

FAN-FARE

Volume 8, Number 1

July-Sept., 1952

15¢

IN THIS ISSUE

Super Bomb by Terry Carr

I Love You, Roberta by Don Howard Donnell

I by J. S. Semens

AND FEATURING

The initial installment
of a different fan col-
umn.

INTRANSIGENT

by

Al Leverentz

plus

a
fascinating
satire

by

TOM COVINGTON

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FAN-FARE is supposedly published bimonthly, and emanates from SSR Publications, 119 Ward Road, North Tonawanda, N.Y.

Material submitted for publication should be accompanied by return postage.

Manuscripts should be typewritten if at all possible, on one side only, double-spaced.

Subscriptions to "FAN-FARE" are: six issues for 75¢. Single issues, 15¢.

Few advertisements are preferred, but we will accept ads at rates of 60¢ the page, half that for repeats of these, and 30¢ for ads of smaller size.

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Cover illustration by Dave Hammond, illustrating a story that we have now decided not to publish. Interior illustrations by Donnell and M.T. Kanjickowski.

E N T R ' A C T E

We are holding over last issue's ASSAY REPORT until we can get some more votes from youse peepuls.... Our second SSR booklet is going to be not SHANADU but SNOWFLAKES IN THE SUN, a small book of poetry. Pre-publication price is 35¢. SHANADU will be published several months later in a regular book format, just as we are putting out SNOWFLAKES. The pre-pub price on SHANADU is \$1.... Want to find out what happened at the Bufflocon (according to Al Leverentz) and what we did out at Indian Lake at the Midwestcon (according to me)? Read the O-O of the Buffalo Fantasy League, HYPEROPIA, from Bob Fritz, 819 Michigan, Buffalo, N.Y. And if you're an N3F member, you'll want to get it in order to learn about PROGRESSIVE FANDOM, the fan political party.... Since we are publishing only one poem this issue, we will assume that every reader believes that REVENANT is the best poem of the issue.....Note to those who want to be published herein: we can best use short stories, up to about 2500 words. This issue exhausted our supplies of those.... Forgot to mention HYPEROPIA is 15¢..... FANTASTIC WORLDS showed up hereabouts the other day. Try it!.... That is just about it, for this issue ... the Chicon looms ever bigger now, less'n two weeks away. Some of you'll be reading these words there. Which would seem to be all....

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as of August 20th —THE EDITOR

1
BY J. S. SEMENS

I lie on the cold asphalt street, my body aching and my head spinning. I hear a woman weeping over me.

The sobbing is drowned out by a loud screeching sound, a siren which is closer and closer to where I lie. It stops and again I hear the woman weeping.

I now feel myself being raised and put on a soft object which is no doubt a stretcher.

Again the siren is sounded and after a short period of time it stops. Once more I am raised from my position and again I am placed on another object, this one cold but soft. I now feel myself being pushed by a man, I hear him speak in a not so audible voice.

"How'd this one happen?" he said to another person.

"They had an argument," the other retorted as he pointed to the girl, who was beside me. "He ran out into the street and got hit by a truck."

"A truck!" the man who was pushing me exclaimed. "I'm surprised he isn't dead yet."

"He will be," the other said. "Hasn't got a chance."

I again feel myself being pushed, a door opens and I am led in. I am placed under a huge lamp. I hear voices which are not as audible as previously. I strain my eyes open and above me I see a doctor, he smiles at me. Abruptly his hand comes down, in it is a cloth which covers my mouth and my nose. Breathing is getting difficult, my head is spinning, the room is turning all around me. At last everything is black.

When I awake I find that I am in a dark and chilly enclosure, and I still lay on a stretcher. I raise myself from the cot, and with a sheet cover my body. I walk to the door.

To my surprise I find that my body does not ache anymore, my head does not spin, I am relaxed and comfortable. I open the door and look cautiously up and down the hall, no one is in sight.

Had they forgotten me! Had they thought me dead! No, the latter was not so, they had forgotten me.

I walk into the corridor, my bare feet seem to be frozen, my whole body is cold. I need clothes, I need them to warm my body. I need shoes, my feet are cold. I need shoes and I shall get shoes.

I hear someone coming down the corridor, I must find a place to hide. Ah, there is a door and it must lead somewhere.

It does not lead anywhere, it is a closet. I open the door slightly and spy into the hallway. The footsteps grow nearer, then finally the man comes in sight. He is my size, exactly my size. An idea forms in my mind. I am cold and I need clothing.

Slowly I open the door, he does not hear me. Oh but he does, for he stops and pauses for a moment then he turns towards me. His eyes widen, he is frightened. I come closer to him, he screams and I hit him with all my strength. He falls to the floor, he does not make a sound. I can tell that he is dead for a muscle does not move. He is so still, he is dead.

Quickly I undress him for I do not wish to be found. I must get escape from the hospital, even if I have to kill more.

What is wrong with me? I have changed a great deal. Did the operation effect my mind that much. There must be an explanation, I have never been cruel in my life. Oh God, what is wrong with me? Am I mad?

B

The clothes fit me perfectly, even the shoes are my size. I am calm now as I walk through the hospital. No one looks at me, no one suspects. Why should anyone suspect?

I am now walking down the street, my escape was a success.

I am hungry, I need food. I look into the man's pockets—in his wallet is a five dollar bill. I enter a store, sit at a table and order some food. I finish the food but I find that I need more food, I again finish. Still my stomach aches for food, again I buy more food. I am hungry no more. The waiter looks at me, it frightens me. I do not like people to stare at me.

I must find a room to sleep but I have but two dollars left. I must get more money for it is cold outside and I must get some sleep.

I see a man walking toward me. I need money. No one is nearby, no one except the man and I. I go toward the man. He is frightened. I raise my fists and hit the man, he falls. He moves. With my foot I kick the man in the head, he does not move anymore. Now I can sleep without freezing.

I am afraid of my own strength. I am afraid of myself. Now I know that I am crazy. I must be crazy.

I walk into a hotel lobby and ask for a room. I get a room which costs me ten dollars. I am tired. I fall on the bed and begin to weep. I am a bad man, I must kill myself. I now weep more for I am afraid to die.

Two days have already passed. My money is gone, I must have money to eat and sleep. I go out late at night. I see a girl. I ask her for money but she screams. I hit her and take her money. I hear footsteps coming toward me. I hear someone shout:

"Stop or I'll shoot."

I pay no heed to the man's warning, he shoots and misses. I elude him. I go back to my room and fall on the bed weeping. I am a bad man. I must kill myself and end this misery. I shall kill myself for I have taken three lives already. Now I cannot kill anymore people. I shall kill myself.

I am walking on a bridge now, I am ready to take my life. I am not frightened. Why should I be frightened? I am sorry for the lives I have taken. Please God forgive me.

I go by the ledge and look down at the water, it is black, everything is black for it is night time. I climb on the rail and wait for a minute, then I jump. I feel myself falling, I scream then I splash.

* * * *

I feel myself being dragged by the collar by a sharp pointed object. I am then raised and put on a hard floor. I hear voices.

"Stupid guy, he took the easy way out."

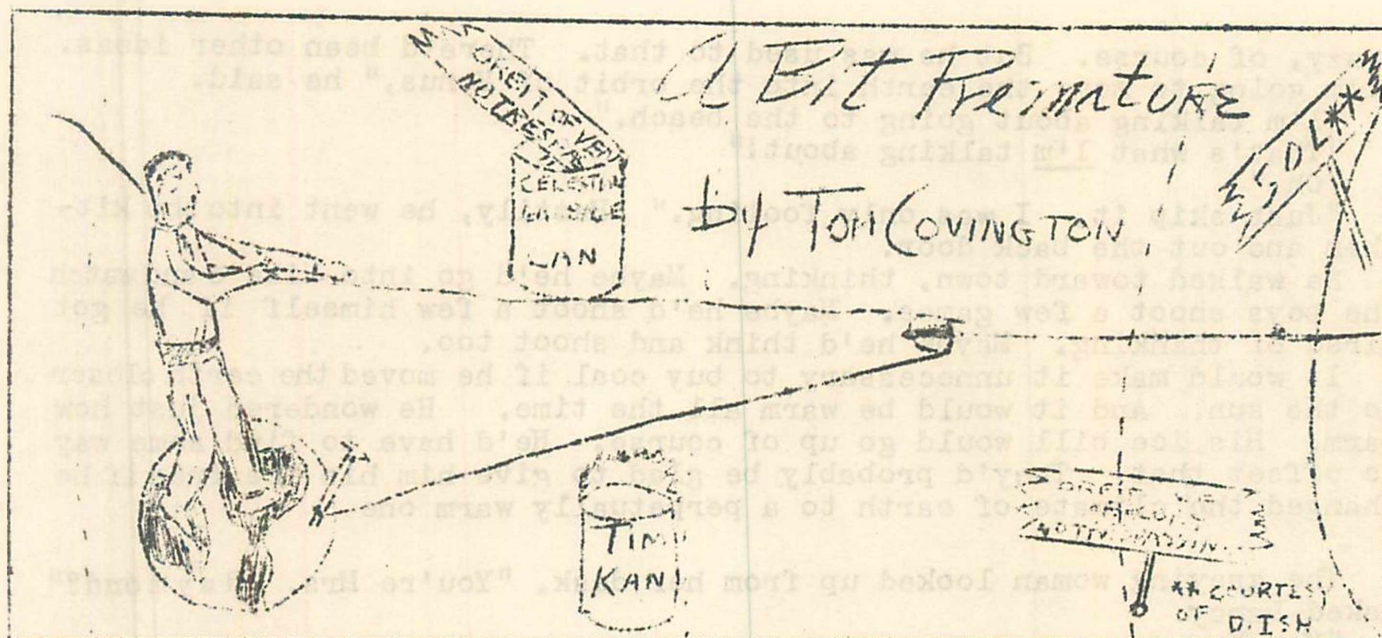
"Some guys are dumb, ain't they?"

I slowly open my eyes to see where I am. I am on a Police Barge for the two men whose backs are facing me have blue uniforms. I begin to rise then I jump on one of the men and begin to choke him. The other jumps away and looks at me with his eyes wide and his mouth open. He begins to shoot at me.

"I hit him every time," he moans out as I drop the other man and begin to pursue him. "I hit him every time," he repeats, "I killed him, I killed him," he screams, then dives over the side of the boat into the water. I watch him swim away but he does not get far. The current takes him and then I see him go under, his arms wave frantically but it is to no avail.

I strut triumphantly up and down the barge. Now I know what is wrong with me, I know what has happened. I laugh at the sky at my enjoyment. No one can kill me, no thing can kill me. How can they? I'm already dead.

The End



It looked rather crude, but it was done. A few copper fibers of the wire stuck out through the tape he'd wrapped the connection with, but it didn't matter much. The thing'd work anyway. Lancy finished screwing the switch over the hole in the wall, and dropped the screwdriver on the floor with the rest of his gear. Let Lucille pick it up — he had to think. He'd just had an idea.

He walked away, then returned. He picked up the screwdriver and pliers and a few scraps of tape and gave the switch a flip just to be sure it would work. It didn't. Damn thing. He'd think now. He flopped onto the bed.

"Why not shift the position of the earth nearer the sun?" Might get it too near, maybe? No, he'd stop just about Venus. Maybe replace Venus even? It seemed to run on a pretty good old orbit. He'd just give it a gentle push and send it floating into the sun. Or put it in earth's old place. That seemed better. Might hurt the Venusians to shove their planet into the sun, if there were any such things. Confidentially, he didn't believe there were, but everybody else seemed to think so.

Something occurred to him. He grinned as he thought of what Lucille's reaction would be. He walked into the living room and looked expectantly at the couch. Lucille wasn't there. Mighty unusual.

"Did you get the light in the bedroom fixed?" Lucille came out of the dining room, lugging an oversized ham sandwich and flopped down on the couch.

"How'd you like to go to the beach next Sunday?" He made the remark sound casual, just as if it weren't a very cold December outside.

"Oh fine," said Lucille, taking the ham sandwich out of her mouth for an instant.

"That's what I thought." Lancy was determined not to be out-manuevered.

There was a moment of expectant silence. Then: "Okay, out with it." Lucille turned over violently on the dilapidated couch.

Lancy was confused. He hadn't thought of what to say to that. He'd had his joke, and now he couldn't follow through. "Oh, nothing," he stammered, and left the room, feeling rather foolish. Well, that would fix her, he rationalized. She wouldn't know just what to think of that.

She followed him. "What did you mean then?"

He hadn't thought she'd get up. He was sorry he'd let the cat out of the bag. He might as well go ahead and tell her. She'd think he was

crazy, of course. But he was used to that. There'd been other ideas. "I'm going to move the earth into the orbit of Venus," he said.

"I'm talking about going to the beach."

"That's what I'm talking about!"

"Oh."

"Just skip it. I was only fooling." Hastily, he went into the kitchen and out the back door.

He walked toward town, thinking. Maybe he'd go into Mike's and watch the boys shoot a few games. Maybe he'd shoot a few himself if he got tired of thinking. Maybe he'd think and shoot too.

It would make it unnecessary to buy coal if he moved the earth closer to the sun. And it would be warm all the time. He wondered just how warm. His ice bill would go up of course. He'd have to find some way to offset that. They'd probably be glad to give him his ice free if he changed the climate of earth to a perpetually warm one.

The greying woman looked up from her desk. "You're Mrs. Raymond?" asked Lancy.

"Yes."

"Well, Mrs. Raymond, I'm J.K. Lancy." He felt uncomfortable. He wished he had some title to put after the name. "I've got an idea I think you'd be interested in." He hesitated. It was a hard thing to say. He wouldn't tell her about it yet. "Er, how much does your business decrease during the winter?" he asked.

"Why, about eighty percent," Mrs. Raymond said perplexedly. "Why?"

"I think I've got a way to keep it from decreasing."

"You have!" She leaned forward excitedly. "How?"

"Well, I thought if I could move the earth closer to the sun, it..." He stopped. She was taking it very well.

"Yes, go on."

"Well, it would make the weather hot, and you could sell more ice." He finished quickly.

Mrs. Raymond leaned back. "A very good idea, Mr. Lancy," she said. "What sort of business proposition do you wish to make?"

"Oh, I thought..."

"Would fifty percent of the yearly increase in earnings be enough?"

"Huh?" said Lancy. He hadn't expected that much. "Sure," he said.

"Good." She stood up. "I'll have my secretary make up a contract and send it to you first thing tomorrow. I think we can come to a very good arrangement. It's been very nice talking to you, Mr. Lancy. I think you have a wonderful idea."

"Okay," Lancy said, blushing, "I'll be in sometime next week and talk over the details with you. Good evening." He turned and walked out of the door, feeling very happy and important.

Didn't lawyers have to make up contracts? That thought bothered Lancy rather vaguely as he walked home. And didn't you have to sign them with all sorts of witnesses and things present? He'd always thought it happened at big meetings with everybody looking smug and confident and trying to wheedle all sorts of concessions from everybody else with fine print and all that. But he never had been much on legal matters. Maybe things had changed since he went to school. Or maybe he'd gotten false ideas from reading an article by somebody who didn't know his beans.

That was the trouble with ~~half the~~ writers, he thought. How could you blame the public for its ignorance when it was really the fault of a bunch of big-heads, pumping lies at the rate of five cents per word? Maybe he should be a writer. He'd show them. But that would wait till

later. Right now he was making money.

He wandered into Independent Ice Company, and came out feeling very elated with the promise of another contract. This thing might turn him into a millionaire in no time! Maybe he should go by the General Electric offices. They'd certainly sell more refrigerators if it were hotter. Trouble was, they sold air conditioning systems too. Maybe he could stink up the atmosphere so that everybody would need air-conditioning. He'd have to think about it. First things first, he always said.

