know! For a while after the Solacon, Astrid was calling me a Young Bat.

KLEIN BOTTLE Att. Miri - You've got your animal identity, too, as a turtle. Anybody else?

LIMBO Att: Bill Donaho - Isn't "High Wind in Jamaica" just a short version of The Innocent Voyage?

AND THERE IT WENT, the 91st Papa Mailing. Now to fill out with some Rotslerizing, and I can think about when I'll have time to mimeo and mail this.



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