He turned into "The Hangover." He generally avoided bars, but he had to celebrate today. The booth which he chose was in a very dark rear corner of the bar. He liked to be alone.

He was just beginning to feel contented, when a man came in and sat across from him.

"You're Lancy, aren't you?" he mumbled. "I'm a science-fiction fan. Been thinking about going over to Berkeley and getting in with them Little Men people." He wiped his face with his shirt sleeves.

"I don't read science-fiction," said Lancy, downing the last of his whiskey. He felt brave and happy, and unafraid of the world. "What's the use of reading about all that stuff when you can do it? I'm the doing type, I am. I want you to know that. I'm the doing type!"

"Oh, you are? Suppose you can do anything, I suppose. Even move the earth closer to the sun?"

"Yes, I can," said Lancy, not caring if anybody heard, "I can move the earth closer to the sun. What's more, I'm going to do it! I'm going to make lots of money. Barrels of it! Enough to fill the bay with beer instead of that stinking stuff it's got in it now!"

The drunk stood up, knocking the empty whiskey bottle over, and supporting himself on Lancy's shoulder. "Hey people!" he yelled drunkenly, "this here guy is gonna move the earth closer to the sun so we'll all be warm!"

The bar was crowded with the early evening rush. The booths were filled with parties of four or five people, most of them of the middle-aged variety, and the seats at the counter supported quite a few plump maidens, some sailors, and an elderly gent or two. Everyone turned to look at the drunk and Lancy, expressions of doubt, amusement, or drunkenness controlling their faces.

A big man, sitting on a stool near the front of the counter, laughed uproariously and banged his fist down on a plate of pretzels. "Ha, that's a good one," he thundered, "That's the best one I've heard in a long time!" The crowd began to laugh with him.

Lancy had seldom been laughed at. Subconsciously, he'd avoided such situations as this, having a deep horror of them, and now anger began to creep up into him. His feet felt fuzzy on the bottom, and his throat became tight. He'd show them. He brushed past the drunk and out into the middle of the floor. "Yes, I'm going to move the earth closer to the sun," he said quietly.

The crowd stopped laughing. "You're serious?" a dumb-looking female asked.

"Yes," said Lancy, somewhat pacified now that they'd stopped laughing.

"Oh golly, my hair!" the girl exclaimed. "You musn't make it any... any warmer. My hair just won't comb at all when it's so dry."

"It won't be dry," said Lancy.

"Do you really plan to move the earth toward the sun?" The little man was balding and wore glasses. He had a pencil stuck behind his ear and he looked sober.

"Yes, I do."

"Did you have this planned before you came here tonight?"

"Yes. I even have a few contracts...."

"Contracts!" The man's doubtful air vanished completely.

"Contracts!" echoed the crowd.

"Yeah," said the big man who'd laughed. "Won't this take money?"

Lancy stiffened. He hadn't thought of that. "Er... yes, it will." He put on his executive manner, "But I'm prepared for that."

"Who are the contracts with?" the little man asked. He began jotting down things in a small notebook as Lancy told him about his dealings with Independent and Raymond, and his plans for future arrangements—with the other ice companies in town and maybe even General Electric. The crowd listened intently—all but a few who were much too occupied with their drinking.

"Have you considered selling shares in this... ah... venture?" The newest speaker wore a grey tweed suit and had a prosperous look about him. He also smelled strongly of liquor. "Shares are insurance, my boy. The strength of any large-scale endeavor lies in the close unity and co-operation of as many component groups as can be assembled. Now I am equipped to...."

"I don't think Mr... er.... this gentleman should consider selling shares as yet." It was the little man with the pencil behind his ear, ready to jot down any other of the proceedings.

"No," stammered Lancy. "I don't think I should consider that as yet." He must be a fool to refuse money, he told himself. But it would never be too late to sell shares. Then he remembered that shares meant dividing the profits, and decided that he'd better not sell any after all.

The big man who'd laughed extended a bill toward Lancy. "Here's five dollars," he said, "I'd like to see it warmer."

"And me too." The drunk from Oakland staggered off a table where he'd been lying. He pulled a straw hat from his pocket. "Here, everybody," he yelled, "if you want it to be warm, just chip in!"

The hat went around and around. More and more money piled into it. Everybody seemed to be trying to outdo everybody else, and the bar became a very merry place. The bartender passed out free beer, and it was early when the little man with the pencil lugged Lancy home—early the next morning!

His head was splitting. He awoke and saw Lucille standing over him. Only there were two Lucilles. "Kee-rist," he thought.

"Well, did you buy 'The Hangover?'" she asked, rubbing her lips together as she always did when she was angry.

"No, I got it in the normal way," groaned Lancy. "What time of the morning is it?" He peered at where the window should be. There was bright sunlight streaming through it—both of it.

"It isn't morning!"

"Oh," said Lancy. "Well, it sure is bright. I guess I'll go back to sleep then. Don't wake me up in the morning. Lucky it's Christmas vacation, and I don't have to work. Turn the lights off, will you?" He closed his eyes and listened to the drums.

"The light won't turn on. Remember?"

"Oh." He sat up and opened his eyes. "Well, why in hell?..." He stopped. There was sunlight streaming through the window. He looked at his watch and wondered what all the hands were for. "What time is it?" he asked.

"Three o'clock in the afternoon."

"Oh." Now he saw what she'd meant. He moved his hands painfully to

his head. Strange. His hands could feel his head, but his head couldn't feel his hands. Oh well, he'd worry about it some time when he felt more like it. Right now he had other things to worry about. He looked at his wife, trying to bring her into focus to see the expression on her face. He waited, and wondered why he wasn't catching hell. Maybe she was beating him over the head with a table and he couldn't feel it. He put his hands up over his head to make sure.

"Where did all the money come from?"

"What money?"

It was all over the bed. Then he remembered. So that was why she hadn't mutilated him.

"Oh, that's from some people who want to help me move the earth closer to the sun."

"You mean it's ours!"

"Well...."

"Yippee, you remember that little fur...." She stopped as the ting-a-ling of the door bell sounded in the living room. Lancy wondered vaguely how it had gotten fixed. But his thoughts turned to his wife's words as she moved lazily to answer the door. "That must be that queer duck with glasses who was here to see you this morning."

"Queer duck with glasses." Lancy remembered the little man with the pencil who'd brought him home. Wonder who he was. The question was answered when Lucille brought the man in. Pinned to the corner of his lapel was a card. "Press," it read.

"Hello, Mr. Lancy," the little man said. He seated himself on the side of the bed. "Monroe's my name. You remember me, don't you?"

"Yes," said Lancy. "I remember calling you Monsey, so I guess you introduced yourself. What can I do for you, Mr. Monsey?"

"Do you remember anything about moving the earth?"

"Oh yes, I fully intend to move the earth into the orbit of Venus."

"You do! Good. I was afraid... Never mind, I'd like to ask you some questions...."

* * * *

"A girl!" Lancy exclaimed, sitting up in bed. He hoped that Lucille believed he was perplexed. He was. "Well, hold her. Do something.... Wait! I'm practically naked!"

"Oh, that's all right," The voice was sweet and husky. She stood in the doorway and Lancy pulled himself as far down in the bed as he could, and squeezed the covers over him. The girl advanced across the room while Lucille stood, like an astounded watchdog, by the bed.

"Er... er," said Lancy, his eyes performing the normal reaction. Even through the turmoil in his brain, and the embarrassment which shown red upon his face, there came the awareness of her sex appeal.

"Er... er yourself," said the girl, laughing again. She tossed her head and ripples flowed down her long brunette hair. Lancy started to say something, but it became lost in his throat. She looked at him, and he looked at her. Lucille looked at them both. Lancy glanced her way, and his voice suddenly returned.

"Who're you?" he asked, anticipating some sort of sexy French name.

"Mary Davis," the girl said. She fondled the bedpost, ignoring Lancy's disappointed "Oh." She sat down on the foot of the bed. "I represent the Newlanders," she said. "We're sunbathers. I've come to..."

"No, I'm sorry. I never go swimming," said Lancy. He hadn't meant to break in, but when he'd seen Lucille jerk like that....

"Oh, but I didn't come to ask you to go swimming," said Mary. "You see, our club would benefit greatly by your plan to move the earth, and we thought it might be an appropriate gesture to offer you our thanks with this check." She extended the blue check toward Lancy. He started to take it, but saw Lucille making furious faces and motions. What did she want? He couldn't think of... Oh, the maid! He looked Mary up and down. Yes, he decided, she'd make a very unusual maid. Very unusual, indeed. "Er, Miss Davis," he said, wondering how to ask such a woman about being a maid. "Thank you very much for your offer, but I'm afraid I can't accept your money. Now we've been needing a maid...."

Lucille flopped over on the bed.

"Oh, help me; she's fainted!" exclaimed Mary, throwing her delicious body across Lancy's to keep Lucille from sliding to the floor.

"Huh!" said Lancy, jumping out of bed in his blue-striped shorts, and ran to get some water.

"This ought to help," he said, coming back and beginning to slap Lucille's face with a wet rag.

"Mr. Lancy!" exclaimed Mary. "Your shorts!"

Lancy remembered his shorts. They were rather loud. "Oh, my wife gave me these for.... Yeeoooo!" He made a jump for the bed, dropping Lucille on the floor.

The next morning Lancy got up early and started making the rounds of the ice companies in San Francisco, gathering more contracts. His first visit was met with an attitude which had been strangely absent from his dealings so far: "And, furthermore, Mr. Lancy, I don't want to see you near Spalding again!" Mr. Spalding slammed the plate glass door of his office vehemently, muttering something about crackpots bothering him in the busiest hours of the morning.

"Crackpot," thought Lancy. He supposed he did seem like one in the eyes of some people. The idea of moving the earth closer to the sun was a pretty revolutionary thing. "There's one in every crowd," he thought, remembering that Mr. Spalding had a mustache that turned up at both ends.

"Paper, Mister?" The boy wore a red baseball cap and knickers. His slightly dirty face changed to one masked with disbelief as he looked up at Lancy. "Hey! You're him!" He dropped the paper he'd been extending and ran toward the corner. "It's him! Hey, guys, it's him!"

Lancy ducked into the door of a drug store. He looked at the paper. Staring up at him from the front page was a picture. It was one of himself; a very flattering one, even in his opinion. He felt like bursting with pride as he noticed the way his chin bore a look of intelligent determination, and the dignified look of his old blue serge suit. His eyes went to the article beside the picture:

WARMER CLIMATE FOR THE WORLD

The cold-weary citizens of San Francisco and the rest of the world were given new hope yesterday when J. K. Lancy revealed plans to shift the position of the earth nearer the sun. Lancy, a noted local inventor, said that his plans will be complete some time next week.

Lancy hopes to put the earth in a position about the same as that of Venus in relation to the sun, explaining that such a position will be ideal for life on earth; and that....

"See! There he is!" The plate glass door burst open and the gang of boys collected in the doorway.

Lancy jerked his attention away from the article.

The kids were talking about him. He hadn't expected anything like this. He'd known there'd be an article in the paper, of course, but not on the front page. And he hadn't expected to be pointed out. It made him nervous. He wanted to get out of the store and hide. He looked around, but saw no way of escape except the blocked front entrance.

Holding his breath, he walked toward it.

"Autograph, mister?" said a boy, holding up a comic book without a cover, and obviously regretting that he couldn't find anything more appropriate.

"Sure," said Lancy, rather flattered. He took the comic book and wrote his signature on it.

"I'm next!" yelled a sandy-haired kid. "Are you really gonna move the earth, Mister?"

"Yes," said Lancy, signing the piece of paper the boy had given him with a newly-acquired flourish.

"Gee! My daddy said you were full of balogna, but I don't think you are!"

"No," said Lancy, looking for something else to sign. There was nothing, so he bade them goodbye and went out, hoping that they wouldn't follow him. They didn't.

It was on Thursday ~~that~~ the first call relating to the signing of a contract came. After that they piled up at such a furious rate that Lancy had to put them in an appointment book. He found himself busy every day. Most of his time was taken up with attending meetings. He wasn't frightened by them, as he thought he would be. He just sat in the biggest, most impressive chair he could find, and answered questions. Sometimes he'd hum and haw over something as if he were thinking about it, and puff his cigar furiously. It seemed to work. He was always treated with a respect approaching awe, and listened to very courteously. On Friday, Mrs. Raymond called:

"Mr. Lancy," she said after they had exchanged greetings and such, "I talked to my lawyer concerning our agreement, and he said that it would be nice to have you over tomorrow morning to discuss the terms of our contract."

"Fine," said Lancy who had completely forgotten about the Raymond agreement. "What time?"

"About ten, if you can make it. Er... we were discussing the question of finances, and we don't see how we can make your share quite fifty percent. You see, when I named that figure...."

"That's all right," said Lancy, trying to reach a pencil to write the time of the appointment down. "The money doesn't make that much difference to me." He assured Mrs. Raymond that he'd be at her office at ten, and hung up, making for the living room with the evening paper in hand.

The phone rang.

"Hello."

"I want to speak to the man who's going to move the world." It was a feminine voice and it sounded vaguely squeaky and irritating as feminine voices do.

"This is he," said Lancy, picturing the woman as a middle-aged blonde with a soapy complexion and shallow eyes.

"Oh," came the voice. "Well, you must be mad. Do you really think you can move the world?"

"Certainly," Lancy answered. "I mean I'm not mad, and I can move the earth."

"Oh." The woman seemed frightened. "Well, don't! The world can't be moved. It ain't built that strong. It'll fall apart. It won't hold together. It's just like the time the men moved our house. If God had wanted the world to move, he'd be moving it. Please don't go messing with God's work. The earth won't stand being moved, I tell you!"

"Yes it will," said Lancy. He hung up, rather disgusted, and walked into the living room. It was full of people. He looked at them in surprise. They were of all shapes and sizes and stared at him in rapt awe.

A young man who seemed more normal looking than the rest stood up. "Mr. Lancy," he stammered, "We... I mean, let me introduce us: We're the Luncanians."

"Luncanians?"

"Yes, we're your fan club!" exclaimed a giddy-looking girl. "We've come to volunteer to help you move the world! ...Oh!" She ended rather abruptly, and looked at the boy. "Julius was supposed to say that." She sat down.

"Oh," said Lancy. He couldn't think of anything else to say.

The next few days were very busy ones for Lancy. They were full of meetings, luncheons, and various other occasions relating to the business end of shifting the earth's location. Lancy came home each night very tired and weary of the demands made upon him. The thing was taking all his time. He was tempted to forget it, and not move the earth after all. But there was all the money involved! The thought of the reward was usually enough to pull him from his periods of despair.

As he pulled himself in Tuesday night, however, even the monetary aspects of the venture were not enough to keep him from wishing that it were all a bad dream, and he never had thought of moving the earth. He dragged off his shoes, and soaked his feet, while trying to get rid of the collection of people who had accumulated in his home throughout the day. There were business men, reporters, photographers, salesmen, fans, and an unholy assortment of people who just hung around and stared at him and Lucille without ever stating their business. Everybody came and went as he pleased, and nobody ever challenged the right of anyone else to use the Lancy household as a congregation hall. What was the use?

Lancy picked up the phone, "May I have the office of John A. Marshall," he asked, not even bothering to think up the number of his business manager. "John," he said when the other answered, "I'm through making contracts. I'm ready to go ahead with the actual preparations to move. The administrative end can hang."

"But most of our contracts state that you'll move the earth only when you have 65 contracts. You lack quite a few yet."

Lancy sighed. "I asked you to put that phrase in to protect us," he said. "You know everybody would benefit from our moving the earth, regardless of whether they have a contract or not. The part you just brought up was to prevent somebody from forcing us to go through with the deal before we had enough contracts to make it profitable. Well, now we have enough!"

"But...."

"No buts!" said Lancy, asserting his feelings. "I'm through running

around all over the city with a bunch of stuffed-heads!"

"Okay, if that's the way you want it."

"That's the way I want it." Lancy hung up and went into the bedroom. He switched on the light. It didn't work. He remembered that he had never gotten around to fixing it. Oh well, he thought better in the dark, anyway, and the question of how he was going to move the earth was something to think about.....

The End

A STATEMENT OF THE MANAGEMENT OF SSR PUBLICATIONS

Since we now enter our third volume and our fourth year of publishing, it occurs to me that a re-evaluation is in order.

The official policy of SSR was set forth nearly three years ago, in the January, 1950, issue of FAN-FARE (Volume one, Number one). At that time SSR was a still small voice in the mire of neo-fandom. SSR, as a matter of fact, was FAN-FARE—and I was SSR.

Things have changed.

We have grown up—literally and figuratively. Our original policy was simply to aid amateur authors by publishing their material and letting the fans tear it apart verbally. It is no longer so straightforward. For one thing, those authors who started with us have developed—they're teetering on the edge of the doorway that leads to "the prodom of the pulps." They are, in a word, good. The stuff they turn out is about five or ten times better now than in those early issues.

And along the way we've picked up a few professionals.

We might as well face it—we no longer exist to aid the just-beginning amateur author. This makes it official, but the trend has been evident. The beginning "Duanes" and "Covingtons" of today just can't compete with our present writers. FAN-FARE exists to please its subscribers with high-class fiction. They have no place here.

But there is no cause to weep. There are other magazines, magazines that did not exist when FAN-FARE was started.

And perhaps it is true that there will always be other magazines.

And when they can write well enough, we'll be here to give them their "mimeographed glory."

This is not all that has happened to SSR Publications. S S R has found itself two more backers, Bob Briney and Al Leverentz. S S R has begun publishing hard-cover books, still in mimeo format, but with illustrations reproduced through a better medium.

And the books are more important than FAN-FARE.

Oh, FAN-FARE won't fold. It'll go on as it has, probably for at the least another three years. But it won't be the primary reason for SSR. Although it will still be the official voice of SSR, the SSR of today exists to publish books.

This is something new in fandom—actual mimeographed books. True, BLAGUE, the first one, was in FAN-FARE's format: but we've remedied that mistake. SNOWFLAKES IN THE SUN and SHANADU will be 5½ and 8½, and they will feature hard covers and dust jackets—and some of the finest fan poetry and fiction ever brought together.

We think the books are more important than FAN-FARE.

But you have to think so, too. You have to buy them. If you want us to continue publishing books, you have to buy them.

And we want to continue publishing.

So will you sit down today and buy BLAGUE (65¢), SNOWFLAKES IN THE SUN (35¢ prepublication), and SHANADU (\$1 prepublication). Please?

Because you are the reason we are publishing them!

INTRANSIGENT

A Short-Lived Column by Al Leverentz

Harry Warner, Jr., in his column in the recent opus, claims that "First Fandom" was possessed of "a dignity, earnestness, and freshness of attitude" which is not a part of modern fandom. I wonder if Warner is not taking a roseate view of the past, but I am sure fandom does lack all those things he mentioned.

Fandom as it exists today has always mystified me. I have often attempted to divine its purpose, its values, its achievements, and its all-around sense, but I have had little success. The constancy of this failure in running down any of these qualities seems to indicate but one thing: none of them actually exist.

I have heard it said, perhaps not in these exact words, but to this general extent, that the purpose of fandom is "to bring together the people who read, write, illustrate, publish, or are otherwise interested in science-fiction and fantasy." That is all very nice, I admit, but I cannot refrain from asking: "What is the value in bringing all these people together?"

This is a difficult question to answer, even for the fans, but most of them will ultimately come up with the answer: "For social purposes, if nothing else." To that, I say "Pfu!" No one has ever required the medium of so slovenly, senseless, and decentralized an organization as fandom to expedite social relations. The old song about people of like interests is so much clap-trap. You can find a great deal more of this "common interest" at a smoker, and probably more sociability as well.

Fan-magazines seem an intrinsic part of fandom. They, along with the pro letter-columns and the conventions, form the backbone of science-fiction fandom. I shall comment on two of the three. The last I covered in a vague way on a report on the BUFFLOCON, which appeared (or will appear) elsewhere. [Buffalo Fantasy League 0-0.]

Fan-magazines are astonishing things, in that there are so many of them and the majority of them are so worthless. There is a great deal of variation in the "policies" and the "format" of these publications, but the lack of quality seems almost a constant. I am confronted on one side by magazines which resemble nothing so much as a high-school newspaper, replete with "gossip columns," news reports on things never new and rarely unknown, and illustrations that are an affront not only to art but to the basic fundamentals of design. On another side one finds the "cultural" type of publication, featuring columns which radiate a disgusting kind of infantile philosophy, discretion, and perception. They seem to be the work of mental nincompoops who are possessed of the lone ability to write the purest kind of tripe, and with an audacity and egoism that is wondrous to behold. They speak of nothing at excruciating length, they reason on precepts which are foreign and incongruous to me, and they present what they have to say in a manner which in no way alleviates the overall puerility of their ideas. And we have book reviews, too (and when we are particularly unfortunate, movie reviews as well), and they are of singular note. One often wonders if the reviewer could ever truly appreciate or analyse anything he read, or if he knows how to read at all. In all ways, they match the columns.

And, ultimately, we have the magazines which cater to fiction! We taste here the apotheosis of hack, the reverent service of dozens of

feeble-witted imitators to the Great God Pulp, the emulation of literary trash. The goal of the fan-magazine author seems to be one thing: to someday attain to the pulps. Ah, how noble a thought is this! What a glorious horizon, and so tantalizing a future. It may take a long time, this writing to a small slugly-minded public, but there is always that great promise which may someday materialize, that he will appear between a Bergey cover and an ad concerning athlete's foot, and shall reach, finally, a large slugly-minded public. These authors are legion. Their work is faulty and incomplete, lacking the true qualities of extrapolation, burdened with abysmal characterization, plots that are either too ponderous or too slight, poorly organized and integrated, hackneyed and unrealistic dialogue, and cumbersome and ineffective description. They are amateurs, to be sure, and perfection cannot be expected of them, but they will never rise above this amateur status following the path which leads to the "pro-dom" of the pulps. They will remain, unless they are extraordinarily gifted and apt (and these are lamentably rare literary attributes), inarticulate and cheap, confined always by the rules and the formulae of the pulps, writing automatically but not sympathetically—with their minds (and such minds!) but not their hearts.

Yet they are not alone at fault. They are writing, in the fan-magazines, the fiction which appeals to the fan-magazine readers, and theirs is a very low taste, indeed. There is as much a minor formula of the fanzines as there is the greater formula of the pulps. If the audience were a little more perceptive, a little less content with slipshod work, even a little more "intelligent," the authors could improve. There are so many individuals writing for the fanzines, there must be at least a few of them who can write something worthwhile if they are only impelled or induced to do so. The whole, flimsy, idiotic framework of fandom is at fault. Jointly, it contributes to the delinquency of each of its segments.

But before I moralize further, I shall proceed to the letter columns. These columns mirror not only the unspeakably bad taste of fans, and their inability at a truly critical attitude, but their inherent lack of maturity as well. I have read letters supposedly written by individuals who are fans of ten, fifteen, or more years standing, and I have been rudely shocked. August Derleth, in his introduction to STRANGE PORTS OF CALL, describes the letters as being "written on a level which can only be described as sub-moronic." It is a fitting and a complete evaluation, I feel. I will admit, however, to some rare exceptions (and will say, in view of all of the glaring faults of the pro-letter-columns, that I shall be ever indebted to one of them).

There is but one thing which prompts these letters, and makes their writers so willing to make unequivocal asses of themselves. It is the same thing which gave birth to the phenomenon of the fan-magazine, and it is the fundamental embryo from which the whole, complex, malfunctioning organism called "Fandom" originated. And that, my children—if I am permitted a fan-phrase—is EGOBOO! All these persons are in fandom for no glorious crusade to reform the pulps, to improve science-fiction and foster an interest in it, or to do anything particularly commendable or worthwhile. They are up to their ears in the putrid mess because they get a devil of a kick out of seeing their names appended to a mass of incontrovertible sludge in a pulp magazine, or claiming to be an editor and/or contributor to a senseless amateur magazine which is hardly worth wrapping canary droppings in, or engaging in all manner of feuds

which are as ludicrous as they are insignificant, or for any other reason where-by they can get their names before other people's eyes.

This is the purpose, the value, and all the rest, of fandom. The whole thing is one big rationalization, a means to an end, and that end is the erection of the immortal I, the service and the worship of ME, the flaunting of MINE. It is a great heterogeneous mass of individuals who don't give a particularly big damn about science-fiction or anything that goes along with it, if they can only, by being a "fan," do a kind of three-dimensional jack-knife and lavish caresses upon their own little "pink profoundaments."

—————30

[This column, originally written for publication in GHUVNA, has been usurped for our own private enjoyment. Al Leverentz, who must normally be compelled to turn out material for publication, reports that he did this piece for the sheer joy of it. It stems, we must all realize, on the whole from the shattered illusions that followed attendance at two science-fiction conventions. In OPUS, the outcries of the fans—following perhaps harsh but possibly merited criticism in her fanzine review column—have deposed Marion Bradley from her mimeographed glory. We trust that Al Leverentz, being made of sterner stuff, at the least of stuff that can stand against the outcries of fandom, will not be so victimized. If FAN-FARE's readers threaten to abscond, leaving us holding the bag (full of unvented issues), there will be multitudes of editors to pick up the column where we drop it. But that is problematical, since we do not intend to drop it.

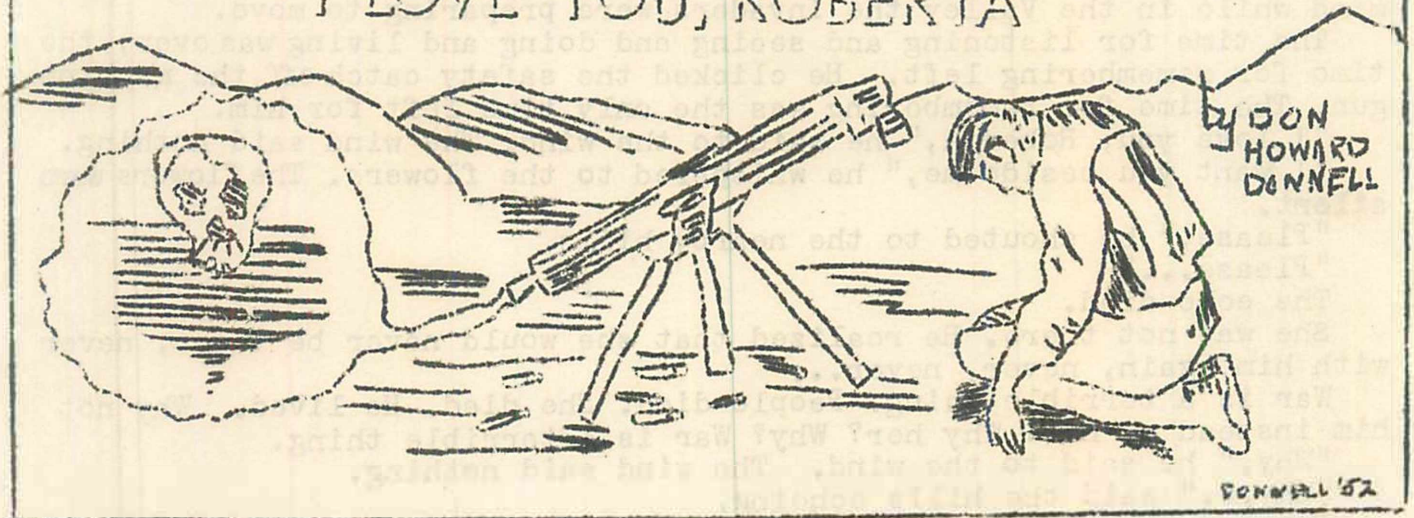
NOTE: Any similarity between points of interest in the foregoing article and actual events, places, people, or institutions is likely not to be coincidental. Statements made in FAN-FARE (except in ENTR'ACTE) are not to be considered as official opinions of the magazine or of SSR Publications. In other words, sue Leverentz, not us! —THE EDITOR/

THE REVENANT

Fear with evil clutching fingers
Closed tight around my heart,
As the shadows crept toward me
And bade the day depart.
Day stole away on muted feet
And vanished down the hill;
The birds and crickets ceased their song
And all the world stood still.
A cold wind shook the apple tree
And withered all its leaves,
It tapped at every window-pane
And fumbled at the eaves.
It then slid down the chimney-piece
And olden timbers creaked;
And in his soft-lined hidey-hole
Timmie, the gray mouse, squeaked.
Was that the pounding of my heart,
Or knock upon the door?
The shadows seemed to shift and move
Across the oaken floor.
Was that a long-drawn sigh I heard
Upon the quivering air?
And the settling of a light form
Deep in the rocking chair?

—————Isabelle E. Dinwiddie

I LOVE YOU, ROBERTA



The wind came from the hills, making the grass move and the flowers dance. The wind hummed, it sang, it chanted softly to itself, telling little stories, blowing away the last fringes of the day. It came uninvited, unnoticed, and lingered eddying. It floated, a gentle breeze then a fierce giant bellowing through the trees. It was night in the Valley.

From his position on top of the small hill he could see the silent brown wave sweeping across the Valley. Slow and sure it came, confident in its approach; it progressed rapidly. Rolling across the fields and through the deserted streets leaving in its wake small red pinpricks that he knew must be fires. From the darkening horizon came their hive of droning bees, big and small, rising and falling, causing the earth to erupt in violent explosions. The fires were closer.

Wade was witnessing an invasion.

"You're to delay them," said a voice behind him. He nodded without bothering to turn and unlimbered his gun. "Goodbye and good luck."

"Goodbye," said Wade bitterly. He was expendable.

It was wholly night. Black, cold, starry night. In the Valley the enemy's campfires burned redly and the sound of singing and laughing came to him faintly and far away. So he was to have another night. The Invaders wouldn't move before morning, foolishly giving the 189th time to regroup for the defense of Los Angeles. And he was to delay them for a few precious seconds more as L.A. could go down in a hot hell of glory. He shivered and laughed at the thought. He was to delay them. Give him the number one horse laugh. When these brown coated fanatics came up this hill, nothing would stop them. He dropped the barrel of the machine gun in the dirt and rubbed his unfeeling hands together, trying to promote a little life in them. The cold of the Valley night was beginning to tell on him. Incautiously he withdrew a cigarette from his pocket and lighted it, blowing the sweet, pleasant tasting smoke in the direction of the invading army camped below. Tomorrow some of them will die by my hand, he thought. And I will die too. Dying is not one of the most pleasant thoughts to dwell on, especially when it happens to be your own death. But war is a terrible thing. When everybody fights, and everybody is expendable and everybody dies. Your country is invaded and you defend it, and you are expendable. Wade knew he would die soon.

"Roberta..." he murmured in his sleep. He twisted on the rock hard ground and pried an exhausted eye open. It was nearly dawn. Regretful of the effort he sat up and shook the pleasant cobwebs of sleep from his mind while in the Valley the Invaders were preparing to move.

The time for listening and seeing and doing and living was over, the time for remembering left. He clicked the safety catch off the machine gun. The time for remembering was the only time left for him.

"I love you, Roberta," he said to the wind. The wind said nothing.

"I want you beside me," he whispered to the flowers. The flowers were silent.

"Please," he shouted to the nearby hills.

"Please..."

The echo died.

She was not there. He realized that she would never be there, never with him again, never, never...

War is a terrible thing. People died. She died. He lived. Why not him instead of her. Why her? Why? War is a terrible thing.

"Why," he said to the wind. The wind said nothing.

"Why..." said the hills echoing.

The Invaders had begun their advance up the hill, seemingly unaware of his presence there even after the shouting he had been doing.

They had killed Roberta. They had killed her along with thousands of others in the small coastal towns of Southern California. They had killed her, as they had the others, for no reason other than the pure joy of killing. And he was going to pay them back!

He readied the gun and pointed it down into the midst of the brown tide coming uphill to engulf him.

* * * *

The smug lieutenant was thinking of Los Angeles and of its loot and pleasures and women, as he led his Company up the small hill, inwardly annoyed at the foolish pause the Division Commander had ordered the night before. He was not aware of Wade and his gun on the crest even as the bullets tore in him and all his thoughts spun dizzily into a whirlpool of blackness and he fell to the ground torn and broken and dead.

* * * *

Wade's gun sang. A section of the advancing Invaders crumpled pitifully. For her. Again the static melody; again the sprawled manikans. For his country. But still the advance. The metallic melody sang out again and again. A few for himself...

The gun stopped empty. He looked with interest at the men coming up the hill at him to wreak vengeance for their fallen comrades. Little men, as he was, expendable, and expended. He could run, of course, but strangely he didn't want to. He sat and waited for them to come, and they came. They came in a brown that cast shadows and caused the earth around him to erupt in miniature explosions. He, Wade Saunders, was on the way out.

The wind came from the hills, making the grass move and the flowers dance. The wind hummed, it sang, it chanted softly to itself, telling little stories, sweeping away the last fringes of the day. It came uninvited, unnoticed, and lingered, eddying. It floated, a gentle breeze then a fierce giant bellowing through the trees. It was night in the Valley.

"I love you, Roberta," Wade said to the wind.

"I love you, Wade," came the faint wispy floating whisper.

The wind said nothing.

The End



JUST BROWSING AROUND

Oh, yes we can—we never were modest. So we present a review of.....

"BLAGUE," by Toby Duane and Al Leverentz (SSR Publications, 1952, 65¢).

"Blague," defined as "a fantastic or impossible story," is an honest title for a straightforward science-adventure tale that depends on no plot-gimmicks or over-emotional devices to hold the reader's interest.

The story is set in the early days of interplanetary travel, when the smaller planets have been explored, but the ammonia giants still remain challenging mysteries.

Signs of intelligent life have been discovered on Jupiter, as the story opens; and the two young heroes, Wayne Keller and Edward Chapman, have been selected for the task of establishing the first contact with the aliens. Jupiter having certain undeniable differences from Earthly conditions, the explorers cannot merely jet down and stroll about the Jovescape. Instead, they must make their investigations by means of mentally-controlled robots—so devised that the operator, for all practical purposes, is in the robot, or more accurately, is the robot. The fact that the men must occasionally withdraw their minds from the robots for a rest period throws in an added complication when they get involved in some fast-paced action with the inhabitants of Jupiter.

This is the background against which the authors have woven a bright tasty tale of space-adventure, which, in spite of its modest title, is more plausible than not—for stf, that is. In particular, the Thoors which they have invented as one type of alien show powerful but reasonable imagination.

Not least by any means are the delightful wisps of humour appearing throughout the story in unexpected flashes.

Artwork by Don Duke is commendable.

To Fan-Fare readers I recommend this novel whole-heartedly. It is written by two of our own authors, so should suit your taste; and it is good reading on its own merits.

—Helen Soucy

ROGUE QUEEN, by L. Sprague de Camp (Dell Publishing Co., Inc.). "Sex... among the stars," says the blurb. "She learned about sex from an Earthman!" From which the reader might get the idea that this is a filthy book. Quite to the contrary, however. There's sex in it, of course, but nothing like what the blurb-writer would lead you to suspect. The story takes place on the planet of Ormazd, whose inhabitants are roughly manlike, with certain differences: they are oviparous. They have a cast-system that is much like that of Earthly bees.

The trouble begins when the Paris, a spaceship from Earth, lands in the community (or nation) of the Avtini, who are currently under threat of attack from the Arsuuni. Iroeth, a worker of the Avtini, tries to obtain help from the Earthmen for the forthcoming war; but, because of interplanetary law, they cannot interfere with the culture of any race whose technology is so far behind their own.

Iroeth's lover is to be executed because he is no longer of any use to the Community. An Earthman, through blackmail, is forced to assist him to escape. Thereafter, the complications arise thick and fast!

It's a swiftly-paced book, one with humor and action. It's adult science-fiction. It's a well-conceived idea worked out fully. But above all this: it's entertaining reading!

—Terry Carr

SUPER BOMB

by TERRY CARR

It was nineteen fifty-five, and the world tottered on the brink of destruction. It was but a matter of a single incident, one spark, and the fires of oblivion would roar over the world, taking with it the lands of both sides—Russia and her puppet governments and the members of the Western Alliance. Scientists of both sides worked frantically for what they believed to be right, and all the while spies from the foe were looking over their shoulders, recording their findings. Stalemate. A battle not of scientists, but of spies.

An intricate network of spies permeated each land. But in the countries of the Western Alliance, there had been a new installment. The counter-spy bureau, comprising some thousands of men who made it their occupation to weed out spies, replaced the F.B.I. In it were such men as Duncan Ellstad, 'miracle-boy of the gridiron' in '52; Jules Summors, rapidly-rising young lawyer, who had given up a nomination to Congress to join the C.S.B.; Robert Terrsen, the movie sensation of "The Destroyers;" and many more. But the majority were made up of just joes like Dick Larson.

Larson had attended college, studied law, and had been beginning his career when one of his friends persuaded him to join the C.S.B. Since then—two years ago—he had rapidly made a success of the job, and at present was drawing two hundred a week. The job was a good one, always interesting, and he had no trouble with its intricacies, because of his training in law.

He was in a good mood as he rang the bell of his home. The night was fresh and the air clear and warm. There would possibly be time for a night at the Hales', playing canasta. He heard footsteps leading toward the door, and presently his wife opened it. He pulled his hat down over his face and grumbled, "Got a handout for a poor starvin' man o' the world, Ma'am?"

She flipped the hat off and laughed, "I guess so... come on in, ya bum." He retrieved his hat, solemnly placed it on the rack, and followed her into the kitchen.

"Mmmmm... pork chops! What's the occasion?"

She glanced at him from the stove. "Those aren't for you, they're for my husband when he gets home." She added, "Ya bum."

He chuckled, then became serious. "No, I mean it... what IS the occasion?"

"Don't you know?"

"No, what—" He broke off, as she brought a cake with one candle from the oven. "Oh... our wedding anniversary?"

"What else?" queried she, setting the cake on the table before him.

"Hmmmm," he scratched his chin. "Parrott's birthday?" She cuffed him lightly under the chin.

"You know very well it's our anniversary... our first one, and you forgot it!"

"Didn't, really!" he protested, pulling a package from his pocket. "Here."

"What...?" She tore away the wrappings from a small case. "A watch ... oh, you shouldn't!..."

"Why not? Two hundred a week ain't hay. No use letting hay or mon-

ey go to waste. That's what money's for... to spend."

"Yes, but you never know when your job will go up in smoke...oh, you darling!" She kissed him lightly on the cheek. She slipped it on.

"Sorta loose... I guess it'll do." They laughed.

The chatter continued while she set the dinner on the table, and all through the meal. Larson had found early in marriage that she was vitally interested in his work, so the conversation was ever lively.

"About my job maybe not being here tomorrow... you may be right. If the war is fought, after the war there won't be any place for spy-catchers. And we've just about got the war started and finished now."

"What do you mean?"

"New weapon we have. Super-bomb, sort of, From what I've picked up it's about three times as powerful as a hydrogen bomb. We're gonna give it a test that the world will know about, including our not-so-respected enemies. Then we're gonna slyly ask for a treaty of peace and if we don't get it, the Ruskies will find that they've got something in their hair... namely a certain bomb that's gonna part their hair clear down to their shoulders."

"Oh, Dick... I hope so!"

* * * *

The next day all Hell broke loose. Russia suddenly attacked the Western Alliance in five different places, weakening her defenses. It was reported that they were using a new kind of bomb, more powerful, even, than the so-called super-bomb of the Western Alliance.

* * * *

It was five hours after the first attacks that Larson found his wife. He strode up to her and raged, "So here you are! I've been looking for you! Hope you had a lot of fun when your Ruskio pals blew the soil from under our feet! I guess you were hoping for a medal or something. Maybe 'to the greatest woman spy since Eve.' Vitally interested in my work, were you? You wouldn't have been so vitally interested if I hadn't been in government work! Wouldn't even have married me, I bet! All you wanted was to find out how far we'd gone on that bomb. Had the thing worked out almost a year ago, eh? A quick radio back to Moscow... and poof! no more Western Alliance! Congrats! Hope you had..."

"Wait, Dick, wait! You don't understand! The world will be a better place under the rule of a benevolent dictatorship! Democracy is too slow. Wait till you see the advances that will come under the new regime!"

"Uh-huh," Sarcastically. "Meanwhile, we sit while the Ruskies knock the Western Alliance all to—"

"Dick, Dick..." Soothingly. "You don't understand. And anyway, it's all over now!"

"Over! You aren't kidding it's all over!" He picked up his harp from a nearby tuft of cloud and strode away, stardust rising from his tracks.

The End

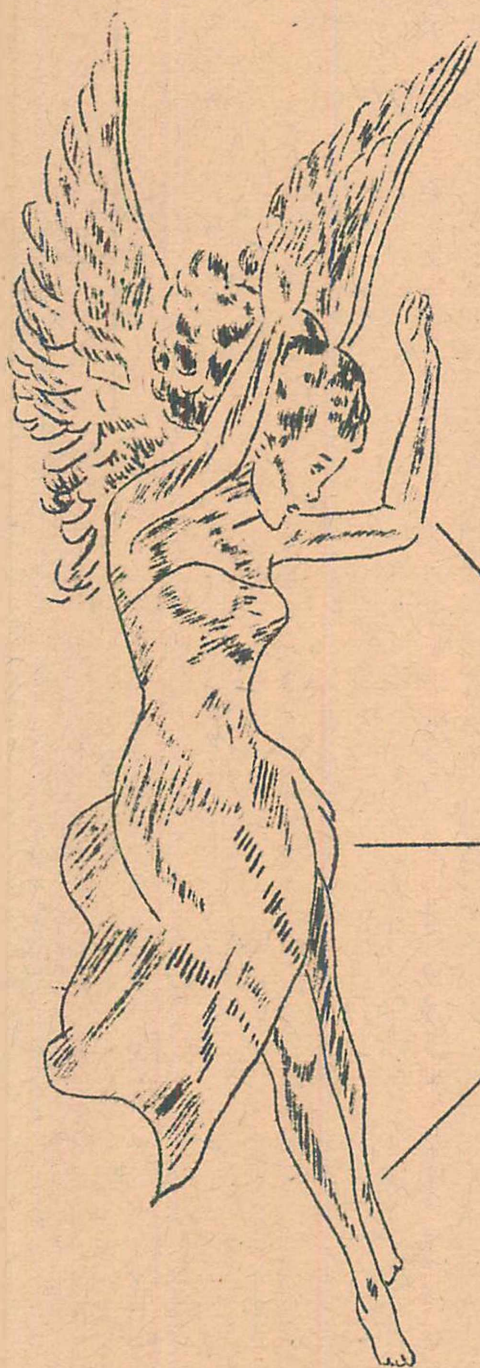
Put in your order now for the second SSR Booklet: SNOWFLAKES IN THE SUN, a poetry book with hard covers and a multi-lithographed dust jacket by Charles Momberger—something new in the annals of fandom! Order now!!

Send all letters to Robert E. Briney, 561 W. Western Avenue, Muskegon, Michigan. No letter should exceed 250 words in length.

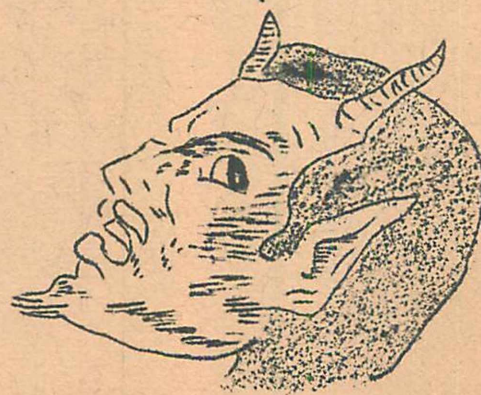
Dear Bob: Fan-Fare arrived a couple of days ago, but I've held off writing this epistle until I could decide how to rate the various and sundry gems of literary excellence in the May issue. It was no easy task, believe me, since all the yarns, I thought, were well above average -- and that's saying quite a bit, since your average is well above average ... er, if you follow me. What I'm driving at is that F-F was damned good this month. ### The best yarn in the issue was Andrew Duane's item, DREAD HUNTRESS. The writing had an almost Merrittesque beauty. But perhaps, after all, I should give this yarn last place; for your purpose is to give amateur authors experience for the pros, n'est-ce pas? And what professional mag of today would print a story of such high quality ... Amazing? No, AS is now catering to the carriage trade (baby carriage, that is), and half its readers wouldn't know what the story was about. SS, TWS? No, both those mags seem to have gone off the deep end for straight sf lately. Browne's new mag, Fantastic? That would be the day! The Duane story is neither sex-motivated, nor is it a detective story. [The eternal interpretation! See the letter below for a classic example of a diametrically opposite idea of what Duane's story was about. Which one is right? (Or is that a dangerous question to ask...Andy, put down that gun!)]--Ed.] The only magazine that I think would have published DREAD HUNTRESS was the old Popular Fiction Weird Tales, under the aegis of the great Farnsworth Wright. Alas, both have gone to better existences, leaving naught but pitiful ghosts behind. Anyway, I still give Duane 1st place. ### Were it not for the fact that I'm listening to my favorite Debussy recordings and have just finished a delicious steak dinner, therefore being in a comparatively mellow mood, I would give Walt Klein a fifteen yard penalty for his story, TO BE A GOD. It just wasn't sf, nor has it any claim to being fantasy. Consider the plot: to men go into the desert after a treasure. They clop each other on the mazard a few times, naturally, since they want to keep the loot for their respective selves entirely. In their greed to get the swag they set off a few tons of dynamite and have an idol fall on top of them. And that's it. All you need are a few swindled natives, a South Sea setting, and you have a plot for a Jon Hall-Maria Montez movie. Compare the tale to DREAD HUNTRESS; in that story the basic plot and entire treatment were fantastic. But TO BE A GOD has only a few sf trappings that have very little, if anything, to do with the basic theme of the yarn. And another thing -- why are the explorers carrying flour around? It seems to me that in a society advanced enough to have space travel, nobody who goes traipsing around to other planets would want to impede his progress by toting several pounds of such a primitive commodity. But I did like the writing, the characterization and general atmosphere; and because of that, I give the story first place after first place...that is, second place. ### AFTERMATH FROM ANGLE TWO and RETURN FROM TERROR are tied for third place; they're both excellent, but the competition from the first two yarns is a bit steep. A special word of praise must also go to the lone illustration in the issue--it's the best illo you've had yet, and it reproduced beautifully. [Are you listening, Charley?--Ed.] The cover was very good too. Magnifique, as they say in Germany. If they're French tourists, that is. But who drew it? [After much and long research, we can definitely-like state that the cover was done by Briney.--Ed.] ### And now that I have paid my way with comments, may I take a little space for a plug or two? [You chew?--Ed.] First about Cataclysm, which has recently changed to a new publisher--me. The ninth issue will be ready by the time this letter sees a gleam of light; and I promise that it will not be mimeo'd on the sickly yellow cardboard that was used for the last issue. Poetry should be sent to the editor, ha who

VOL 3
NO 3

FAN FARE



MAY '53



15¢

FAN-FARE is published bimonthly by SSR Publications, 119 Ward Rd., North Tonawanda, New York.

Manuscripts submitted for publication should be accompanied by return postage, and should be typewritten or legibly hand-printed on one side of the sheet, double-spaced. We are not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, but all care will be taken in their handling. If you have not heard from us within a period of one month from the date of submission, you may care to send a follow-up letter.

Subscriptions to FAN-FARE: six issues/75¢. Each issue, 15¢.

Feel free to write us at the above address for information on advertisement rates or concerning other SSR publications.

SSR PUBLICATIONS consists of A. C. Leverentz, R. E. Briney, and W. P. Ganley

Editor: W. Paul Ganley

Cover by Charles Momberger (see editorial please).

Fillinger, (editor of the now defunct GHUVNA). This was a mistake—as a matter of fact, two mistakes! Note the sloppiness of the interior reproduction. Note the cover, and realize that Joe swiped it from a Momberger cover on the second issue of GHUVNA; it suffered in the process, and I expect Charlie to sue me any day now. I'm tired of saying in each issue that the next one will see, finally, publication of the DeWeese story. It is not a myth... and it will appear. What? Well, now, you just wait and see!!

Beginning with this issue I am experimenting with kinds of stories—I'm tired of publishing tales that "almost made the pulps;" eventually, FAN-FARE will be issued in a better format than mimeographing—I'd have it lithographed beginning right away if I thought reader support would pay most of the cost, but I've learned from others' mistakes. And I refuse to issue it in the not-so-costly microscopic form which early issues of SF DIGEST used... I'd have to provide magnifying lenses!

Next issue the regular page of book reviews should return, and I hope to have another installment of the Leverentz column—having been an observer to one of the latest atom explosions, he should have interesting things to comment on...

-- 8 June, 1953

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. . . E N T R ' A C T E

This issue was published with the thought in mind that it would be nice to distribute it at the Midwestcon—in the rush to get it finished, the aid of Robert J. Fritz (editor of the now defunct HYPEROPIA) and Joseph M.

—THE EDITOR

THE ANNALS OF AARDVARK

BY HARLAN ELLISON

CHAPTER 1

THE ENTRANCE

C'mon in won't you? You can sit right down there in that rocking chair. Oh! you saw the sign on the door and wanted to ask me about Aardvark, did you? Well, I guess I'm the best person to tell you about him since I was with him from the moment he entered the country. Do you want to hear from there or from the real beginning? Well, okay, I'll tell you about the start when he met the Valkyries.

You see Aardvarks can live only in the warmest places. So, when the Aardvark got lost in the Swiss Alps, he was very uncomfortable. Don't ask me how an Aardvark got to the Swiss Alps or what he was doing there in the first place. He's never told anyone, except maybe the Valkyries.

Anyhow, stumbling around in the freezing cold, he got lost; but good. Just as he was about to give up and say farewell cruel world, he stumbled upon an ice crypt. Stumbled, he ran into it and knocked out two teeth.

This crypt which was set in the side of one of the glaciers was not an ordinary one, for frozen within its icy walls, rent free, were two Valkyries and a large elephant. Even the elephant was unusual. He was the sole owner (the Valkyries obviously had no use for one!) of a handsome brown handle-bar moustache, nicely waxed and glistening.

The Aardvark, who was inquisitive as are all great men, strolled up to the ice crypt as nonchalantly as a freezing Aardvark could, and dying of hunger, put forth an exploratory tongue and licked the ice. To his amazement, the ice was lemon flavored. Wait a minute, I'll tell you why it was lemon flavored, but first let me tell you what happened.

Knowing full well the consequences of licking open this age-old ice pack, but racked with hunger, the Aardvark proceeded to lick open the crypt. After several minutes of lightninglike licking, the Aardvark sated his hunger and in the process freed the Valkyries.

The Valkyries were forever grateful and proceeded to show the Aardvark this by bursting into a Wagnerian opera, complete with flowing braids.

After the preceding formality had been dispensed with, introductions went around and the Aardvark found out the fact, which is of practically no use to anyone, that the Valkyries' names were Olga and Ketanya Schwartz. Very old lineage, this name. The elephant, who had been sitting by looking very bored about the whole thing, was named Rubin.

The Valkyries, it seems, were delivering a package of lemon flavored Jell-O to the cook in Valhalla, and en route, had gotten frozen in the ice. The elephant was their mode of conveyance since all the good horses had a day off and went to the people races at Lowaleah.

The Aardvark heard all of this in a rather detached way, for you know most Aardvarks can neither talk, write, nor understand human language... The Valkyries who perceived this deficiency were contemplating giving the Aardvark some of their Valkyrie Local Number 86112 Magic, Pat. Pending, when the recipient in question suddenly turned a lovely shade of aquamarine, shivered, and dropped over, frozen solid. This solved the problem very effectively. They worked their second-hand magic on the fellow, and when he awoke...! Well, there was a complete change in him. This was the exit of Aardvark, boy nothing, and the entrance of Cassius Quagmire Aardvark, man of the world.

CHAPTER 2

MASS EXODUS

After the Valkyries had revived Cassius with the aid of a bouquet consisting of a quartet of red flowers in liquid form, they placed him and themselves upon the back of the elephant Rubin, who it was found was permanently grounded after three or four thousand years of disuse, and proceeded to the almost obscure town of Eeahohaheeee, Switzerland, where they intended to settle down.

But the people of the town upon seeing the apparition of a large elephant with a moustache carrying two beautiful girls and a strange animal, wanted to burn the aardvark and his companions at the stake thinking them a figment of their imaginations.

The elephant did not care for this in the least and raring back on his hind legs proceeded to tell the townsfolk so, much to their dismay. In large groups they immediately depopulated the Swiss village.

Cassius, the Aardvark, finding himself alone in the middle of a deserted town with a moustachioed elephant and two Valkyries decided that here they were not appreciated, and made preparations for leaving the country.

In a deserted haberdashery he found a fine, warm English tweed, a top hat, white gloves, a white bow tie, and a pair of lavender earmuffs, which he quickly donned. The elephant was equipped with a can of moustache wax and a muffler, while the Schwartz sisters doffed their filmy negligee type goddess gowns and donned two lovely business suits.

Then, well clothed and happy, the elephant replaced his travelling companions upon his back, and calmly swam the Atlantic Ocean to arrive at the United States of America, where the Aardvark's appearance was destined to cause a stir and tremor in the daily life of every American.

CHAPTER 3

"...IT'S A BARGAIN"

A warning of the thing to sweep the country shortly was evidenced when the moustachioed elephant Rubin came lumbering through the water in the New York Harbor. People from miles around who got wind of the news (he was a very smelly elephant) rushed to the docks to watch, or climb to the tops of buildings with binoculars. And when Rubin climbed ashore on Ellis Island, the city was thrown into a panic.

It seems that Cassius began conferring at once with two of the immigration officers about entrance into the country. This was flatly refused by the officials, who cited a weak clause in the handbook which excluded all uncivilized beings; and anyone could see that Cassius was uncivilized, — whoever heard of wearing lavender earmuffs with an English tweed?

When his traveling companions heard this, they were all for hurling the immigration officers head first into ye olde New Yawk Harbor.

Right about there is where I came in. Yeah, good old Charlie Smirtz, that's me. I had been waiting on the Island for a shipload of animals from Africa and being a producer of some rekknown, saw the latent possibilities in the appearance of these, and I use the term loosely, people. I had just finished a show on Broadway that had run three years and was just getting together an animal circus to tour the country. But when I saw this Aardvark in an English Tweed with a top hat, tie, and ivory-topped cane, a moustached elephant wearing a muffler, and two of the most gawjus dames in the world, I knew that this was something a little unusual. I was sure of it when I saw that the Aardvark was wearing lavender earmuffs.

Sauntering casually over to where the Aardvark and his companions were sitting, I introduced myself, and in a low voice related to them the fact

that if they would consent to signing a contract, I would personally see that they were inside the country before morning. The Aardvark gives me the cold eye at first and then says, "If you promise, and write it out in this contract that we are not to appear in any sideshow type things, we might consent."

Before the fellow could twitch his short brown tail, I had pulled out my Foster pen that writes under water, air, ink, blood, and money, and was writing in the clause he mentioned. Then he signed the contract, and so commenced the partnership of Smirtz, Aardvark, Schwartz, and Rubin, Inc.

CHAPTER 3

THE CARBUNCLE VOYAGE

After the signing of the contract, Cassius and his companions retired to the harbor to wait till I had made the arrangements. Late that night, very late (about five o'clock), a small tug pulled up to the island and out came one Hawser Dawson. I can truthfully say that Hawser is the mouldiest looking animal ever to set foot upon dry land. Or wet water, for that matter. He is so filthy that his clothes stand up by themselves when he takes them off at night. And the smell! WHEWWW!! Hawser Dawson smells like Mrs. Murphy didn't get home with the eggs in time. He is dirty, smelly, and dumb besides, but he is loyal and one of the best tugboat captains that ever tripped on a two inch line.

We had arranged to get the Aardvark and his buddies into the country under cover but I had forgotten to mention to Hawser how big the group was. When Hawser saw the elephant he almost fainted. His ship, which was as leaky as Stalin's head wouldn't carry that load. It could hardly carry Hawser himself. So we arranged to hang the Aardvark and the elephant under the ship while the Valkyries and myself rode upstairs.

But not only did Dawson get paid twice as much as he should have, he wanted the Aardvark and Rubin the elephant to work their way in. He whispered something to Cassius and Rubin and then came aboard. When the Elephant and our hero were slung under the ship, the leaky tub sank so low into the water that it was wetter on the bridge than it was under the ship. We got under way shortly and as we sailed around under cover of darkness we heard a weird sound. It was a systematic metallic whonking under the boat. When we asked Dawson what the noise was, he told us that the Aardvark and Rubin were working their way over by cleaning barnacles off the bottom of the tugboat with their teeth. I almost fainted when I heard this. Our future star, the brightest new personality in years.... scraping barnacles! Oh no!

After breaking a steel pipe over Dawson's head, we got the Aardvark into the ship and started chipping the remnants of his work from his bicuspid. It was about this time that we got into the small dock that Hawser had told us would be waiting. We dragged the slightly defunct sea captain out of the ship, got Rubin out from under and proceeded to enter the United States of America, which as you know has been renamed since by some people, the United States of Aardvark. One of the reasons is because of what happened in the Drunken Cockroach Nightclub. Oh was that a queer night. It happened on the same evening we got into the States...

CHAPTER 5

IN THE 'DRUNKEN COCKROACH'

We got the Aardvark settled quickly in a hotel near the center of town and then decided to go out and eat someplace. Hawser Dawson wanted to go along till he got his money and since he wanted it in cash and the banks

didn't open till the next day we decided to let him tag along. There was but one stipulation; that he take a bath. This almost broke Stinky's heart but he consented and when he met us in the lobby a few hours later, he was (as he termed it) "disgustingly filthy clean."

Rubin was looking quite elegant in a rented tux which was a size sixty-seven. The Schwartz girls were absolutely ravishing in their two evening gowns that were strapless, hemless, backless, topless, bottomless, frontless, and with a plunging neckline.

But the really dashing one was Cassius Q Aardvark. He was decked out in a conservative green and red suit with a yellow tie, spats, a cane, top hat and the perennial lavender earmuffs. We could never understand it but the newspapers said the next day that about fifty cases of color blindness and shock were brought into the hospital raving about an Aardvark with a top hat and earmuffs.

That was really a queer night. We started out at the Stork Club. Sherm Billingsley had gotten wind of the Aardvark and had a special room reserved with a wall knocked out for the elephant Rubin. The men were practically fawning all over the Schwartz Valkyries who calmly broke Champagne bottles over their heads and continued to stay by their erstwhile pal, the Aardvark. After we had gotten well placed I looked at the Aardvark. He was holding sway like a royal Sultan, complete with dancing girls. The young blade was surrounded by the chorus line and was having a rough time with them. But he had eyes only for the Schwartz sisters. They sat there exchanging guttural sounds.

After we got finished at the Stork we took in rapid succession the Mocambo, the 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 Clubs, the Noire Pansy Club, and the Hi, Low, Top, and Homburg Hat Clubs.

About nine o'clock we were just about pooped out when we noticed that we had lost Hawser someplace. It was quite a relief to us as he had poured the contents of a potted palm over himself at the Noire Pansy Club to make himself feel more at home and he had begun to reacquire the odor that was peculiar only to his body.

It was then that Cassius remarked, "Look at the neighborhood we're in. This is lower than low."

Truer than true were his words. We were in a neighborhood that looked like the inside of a shell-shocked oyster shell. We were surrounded by broken down houses and buildings that looked as though they had been old when Moxie's Army was chewing on rattles. At the end of the street that we were on was a building that was a little better; just a little. By better, I mean it was standing. There was a sign over the door that proceeded to tell us in no uncertain terms that this was the "Drunken Cockroach Nightclub."

I was all for turning back as was Cassius Q., but the Valkyries, Olga and Ketanya who had consumed a great deal of wine (they learned how in Valhalla, they told us) ran on ahead and without a backward hiccough vanished into the rickety building which threatened at any moment to fall on their heads.

With a shrug to the Gods of Chance Rubin, Cassius and myself proceeded to the Spirit Hostelry, or as you choose, Beer Parlor.

The inside of the Drunken Cockroach was worse than the outside. It looked like a nightmare by Dali on a night when he had run out of brushes and had started using his feet.

The bar, which ran across the back of the smoke-filled room, was of a seasick green color while the walls were a burnt umber tinged with beige. The floor was ornamented with a five-pointed star that showed several

crawly type animals such as the kind that "...go bump in the night." They were of various hues and were, in all, quite sickening. The bartender was the worst. A small sign above the bar related the fact that he was Oliver Absinthe. He was not only repulsive, he was nauseating. A large bald head encased in folds of pink flesh was what surmounted the largest bay window in the country, outside of Rubin's. He was wearing an apron that showed the demise of many a martini. There were also spaghetti, dirt, milk, coffee, and gravy stains on the apron besides a group of green blotches that I couldn't quite place. It looked like the remains of last week's spinach.

Have you ever heard a sick Hippo tell you about his operation? Well, if not try to imagine how it would sound, since that was what this fellow's voice sounded like. "What's ya pleasure," he said.

"Nothing much," I answered, looking for a quick way to get out if it was needed.

We seated ourselves in a booth next to the Valkyries who were fast at work guzzling beer. Rubin just stood with one foot on the brass rail, which at the application of his weight, bent. He ordered another double double scotch and in one gulp downed it. It was then that the elephant began screeching in an unelephantlike way and kicking himself in his more than ample posterior. We started shaking him by the trunk and asked him what the trouble was and he yelled that the last drink was one too many. He was seeing pink people.

After this outburst I returned to the booth to see that the Aardvark was gone. My attempts at locating him were halted suddenly by the screaming of another person. It seems as though that evening was open season on howling. The person yelling was Oliver Absinthe, the bartender, who was yelling at Cassius who was in turn yelling and alternately beating with his fists and a cuspidor, a slot machine that was not acting in the way Cassius expected it to. With a resounding howl the machine exploded showering colored lights, nickels, pieces of wire, and an Aardvark at me. The last was caught by Ketanya Schwartz in one hand while downing a beer with the other. Absinthe was jumping up and down behind his seasick green bar while the rather shady looking patrons were scrambling for the nickels.

Absinthe, who had been systematically withdrawing each strand of hair from his chest (his head was bald), let loose a barrage of verbal abuse that even singed my ears. Besides that, he let loose a string of whiskey bottles that sailed across the room and felled, one at a time, the clientele on the opposite side. The bodies began piling up as Oliver the bartender became not only bald on his head, but upon his barrel chest also. I for one dove for safety under the table, and there was pleasantly surprised to find the half-pickled Olga Schwartz still swilling spirits. I raised my head in time to see the Aardvark swinging across the nearly-ruined room on the trunk of Rubin, who was sitting in the middle of the floor hitting himself and repeating, "Go away, go away." Giving out a sound like Tarzan with the gout, he flew through the murky smoke-filled air and with a sidearm that would do Bob Feller credit, hit the still-bellowing bartender a resounding clunk in the cranium. Absinthe fell like a poled ox.

By this time there was much yelling and hollering by everyone within a radius of two blocks. In the distance we heard the mournful wail that signals the entrance of the blue coated gendarmes. With a significant look we aroused Rubin, whose moustache had begun to droop sadly, climbed upon his back, and amidst the clatter and crash of beer bottles, escaped the "Drunken Cockroach Nightclub." Like I said, what a night!

These were the times. The good times that I still remember as I rock back and forth before my fire. Eh? Whassat? Oh, yeah, less ruminating and more expostulating. Heh, that's a good one, sonny, but don't be gettin' flip with me... old Smirtz can still tan the hide off'n any young whipper snupper like you.

Well, anyhow, I had been making plans to put Cassius and his band in- to a supra-super-collosal extravaganza that would out Florenz Ziegfeld. It was about six months after that mad night at the Cockroach that re- hearsals were over, the show was prepared, the public waited with bated breath and fish-hooks to see what had been the most highly touted pro- duction in a decade.

Then that night.

I can remember it as if it were twelve years ago. (As a matter of fact, it WAS twelve years ago). The marquees blazoned their messages to the crowd that had formed a line fourteen times around the block in front of the Garden. New York had turned out en masse. And, as I said, those marquees!

T H E A A R D V A R K F O L L I E S

starring CASSIUS Q. AARDVARK with RUBIN, OLKA and KETANYA SCHWARTZ,
MILTON BERLE, LAURENCE OLIVIER, LIONEL BIRDBATH
and others

an extravaganza to out-ganza all extras!! STANDING ROOM ONLY

How d'y'like that? SRO signs up, and we hadn't even opened yet!

Well, when that curtain rose and the Aardvark came out on the backs of seventy raging rhinocerii, the crowd went into fits. And when the Schwartz girls danced the dance of the $8\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 Kleenex, you could have sworn that the rafters would buckle. And when Rubin did his imitation of the president (Oh that imitation of Mamie!), the Garden sounded as though 12 billion Zulus were singing, "TIDE'S in, Smirtz out."

Thirteen weeks went by with two shows a day except when Cassy got tired, and the money was rolling in. We had to save a box seat each night for Impellitteri, otherwise the cops would have closed us down. It wasn't exactly blackmail, I don't blame him a bit, that was one helluva show."

However, all good things must come to an end.

We had signed on a pair of kids named... uh... what in the... oh yeah —yeah, that's it, Martin, for some fill-in stuff 'tween acts (we had to let 'em go eventually. We found 'em carrying on with one of the hat-check girls name of Monroe, or something. Oh well.) and Cass had taken off a week to go down to Monte Carlo for some sun and air. That year, the rage of the Riviera were two three-headed girls named Sally Louise Lee Munglefootz and Gertrude Alice Roberta Hitslongle (they called them SLL and GAR for short), and when they saw Cassius...

Well, it went on for three gay, mad days till I went a wire back to New York to tell Olga and Ketanya to get down to le ville de mazuma to save Cass-boy from what might develop into a septangle.

SLL and GAR were entertaining Cass at a party one night, drinking borscht from his sneakers, when who should drop in through a skylight from a DC-6 but the Schwartz sisters who immediately began laying about them with a pair of two-handed broadswords. Fifteen minutes and ninety

gallons of blood later the place was cleared of all sentience save Cass, myself, the Schwartz girls, and a drunken cockroach (something familiar about that boy) who immediately staggered to the seashore, fell in and was poisoned to death.

Cassius, basking in such munificent attention, and also regaling himself with the beauty of the two girls, immediately realized how unhappy he really was in civilization. He pleaded on bended bodies for forgiveness, and upon being received warmly by Olga and Ketanya, made plans for his leaving "culture."

I didn't try to stop him.

What would'a been the use? I'd made enough to retire, Cass had seen the World, Rubin had been adopted by some destitute family named DuPont who wanted a house pet, and all in all, the only drawback was that I hated to see him go.

But finally he chartered a plane (something about a sacred cow I believe) and took off back to where he felt was home with the two Schwartz valkyries.

Yep, that's the last anyone ever saw of 'em. That is, till now. Huh? Where are they? And what am I doin' here? Well, you see I didn't figger on taxes after the Show... and I was broke in two months. That's what I'm doin' here. Eh? Where are they?

Well, just ste-ep right up, ladeez and gennulmen, for onny twenny-fi' cents I'm gonna show you a real, authentic, for-sure aardvark and two girls frozen into a block of lemon flavored ice, right here in the heart of the Swiss...

The End

THREE A.M.

by WALT KLEIN

The clocks are all awry
this hour of the secret
night - the slender hands
all aimless; the terrible, slender
hands all fingering
a different cipher. and the stars
all reeling in their orbits.

O time! time! time!

Time and death have vanished
this enchanted moment, forgotten,
lost in the endless
corridors of mind. But who -
who will know tomorrow
of this moment fleeing, lost?
Wailing, wailing, wailing...

The pendulum, rasping; drops,
the door springs open,
and a tinny voice shrieks:
"Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo!"

THE GOTHIC HORROR

BY GEORGE WETZEL

Quite often Penhryn had puzzled over the reasons Gothic arts were made so hideous; every cathedral he had visited, every Gothic mass read, even Medieval tapestry was cursed with this ubiquitous grotesqueness. Once a medieval archaeologist told him it perhaps was the soul—ugly and deformed—of the Age that tolerated it. Perhaps so. Certainly there was a shocking parallel between it and the practices of the witch covens that marked that period; a parallel that suggested many hidden Satanists carved the wood and stone of the cathedrals. For did not the same spirit of mockery and perversion of Mass ritual exist in the gargoyles who leered atop cathedral parapets and from cornices and recesses?

Even now, the tymponum Penhryn studied was such an example of that blasphemy. A sly, cynical hint of bigotry, it seemed to him, was expressed in the too closely crowded group of saints and reveling demons. Another infamy like this present symbolism of the Elect and the Damned, he recalled, once carved on the tympanum of Rheims Cathedral, so shocked its 18th century clergy that they had it chiseled out.

His examination of the stone figures on the entrance arch was broken by the verger, commenting pedantically on some IX century Saxon brickwork in the wall. Penhryn stepped into the cathedral and a palpable sea of silence which even the stone of sound (that was his footsteps) could barely ripple. Mumbling about the church's reliquary, the verger started off; and Penhryn, despite the verger's boresome presence, decided to follow him.

Beneath tones of stone they passed, whose weight elfin Plantagenet ribbed vaults appeared incapable of supporting. Reaching the Reliquary in the gloom of the west transept arm, the verger unlocked it and brought out of a chest therein the cathedral's mortuary wealth—the remains of illustrious prelates and canonized saints—that reposed in bejeweled, golden urns and containers. Dryly, the verger spoke of dullsome abbots and obscure saints.

"This particular urn," said the verger, picking one manifestly no different from the rest, "whose osseous contents are those of an early saint, has a quaint history. In 1163 the Popish monks here gathered some henbane found growing in their garden, mistaking it for a kind of parsley."

Unimaginatively, he went on, relating—despite his pedantic manner—an interesting account of how those monks who did not eat of it were woke that same midnight by the Matin's bell. And coming into the cathedral read scrawled across the sacred books what was never originally written there, saw written in chalk on the walls blasphemy, and heard profane things uttered by those who had awakened them.

"The archives," said the verger, "are not explicit on the outrages; though they did say how the drugged monks, for one thing, made a mockery of Christian ritual by reverencing this urn."

At Penhryn's look of amazement, the verger smiled, reflected a bit, and said: "Oh, we've had other misfortunes here, worse than that. Why the west tower has come down four times since their time. And fires without number are always breaking out and always had been." The verger went on to recount other calamities suffered by the cathedral.

"Don't you think it odd," interrupted Penhryn, "such an uncommon number of disasters has struck here?"

The verger pondered this a moment and then smiled triumphantly, "Why, not at all. We have missed some serious misfortunes that have plagued lesser churches... Cromwell's troopers let us alone when they desecrated other cathedrals about us."

"But Cromwell was a hidden Satanist," blurted out Penhryn. "At least Montague Summers thought he was."

"Which is why," added the verger, "he and his Roundheads desecrated so many British churches."

Penhryn desisted from further argument. The verger did not see he meant his emphasis on the fact that Cromwell had left this place inviolate. He pondered a bit. Then, he asked the verger another question, "I wonder—just what do the bones in that urn," he pointed to the one that figured in the curious story of the drugged monks, "look like?"

A look of quizzical tolerance crossed the verger's face, "Just like any other, if not dust already." Then the amused verger added, "They could be fraudulent, you know. It wouldn't be the first time three thigh bones of a saint existed in three separate churches."

What the verger referred to was the traffic in spurious relics during the medieval times, the monstrous incongruities that sometimes existed along with the monkish pilfering of relics from rival monasteries. But that was not what Penhryn had in mind—at least not entirely. Better he not voice what he thought of those relics lest he shock the verger. Considering the spirit that motivated the Gothic decorations, it was very likely just what those relics might be.

At that moment a man in faded overalls entered the cathedral, looked about, and spying the verger, came over. A conversation about gardening ensued. Finally, the gardener—quite obviously—not comprehending the pedantic instructions of the verger, asked that person to accompany him outside and see the vegetable problem himself. Penhryn breathed a deep sigh of relief. The verger was a bore, besides openly regarding Penhryn as a ridiculous, superstitious man.

Now at last Penhryn could do what he originally came for—examination of the cathedral's organ. As he ascended to the triforium gallery, a feeling of self reproach arose. He regreted remarking on the oddness of this place; no wonder the verger had smiled. And yet there was no denying of it—the cathedral had an atmosphere of wrongness; it affected him.

Sunlight glorified the mosaic panes up here; and alternately, where no window pierced the stone wall, a chill darkness lurked. Thrusting up its ornate spires and pipes in perpendicular Gothic style was the organ case, beneath the oculus window. Dry dust assailed his nose as he crawled behind the organ to examine its geometric world of square and round pipes. Coming out, after a time, he paused to look over the balustrade into the hollowed out nave below, and was seized with awe; the Gothic craftsman had been clever, for their arboreal and animal carvings on pew boards, corbel-tables, and moldings seemed living things frozen in acts of motion, waiting for some mysterious summons before they convulsed with life again.

Penhryn felt an oppressive sense of heat; and looking up, saw last, lingering sunlight burning through a window. And the sainted figure that looked down at him seemed to be twisting agonizingly, as though its abode there was some fiery hell. The window frames were wrought in sections resembling flame tongues—a feature similar to the French Flamboyant Gothic style—which furthered the illusion that the window opened into a fiery domain. And he speculated if flame tracery was not also deliberately fashioned, along with the grotesqueness of the Gothic carvings. Another thought, of imitative magic—at least the wish it expressed—came to mind as he looked at the fiery window, and he grew more uneasy. Quite suddenly he realized there was some sort of blistering warmth emanating from the window—too much for comfort—and he retired into the gloom.

Raising his eyes upwards to the clerestory regions, he noted the irregular alignment of the longitudinal axis, proof that a later repair had been incorrectly engineered. While he studied this mistake, the shifting sunlight retreated roofwards as darkness filled the depths below, and he became aware of the long time he had browsed up here, hoping it was not so long that the verger may have forgotten his presence and locked him in. The thought terrified him—the spending of a cold night here—but why he could not say, or else did not want to dredge up the reason.

Hastening downwards he found his worst fears were true. The entrance door had been locked. A kind of reasonless panic threatened to engulf him—his theories about Gothic art were the blame—but by mimicking the verger's pedantic cynicism, he kept a surface calm. Possibly he could find a broken pane somewhere where he could shout out until someone came. Penhryn had barely made up his mind when it happened. Hitherto all was a canvas of dead silence but now a sound was brushed across it. From the transept of the Reliquary it had come; and as he turned in that direction he sensed, then saw, a stirring in the almost impenetrable dark. Fear had called up that presence.

Memory was fragmentary after that. Some shock drove him to seek the upper regions where a blur of light remained. A priceless stained glass window was smashed. And he plunged to the ground outside. No questions were asked him when days later he came out of a state of delirium. None were needed; he had babbled disjointedly while in that state, enough to cause the cathedral to be closed. An examination was made, discreetly, of certain relics. Later the gardener was observed by some to cast a small paper parcel into the river. And shortly afterwards several high ranking clergymen held a private church service in the cathedral to which no one was admitted. Though the more noisy spoke of hearing a hand bell ring and ponderous Latin phrases uttered.

Penhryn's experience had blanks in it which was well for him. One thing, not fully erased, was of a "face eaten away by darkness." There was one final thing that, when he learned of it, sent him into a paroxysm of horror. The investigators, taking much of his delirium babbling into serious consideration, had medical examinations made of the relics. One osseous remain—that which the drugged monks had blasphemously revered—had been non-human and unhallowed; a spurious relic passed off as genuine. The substitution was made obviously by a hidden Satanist, mocking the Church, as the Gothic carvers had, and the witch covens.

The End

D I F F E R E N T

A Voice of the Atomic Age
resumes publication at 79-14 266 St.
Glen Oaks, Floral Park, Long Island, N. Y.
Poetry and Science Fiction. \$2.00 per
year, fifty cents per copy. Lilith Lorraine,
Editor.

AT TAKEOFF TIME

by Raymond L. Clancy

I'd like to leave for the stars from Iceland,
There where they gleam in purple and gold,
In green and orange, and all gorgeous colors,
And the Northern Lights their beauties unfold
Under the eyes of Venus and Mars,
From the Northern Isle, I would leave for the stars.

LOOSE ENDS

by JEAN REEDY

Ada Webster had a feeling of buoyance as she moved away from her body. Sights and sounds were crystal clear. Each mote in the shaft of sunlight, falling through the window pane, was sharply defined. Sounds of the small city came acutely to her ears. Sounds of laughter and talk and moving cars and busses. And closer, the rustle of a nurse's starched uniform, the soft closing of a door as she went out.

In the room, quiet sobbing.

Tenderly the two beside the bed reached for the sheet and together they covered the whole body.

Ada watched in amazement. Brother and sister! They had not seen each other since girl and boy days. Now they were crying in each other's arms.

Ada wished they would stop crying. Their crying made her feel guilty. As though she were the cause of their unhappiness. Was she softening toward Howard? She knew he was there before she left her body. Even then, in her semi-coma, she had resented his presence. How did he know? How did she sense his presence and know him? This tall, good looking man with more grey than black in his hair did not resemble the boy she had tried to forget. This well groomed man with the expensive clothes and the charm of Ben, his father, but without the marks of dissipation.

The old bitterness flared. Why had Howard come, after a lifetime of neglect? He'd soon know she left nothing. Anyhow, she would have left him nothing. She wished there were something for Ellie and her boys—and Ted. If just a few keepsakes. But there was nothing—nothing.

Ada looked at the body under the sheet. It was not as old as some, in years. Hard work rather than age had broken it down so that now it was bent and wrinkled. Why, she could see clear through it! There was the deformed hip bone! The one that had not been properly set after Ben threw her down the stairs in one of his drunken rages. She was quite young when that happened and all the rest of her life she walked with a limp.

"Never again, Ada," Ben sobbed. "Never again will I take a drink."

She knew then that he was too weak-willed to keep the promise. She also knew that she would always love him.

The babies had come too close. Howard. Several that she could not carry to the full. Two still-born. Then Ellie. The twins, both dying after a few weeks of sickly life. Doctor bills. Short rations. Ben, so abusive when out of work and drinking. Ben, so sweet when working and sober. Ben, who died in a charity ward many years ago.

It was before Ben died that Howard ran away from home.

"It's your fault, Ada," Ben accused when he sobered. "You took the money he earned with his paper route."

"My fault!" Ada screamed. "I didn't take all his money. It was little enough. I only took it when there was nothing in the house to eat."

"It's your fault. It's your fault," Ben repeated as though reciting a lesson to himself. He raised bleary eyes to her stormy ones. "'You didn't tell him and he thought of it as stealing.'"

"He'll come back, Mother," said Ellie soothingly.

"He'd better not come back," said Ada, fiercely. "Running away from home! All this added disgrace! I had enough to bear before."

Howard never came back and Ada remembered how, in her stubborn bitterness, she would not allow the mention of his name.

Now she studied the knees under the sheet. Yes, the swollen joints were prominent. Scrubbing floors had done that to the knees that were once round and dimpled. She thought it was the only work for her after Bond died. She was not used to anything but housework.

Scrubbing floors was not bad. Without fear in the back of her mind she could laugh and joke with the other scrub women when they met to eat a midnight lunch in the tall building. She could sleep in her quiet room without fear of being rudely awakened to appease a befuddled man and guard against his attacks.

And she was independent!

When Ellie left her job as waitress to marry Ted Hayes they went into a small house, just around the corner from the rooming house where Ada lived.

"Come live with us, mother," said Ellie. "Ted wants you to."

"Oh, no!" Ada replied. "I'll have my own place, though it is only one room."

It was some years ago that Ellie went around with the letter. That time stood out clearly for Ada. The young folks had not started their family early. Then there were two boys, Carl and Alfred. Sometimes Ellie brought the children to her mother's room. But that time she was alone.

Ellie was nervous and fidgety. "Mother, I want to tell you something," she said at last.

"Well, out with it," said Ada, impatiently.

Ellie drew the letter from her pocket. "Now don't flare up, Mother," she tried to laugh.

"Stop fussing and come to the point."

Ellie took the letter from the envelope. "It's another letter from Howard," she said timidly.

"Another!" cried Ada. "Have you heard from him before?"

"Y-y-yes. Please forgive him for leaving home and not writing for so long. H-he wants to take care of you. He wants you to stop working."

"How does he know I'm working?"

"I told him. And that you won't come with us because you think you'll be a burden on Ted. As if——"

"Oh! Squealing to your brother who did not write to us for half a life time. The trouble and worry he caused me when he ran away! Having the neighbors talk about us more than before! I'm ashamed of you, Ellie! Where's your spunk?"

Ada remembered how patient Ellie was that day. How hard she tried to explain. How she said: "Please! Howard wanted to make good before he let us hear from him. He has been working for an archeologist of late years. He travels all over the world with expeditions."

"Why didn't he say all this before?"

"He did. But I was afraid to tell you. You're so stubborn, Mother. Now you are getting old and I think you should——"

Even now Ada recalled the hot flush of anger that crept over her. "You take that letter out of here," she said.

"B-but——"

"If you ever mention his name again I'll forbid you to come here. And don't you forget it."

"I won't forget it." Ellie had gone out, her pointed chinas firmly set as her mother's.

That was the last mention of Howard and in Ada's senile years even the memory of him was blurred.

She studied the hands under the sheet. The knobby joints, the callus.

How clever those hands could have been!

Even in her first grades in school she loved to sketch. But there was no money to develop her talent.

And when Ben Webster came with his handsomeness and charm she didn't care about it.

But later her talent helped her through many dark hours. With it she could sometimes lighten fear and trouble by her own feeble attempts to create. A funny face would appear on a brown shopping bag. A white box lid became a winter scene. She remembered that in her floor scrubbing years there was a time when she worked in a school house. How tempting was the black-board when a piece of chalk had been carelessly left in the trough! Once she had almost completed a picture of a city street when a fellow employee poked her head around the half closed door.

Ada quickly smudged the picture with her floor cloth.

But the time came when she had to stop work. No more would the old joints bend and stretch.

Then Ellie came to her room one evening with determination in her eyes. "I'm taking you to another home, Mother," she said, firmly.

Ada was too tired to protest. "Where?" she asked.

"Let's play a kind of game," said Ellie. "Close your eyes and I will lead you."

Like a child Ada agreed. Before they left the rooming house that had been her home for so many years she closed her eyes and put her wrinkled hand into Ellie's. "Is it far?" she asked, trustingly.

"Not far, Mother. Don't look until I say so."

"I promise," laughed Ada.

A short walk and around a corner. Ada kept her promise, even when going into another house and up the stairs.

Then Ellie said: "Open your eyes, Mother."

Ada looked and she was in the middle of a well lighted room. A thick carpet was on the floor, bright paper on the wall, a luxurious bed room suite, a roomy easy chair and beside it a radio.

"This is your room," Ellie said, softly.

Ada stared, speechless. Then Ted and Carl and Alfred crowded into the room.

Ada's gaze went from one familiar face to the other before she realized that she was in the front room of their house.

Once more flared the old independence. "B-but—all this. You can't afford all this," she protested.

Ted put his arm around her shoulders. "A fellow can get a raise."

What blessed comfort to the old bones was the soft mattress, compared to the lumpy one in her recent quarters. The fine wool blankets, compared to the rough scratchy ones. The quilted gown to keep her cozy when sitting on the big chair. The fleece-lined slippers for her bunioned feet.

And now the last year stood out clearly. She had been in the comfortable bed most of the time and there was a white clad nurse to give her the best of care. There was no pain—just weakness. Frequently there appeared a doctor. And the tray, filled with delicacies! Everything she craved, in and out of season.

Like a child she had taken all this for granted but with great enjoyment.

Now Ellie and Howard went slowly out of the room and Ada moved with them. She realized that only a few minutes had passed since she began to examine the body and bring it up to date.

The small living room on the first floor was cheerful with late sunshine. Ellie partly closed the Venetian-blinds so that the corners of the

room were shadowed.

Howard went to the settee. "Let's talk a while, Sis," he said. "It's been so long."

Ellie sat beside him. "All right. The boys will be home from school soon and Ted gets home from work in an hour. That will be time enough to make arrangements."

"I'll take care of the expenses," said Howard.

"Oh, thank you. But you've done so much."

"I can afford it. I wanted to—"

"I know." Ellie patted her brother's hand. "We had to trick her so that you could do for her. It's too bad but that's the way it had to be. We could never have given her the luxuries you provided."

To Ada the voices had a metallic sound, like the tinkle of silverbells. So Howard was the one! He had taken care of her after all! No, if she had known, her stubborn pride would not have allowed it. Somehow, pride did not figure now. She knew that she had lost a lot through false pride. The anger she had felt toward Howard was not there now—only regret.

Ellie's voice went on. "I'm sorry mother was so far gone. I thought she might rally and know you at the end."

"I came as soon as I got your wire," said Howard, sadly. "I'm glad I was in this country. It's just as well she didn't know me. She didn't want to see me." Then he brightened. "I'm so anxious to see your boys. How old did you say they are?"

"Carl is twelve and Alfred is fourteen."

"Are they doing well in school?"

"Fair. Enough to get by. Like average boys. But Alfred—I don't know."

"What about Alfred?"

"He has a talent for sketching. Wants to go into commercial art. It's funny, neither Ted nor I can draw a straight line. Ted wants Alfred to learn a trade. He says we can't afford to give the boys extra advantages. We still have a mortgage on this house. Ted had an operation and lost a lot of time at the factory. It's always something."

Howard reached for his sister's hand. "Don't discourage the boy," he said. "You folks are all I've got. I'll see that the boys get their chance, if you and Ted will let me."

"Oh, Howard, you're sweet." Ellie brushed tears from her eyes.

Ada moved closer. She should have known about Alfred's talent but she was always too tired to take an interest in the boy's studies. Yes, Howard would take care of it. But she had planted the seed of her talent in Alfred. She had left something after all! And, through her going, Howard would be close to this family for the rest of their lives.

"I can't believe I am back here after all these years," said Howard, dreamily. "When I first left I was very homesick. But I could see no future in this town. What chance did drunken Ben Webster's kid have here? Yet, I knew that if I wrote to Mother and gave her a chance to coax me back, I would come."

"I had ambition and I did not want to destroy it by coming back here. I didn't know what I wanted to do then. But I knew that some day I would find it." He searched Ellie's face. "Do you understand that, Sis?"

"Yes. I think so."

Ada understood also. The tinkling sound of his voice was like the breaking of fine glass. The words came clear and almost before they were spoken she had their meaning. The bitterness was ebbing and in its place there was admiration.

A TIME TO LOVE

BY DON HOWARD DONNELL

Clark stretched his eighteen year old body luxuriously, rippling the splendid muscles he had acquired from a vigorous, outdoor life. He surveyed himself critically. He had just bathed in the icy lake nearby, and the water droplets glistened in the soft mid-morning sun. Standing there, as he felt the breeze dry him, he drank in the beauty of his surroundings. As the sun plucked the moisture from his bronzed skin, he listened attentively to the mocking birds nearby. The birds seemed unaffected by the happenings of the past few years, and sang their song so joyfully that Clark forgot for one happy moment, before memory crept stealthily back into his forceably matured mind. Slowly he put on his ragged blue jeans, and settled down beneath an oak tree, losing himself in observation of the countryside. The ever present, ever beautiful grass marched stolidly, like long rows of soldiers... No. Grass does not kill, it must not be compared with soldiers, ever. Yet it marched, rhythmically, in time to something... Clark pushed the nearly blond, sun-bleached hair out of his youthful, yet hard face, and played with the sickle bladed grass. He pulled one and examined it closely. There was a ladybug on it; he maneuvered it to his finger. A half-forgotten rhyme came to his lips and bubbled into spoken verse:

"Ladybug, ladybug, fly away... What came next? He thought hard, back, back to his childhood to when everything was...

He nearly cried.

The hills came up from the morning mist, rough hewn and uneven, reminiscent of a buzzsaw, yet, a buzzsaw did not accurately describe them. They were a deep resplendent purple, streaked with white cold veins. Behind them, gradually building up in the distance, were icy mountains of majestic clouds. And all in all there were the bobbing, bending wild flowers, in numbers and colors too numerous and vivid to describe, with wild honey bees like black buzzing dots, floating from the daisy to the dandelion, pollenating, and birds darting across the deep expanse of turquoise blue that was the sky. The warm, active, late spring day tended to create a sense of security, no matter how false, and his head fell to his chest, and he slept.

At first, it was only a subtle sensation, creeping from his thighs up his body to the nerve centers of his brain. It was the vague feeling of warmth, the kind that can only come from...! He was wide awake and sat upright in the next second, looking into the heaven that was her face...

"Well," she said in the voice that only could possess, "am I that ugly?" Badly off-balance, he stuttered around for something to say.

"Why...er hardly. I mean..." He broke off as she started laughing.

"Am I that funny?" he said.

"Yes, silly," he giggled; "You should have seen the look on your face. You didn't know what to say, did you?" He snorted and sat up.

"There's nothing to laugh about, girly. Wake a fellow out of a sound —" The last word was silenced for she leaned over and kissed him firmly on the mouth. When he saw sufficiently recovered he spoke:

"You work fast, don't you?" She socked her head prettily, pushing the brown chestnut hair out of her long oval face, and smiled a smile that Venus herself would envy.

"Maybe you work slow," she said, not too seriously. She had finished tying her hair behind her head, and her long, discriminately tanned arms matched the extremely delicate, yet beautiful legs that showed from the short, skirt-like affair that showed. Her small mouth was gently outlined by a light shaded lipstick which he knew to taste good. It was the only cosmetic she wore, or needed to. He licked his lips subconsciously. Her eyes were deep, large and colored to match the wonderfully long hair that was tied in back. His appraising gaze soon became a stare and she said:

"Do you like me?"

"Being no fool, little girl, I'll say I do, and it's not quite a fair question, I don't even know your name."

"Dianne, if it will make you feel any better," she said softly as she rose to a standing position.

Clark did mental somersaults. She couldn't be much more than sixteen, yet her breasts bore the full aura of a woman, rising and falling, graceful and full. The trim contours of her young body were sleek, litheline of feminine muscle that were attractive, outlined through the thin material of her clothes. He felt quite a lump in his throat, the reason for this being that she filled out that age old form that had enchanted the male from the time of the much maligned Adam to Clark's furiously pounding heart.

"Damned if you're not pretty," he breathed in an undertone that was more than complimentary.

"Thanks," she said in the high prim voice of a girl, and cocking her head again, added; "and I still don't know your name."

"Clark, if it'll help any," he said. "How come... uh, er, How did you happen to find me?"

"I didn't find you, Clark, so deflate your ego a little. You just happened to be here when I came."

"Come here every day, eh?" She smiled a deep pretty smile. Clark noticed she had dimples.

"Every day," she said.

"Suddenly I begin to grow attached to this spot," he said softly, "very attached." He looked at her for a long time, silent, then he said:

"Where do you live, Dianne?" Now it was she who became silent, and didn't answer for a long interval. Clark became sober too, guessing the reason for her silence.

"Bad memories?"

"Uh huh," she said in a subdued tone. "62 Blitz."

"My horror was the first Bomb. I saw the people around me cut to ribbons by flying glass." The birds and the wind through the trees were the only sounds, until, suddenly, she was in his arms, crying. He put his arms around her, pressing her close, comforting himself as well as her.

"Why? Why did it happen...? Oh Clark..." The bitterness of perhaps many years flowed out in a flood of tears that seemed ceaseless. Silently, Clark listened to her story. And it wasn't an unfamiliar one, in fact commonplace, tragically commonplace.

Dianne, as many other countless millions of girls, had been ordinary; the typical American maiden. (Clark could disagree with that.) She had been living in Los Angeles when the war came and disturbed the routine, the everyday life of everybody. Her parents had died in that murderous '62 blitz, and left her homeless when she was about ten. When civilization had crumbled, her own world gone, she found herself one of the tearful few left, living in the hills around the devastated cities. One of

the very few. She had lived, just as Clark had, on Nature, and had found it to be... pleasant. Once in a while, she obtained luxuries, such as cosmetics, soap and good clothing from one of the deserted houses among the hills. It was an old story... tragically old.

Dianne dried her eyes and looked beautiful, which wasn't hard. "I'm a cry baby," she said bitterly.

"How long has it been since you've been with another person?"

Dianne sniffled. "About four years. I can't remember exactly."

"You're no cry baby kid, you've got a right to cry, and cry a helluva lot." He put a finger under her chin, raised her face, and kissed her lightly. "Hell! I haven't seen a girl in three years." She laughed.

"What about you, Romeo," she said. "How did the war affect your life?" He sort of grinned, and leaned back against the tree, pulling her with him.

"You know, I think it affected my life for the better. If it weren't for the war, I might not have met you. It seems that I'm falling in love with you already."

Dianne frowned. "Don't say that... Don't say that you wanted the war. think of the people that died... you folks... mine."

"It was coming, I didn't realize then, but it had to come. Man was too far apart from Nature and Nature wanted him back..."

"That's silly."

"No, Dianne, no, it's not silly. Man lived in his concrete skyscraper, above the earth... complex, not simple. He lost his sense of good and decency; he depended upon someone else for his food and well being. He became soft. It had to come."

"Maybe you're right Clark, maybe," Dianne whispered, nestling close to him warmly.

"I know I am," he said. He was aware of her in the crook of his arm, and, he added, almost too softly to be heard, "I know."

"How about when you were little?" she softly enquired.

"Oh, nothing really. The only thing I remember clearly was the Huntington Park Bomb that dropped on my tenth birthday."

"Birthday?"

"Yeah. Had a party going full blast when it hit. I remember it as a soft of a thunder-clap and a bright flash in the sky. Then, amid the screams of my playmates, came a wave of heat that prickled my skin while flying glass cut everybody around me. I don't remember anything very clearly after that; guess I was in a state of shock or something. After that, I wandered around, living and growing up with Nature. It's been very pleasant... though I haven't met many people until I saw you, lucky day." She grinned.

"You've been through a lot," she said simply.

"We've all been through a lot. Maybe a lot more. Who knows? There's always a few lunatics and degenerates wandering around after the war... ever been bothered by them?" Suddenly, she cringed, wrinkling her face with revulsion, then swallowed hard.

"When I was about twelve..." She was nearly ready to cry again. She pressed closer to Clark...

"Never mind," said Clark, "It's over now, don't think about it." Again she was pouring out the sadness of many years of loneliness.

"I love you," said Clark. It was later in the day and they were still in the same position. "I think I love you too," she said leaning back on him. "It's strange", he breathed.

"A few years ago they'd call it puppy love." I'm sure this isn't. It can't be, Dianne. The war has changed things. Before I met you, I used to lay on the grass, staring up at stars thinking. Maybe that civilization was finished, but man wasn't. He's a tough animal to kill off. The future may lie in us, Dianne."

"You're being dramatic, Clark, we're not the only ones left; there are plenty more people. In fact," she said suspiciously, "I am beginning to doubt your intentions. My name is Dianne, not Eve."

And mine's Clark, glad to know you." They laughed and settled down to watch the sunset. "Where are you living?" asked Clark a little later.

"It's a cave over near the Santa Monica Mountains."

"There? That's infested with a lot of renegades!" Dianne smiled.

"They're too stupid to look under their own noses." She sat up and stretched. "Come on, I'll show you." She sprang up and began running, her long hair streaming out behind her. Clark bounded after, at a pace only youth and vigor could maintain. He soon caught her and they both rested, laughingly. When the shadows were deep, they continued, silently. Within an hour, they were at the cave.

"Well, I'll be damned!"

"It's cozy."

"No doubt. Now I begin to doubt your intentions, young lady." She smiled and squelched him.

"I hope you're used to the hard cold ground, because that's where you're sleeping. There is only one bed. Or you can go outside."

"Never mind, I've got a tough back. But allow me this; this cave's pretty well concealed." The last was true. The cave was situated so that it was visible and nearly impregnable. A dense growth of foliage covered the entrance while the passageway into the main chamber twisted and turned so that light and smoke were diffused perfectly.

"Where... how did you find it?" Dianne sat down on a makeshift bed and began to braid her hair. She raised her eyes and said:

"When I was a little girl, my family came up here on Sundays to visit my uncle. I used to play around in the hills while they were so engrossed in their deep adult conversation. One day I just found it. I didn't tell anybody about it, and used it for a secret hideaway..when the war came, I remembered it. Once in a while I go to my uncle's house just over the rise for things I need, but most of the time I've been here." She finished braiding her hair and leaned back on the bed.

"I lived in the open," Clark said moodily. "With the grass for a mattress and the sky for cover." He glanced around, "I think I'll like it here better." Dianne raised an eyebrow.

"Keep the gleam out of your eyes or else you'll be roughing it again," she said jokingly. He laughed and sat down beside her.

"Where did you get the candles?" Clark motioned to several wax lumps scattered about.

"Uncle liked them, so..."

"Yeah," she yawned. "Tired?" he asked.

"Very." There was a silence.

"Ever read the Bible?"

"Some."

"I remember a verse that I read a long time ago...it sort of stuck in my mind."

"Tell it to me, Clark, please."

"Sure." Clark licked his lips and recited his favorite verse into the murky stillness of the room:

"To everything there is a season; and a time to every purpose under the heavens;

"A time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to love and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace..."

"Hmmm," she said lazily, "Where did you get that from?"

"Ecclesiastes."

"Nice." There was a long silence.

"Dianne?" There was no answer. He stood over the bed and saw that she slept. He stood there a long time, just watching her, drinking in her beauty. She was something he couldn't tear his eyes from. He scratched his youthful stubble, and was aware that the candles were low, casting a ruddy glow, deepening the shadows on her face, creasing her ankles and thighs, accenting everything that needed to be accented, and perfectly. Her breasts rose and fell to the even tempo of her breathing. He walked over and blew out the candles, thoughtfully.

Clark stretched out full length on the rough floor of the cave using his hands for pillows, staring straight into the blackness of the ceiling. The ground felt good against his back. He grinned. Something ran through his mind over and over again.

A time to love... A time to love... A time to love....

Soon, he slept.

The End

ASSAY REPORT

For the July-September issue:

<u>PLACE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>STORY</u>	<u>POINTS</u>
1	Don Howard Donnell	I LOVE YOU, ROBERTA	1.57
2	Tom Covington	A BIT PREMATURE	2.36
3	J. S. Semens	I	2.79
4	Terry Carr	SUPER BOMB	3.29

... and the Nov.-Jan.:

1	Larry Saunders	A PHONE IS RINGING	1.33
2	Al Leverentz	TARRY THOU HERE	2.33
3	Toby Duane	COLIN AND THE LEPRECHAUN	2.83
4	Ken J. Krueger	SOLUTION T-400	3.50

For once, the ratings flowed in in a manner reminiscent of old times --thanks to my consistent bemoaning. There is no rating sheet provided for your use in this issue, so I am not too hopeful about the results. I hope, though, that you will fool me and send in your story-preferences in volume. In the latter issue, the poem most liked was VIGIL, by Isabelle E. Dinwiddie, and second was Toby Duane's THE MAN-HEART.

In the next issue, you may definitely expect DeWeese's long story, which was promised for this issue. Circumstances intervened, however.

—THE EDITOR

N O V A

A yellow star
Burned wanly in the spreading dawn,
Then died.

"Hello, Joe, how's the missus?"

"Fine, Bill,

Did you see the news?"

"No, what's up?"

"Something about a new bomb, K factor
Of two hundred, whatever that means."

"Probably

Nothing, they're always talking about new bombs,
And anyway, we're not at war."

"Well, I don't know,

I hear this one's something new."

"That's what they say

About any new stuff. Remomber the first
Atom bomb?"

"Yeah, well there's nothing
we can do, and like you said, we're not at war."

A red star
Burned fiercely in the black void,
Then died.

--Keran O'Brien

THE SEA AT EVENING

It was in the purple evening, as the moon rose on the sand,
When I heard the restless waters calling me across the land;
And I left the moors and meadows and the forests stretching free,
Left the wind-swept fields behind me, and went down to meet the sea.

How the surges roared to greet me, soared to meet me as I came!
And it seemed that they were calling clearer, chorusing my name.
With the moonlight on them glowing like the luster in a pearl
And the sapphire dwelling in their depths, I saw the waves uncurl
As they spread their crystal fingers, carving figures in the sand—
That the sea had known and bounded, tales from every distant shore;
And I knew that the enchantment would be with me evermore,
That the restless roll and reflux would shackle me apart,
For the sea was in my spirit, and its song was in my heart.

-- Andrew Duane

TAVERN MOOD

The melancholy
faces drift in gloom like pale
headlights through the fog.

-- Walt Klein

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

All letters for this column should
be sent to Robert E. Briney, 561 W.
Western Avenue, Muskegon, Michigan.
No letter should exceed 250 words
in length.

Dear Bob: Maybe you're wondering what my reaction was toward Saunders' story, A PHONE IS RINGING. Well, I'm still wondering, too. I don't know whether I liked it or whether I didn't. I'm perplexed. Before I go any further, however, I must admit that the story held my interest. The suspense was superbly executed. But when I read the ending, I was disappointed. It seemed as if Saunders had a good idea in the beginning... but as the tale progressed, he forgot about it. He seemed to be in too much of a rush to get it finished. And the ending struck me---huh? I'm still saying "huh?" Perhaps I skipped a vital paragraph in the story---I'll have to reread it one of these days and possibly my "huh?" will change to an "Oh!" I don't know, though. The short-shorts, I didn't care for, and as for Leverentz' column... I cannot see how he considers "The Crimson Pirate" as science-fiction. He creates an argument that really isn't an argument. CP was a comedy, anyway, and it was supposed to create a laugh, which it did... This is the first time I have heard it classed as science fiction. [If memory serves, it was not Leverentz but the movie reviewer he quoted who classed "Crimson Pirate" as science fiction, thus reflecting the public opinion of sf.---Ed.] Not that sciencefiction is "respectable"---but Leverentz should have chosen a better example to illustrate his point. ---Joe Semenovitch, 155-67 71st Avenue, Flushing 67, New York. P.S.: In SOLUTION T-400 there are 399 words! You're wrong, Ken, I took time to count them.

[Judging from the following letter from Larry Saunders, we doubt that you missed a vital point in A PHONE IS RINGING. In fact, you probably noticed something that no one else has bothered to comment upon, and which Larry mentions in his letter.---Ed.]

Dear Bob: An explanation for the confusion that probably resulted from the appearance of A PHONE IS RINGING seems to be in order. I wrote the story some years ago while I was under the influence of Leiber, Bradbury, and Benet. When I submitted it to Paul, he accepted it with reservations. In other words, he was confused. He suggested that I might rewrite it and clear up a few points. This seemed like a good idea. The fact remains that I am a lazy SOB, in other words a typical fan, and I never did rewrite it for him. Its appearance in the Nov.-Jan. issue of F-F thus came as a complete and utter surprise to me. I was both pleased and embarrassed. Embarrassed because the story is a confused mess. As it stands, I know what's going on but the readers do not---a situation which should not be allowed to happen. Rather than offer you my full explanation of PHONE, I offer you my apology instead. Ghu forgive me. #### Toby Duane's COLIN AND THE LEPRECHAUN was well-written and capably handled. Ken Krueger's SOLUTION T-400 was an amusing play on words. The best item was Al Leverentz' TARRY THOU HERE, which though unoriginal, was masterfully pulled-off. INTRANSIGENT impressed me with its Nietzschean bitterness. Can't say that I agree with him... Who gives a faint, unheated damn whether sf is "respectable" or not? If I want to read something respectable I can turn to Dostoyevsky, Balzac, Dickens, Hardy, or even Nietzsche. As for the song RUDOLPH---well I can't stand it either, but not for the same reason. The song just is no good---it stinks. The majority of commercial songs do. I listened to this tripe all my life and it had no apparent affect on me. I just outgrew it. Now instead of the current Hit Parade, it's Brahms, Bruckner, Mahler, Handel, Nielsen, Strauss, etc. ---Larry Saunders, 170 Washington Avenue, Stamford, Connecticut.

Cheerio: About the matter of Al Leverentz' red-nosed reindeer. This is a version of Rudolph's birth that I picked up somewhere, I don't remember just where, but it sounds only too true. You might check with Bob Bloch---he's in the advertising business and will probably know the score. #### My understanding is that the song was deliberately written a few Christmasses ago to promote Sears-Roebuck merchandise. [Am inclined to think it was Montgomery Ward rather than Sears---I can remember when the first rash of that Rudolph bilge came out.---Ed.] Some bright advertising genius sold that company

a package deal: a song to do the plugging, and "Rudolph" toys, books, soap, clothing, etc. It worked very well, too, with perhaps hundreds of ~~thousands of~~ dollars worth of junk being palmed off on the kids and their helpless parents. ### That sort of promoting is done all the time to sell many products. When one of George Pal's interplanetary movies, WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE, was being readied for the theaters, one of the movie trade journals I subscribe to reported that Paramount had arranged to plant an article on how the picture was made, in ASTOUNDING. And that's just what happened. At least, friend Campbell printed it. ### Meanwhile, they've got a new picture coming up next May, WAR OF THE WORLDS, and the publicity men are bust again. One of them has been in contact with me, getting names and addresses of both pro and fan magazines, so there's no telling what kind of propaganda barrage is about to come our way! --Bob Tucker, P.O. Box 702, Bloomington, Illinois.

Dear Bob: I'm a little confused about the Lovecraft Collectors' Library. On the contents page of F-F it states that one volume has been published and there are six more to go, the set to sell for \$2.25. On page 18, it says the set will consist of six volumes and sell for \$1.20. I'd like to get the set, but...well, could you clear up the confusion? And what about GROTESQUE? I'd like to sub, but how much does it cost and how often is it published?--Richard Billings, 610 E. Street, North Wilkesboro, North Carolina.

[The true state of affairs with regard to the Lovecraft Library is as follows: there are seven volumes in the set, one of which has been published and a second of which is about to appear. Price for the set of seven is \$2.25, or 35¢ per volume if purchased separately. As for GROTESQUE: as was stated in F-F, the magazine is now defunct, due to the induction of the editor into the Army. The first three issues of the magazine, however, are still available from the editor of FAN-FARE at 50¢. Take it from us, they are well worth getting!--Ed.]

Dear Bob: On the pleasant side of the ledger, the fiction. A PHONE IS RINGING--a rather excellently integrated yarn. A certain resource of technique and imagination definitely present. TARRY THOU HERE--well done. Maybe I had better say no more, except that to the best of my knowledge my reason for the placing of this story is entirely aesthetic. COLIN & THE LEPRECHAUN--clever. SOLUTION T-400--this is a story? The title was good enough as a pun, but that was about the best part of the whole thing. ### Now for the CAT. If this were the only communication I ever received from Al Leverentz (direct or indirect), I would think him a terrible fellow indeed. Actually, he seems to be a rather nice guy. However, I can't let a challenge of this magnitude go by without some response. Case I: My reaction is entirely wrong. Conclusion: Al was edusing entirely too much from my short remarks, and his lack of acquaintance with my personality at the time. Case II: Al is completely wrong. Conclusion: cf. my remarks in preceding FAN-FARE. I probably erred in the direction of charity. Case III: Article fails insofar as it led to individual interpretations on the part of the reader--interpretations which were false, but please! not maliciously so. Conclusion: Al errs by excess in his reaction. This I think is the most probable. There may be many more positions, but I think I've covered the ground sufficiently. Now that the fiery one is in the Army, it may not be just to get the last word by default, but there seemed no other course. I trust Al Leverentz will forgive me. --Keran O'Brien, 186-29 Avon Road, Jamaica 32, New York.