

# GILGAMESH

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Terry Carr

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"...you don't attack the fortress anymore. Just surround it and make faces at the people inside and let them have nervous breakdowns and destroy themselves." -- Norman Mailer, on Yippie strategy

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I've been buying some books for Ace that are really enjoyable to work with -- quite aside from the SF Specials, I mean, all of which are priceless gems of the science fictional art, as you know. I think I mentioned here a couple months ago that Ron Goulart had written for me a history of the pulp magazines -- all pulps, not just the science fiction and fantasy ones. In fact, when he originally turned in the book there was far too little material on sf; he'd concentrated on detectives and spies and such, mostly. "How can you write a book about the pulps and not mention Tarzan?" I asked him. "Where are Conan and Cthulhu and Captain Future?" He said he thought Moskowitz had covered them at tedious length already. I said to forget Moskowitz and write his own book, which he did with the addition of a couple of chapters.

The book's titled Cheap Thrills, and it looks like my efforts to sell it to Nostalgia Book Club have been successful. I talked with Marty Gross, the editor there, and he's made a firm offer that seems fair to me. Final approval of the deal has to come from Ace's president&publisher, who last week, as he is five weeks out of ten it seems, was off on a trip. But there shouldn't be any snags.

My original-sf-stories anthology series, Universe, turned out much better than I'd expected when I got all the stories bought for the first number, so I've got copies of the book manuscript at Scribner's and SF Book Club. Neither may ultimately take it, but if nothing more comes of it all at least I'll have the warm little glow-memory of Norbert Slepian, Scribner's editor, telling me he was interested in adding my series to the Scribner's list "as a prestige item." Shee-it, man, if Warren Freiberg could see me now.

I've been buying some Yout' type books, too, beginning with one called The Sign of the Fool which is a set of reminiscences of life in the Hashbury 1965-68 by a kid who went there as a biker and gradually drifted into the acid culture instead. It's badly written and I left a lot of the clumsiness of style in the manuscript when I did the editing, because it sounds more real this way: I could've cleaned everything up so tidily that it would've read like an as-told-to book, but that would really have ruined it. The guy who wrote it (John S. Simon, who says he was known in the Hashbury as Spyder) came in with the signed contracts on one of those hectic days at the office when I couldn't settle down to doing a single

thing without the phone ringing or somebody coming in from Accounting to ask a damfool question, or like that. I took the contracts sort of abstractedly, said "Yeah, good, thanks," and then found my hand being shaken solemnly and ceremoniously. Belatedly it dawned on me that this was after all Simon's first book, and signing these contracts was an Occasion for him. We high-powered New York editors can get pretty blase about these things. The experience with Simon was refreshing. (The cover painting for his book is a beauty, by the way. It's by someone who'd never worked for us before and never will again alas -- he's used to twice the dough we can pay -- but he has a thematic approach to cover illustration that's very similar to that of the Dillons. On this cover there are motorcycle wheels sprinkled across the top of the painting, gradually turning into circular sparkles in the air, acid bursts. And beautifully done.)

Then there's a book called Underground Press Anthology edited by one Thomas King Forcade. The book's just what it says; it has the usual sort of stuff you might expect: Panther manifestoes, an interview with a dope dealer, a piece called THE POLITICS OF HOUSEWORK, poetry by Alexander Trocchi and like that. Tom Forcade is the head of the Underground Press Syndicate, has edited books for Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman (whose forthcoming book is titled Steal This Book; they couldn't find a publisher to take it on so had it privately printed and Grove will distribute it), and is very much into a Yippie kind of outlook toward getting free publicity. Last year he made the front page of the New York papers with a big photo of him throwing a cream pie in the face of the head of a Congressional Committee investigating pornography. He says cryptically that he expects to be back in the news about May but he can't tell me what it'll be about; when I pressed him a bit he said the Underground Press Syndicate will be trying to establish itself as the equal of the "regular" media. Don't ask me why; it sounds a bit anomalous to me too.

One thing in the book which you shouldn't miss, though, is a satirical article by Ed Sanders called THE GREAT PENTAGON HUNCHING CONTEST, which is very funny and very "dirty": several of the underground papers refused to run it, fearing busts, and whichever hardcover publisher is bring out Sanders' collected writings was still hesitant to include this piece last I heard. But it's really a sharp satire, and those papers that did run it had no law trouble, so I don't anticipate any. Forcade handled the typesetting and layout and art for the anthology himself, and illustrated this one with part of a full-page Gilbert Shelton cartoon that's pretty raunchy too -- anyone else remember the one with the Freak Brothers lying around reading underground comix with some teeniebopper and screwing? That's the one.

Forcade seems strange. When he brought in the completed book he sat and talked for awhile, and noticed evidently with consternation that "Hey, your hair's as long as mine is now!" I said yeah, I haven't been cutting it for awhile. "Looks good," he said. "You uh, you do anything special with it? Use a cream rinse or something?" Which sort of gave my mind a power failure, as Nixon might say: I mean, this guy's a very funky looking cat, and I don't think he was joking. (I said no, I just wash it.)

The Sign of the Fool will be out in May; Forcade's anthology will

probably make it in June.

Other developments at Ace aren't as pleasing. Like most companies in the business we've been looking over our sales figures with much sad head-shaking. Book after book just bombed all over the place for us last year. Books we paid \$40,00 or \$75,000 for went out on the newsstands and died. Anything -- well, almost anything -- outside the tried and true genres had bad sales; if you hear that we've decided not to publish a second Glass Teat book, that'll be why.

And even in the science fiction field there were troubles -- primarily with the SF Specials, tra-la. I got the word a month ago: "Drop those Dillon covers; they're killing sales on the series." So I called and told Leo, sadly, and he was relieved. I can see why: he and Diane have been doing these covers for almost three years now for less money than they get anywhere else (though more than we pay anyone else -- which gives you a little idea of one of the handicaps under which our art department works). I expect we'll want to have Dillon covers on this book or that book that seem to call for their style, but the Specials as a series are being turned over to a new artist named Davis Meltzer (Davis, not David) who seems very good and whose style is much more conventionally "science fictiony looking" than Leo and Diane's.

World's Best SF continues to sell fantastically well for us, though, which makes me happy.

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This issue continues my trip report and also includes a bunch of newspaper and magazine article clippings. Bill Rotsler sent the pieces by Greg Benford and Terry Champagne. I like your article quite a bit, Greg -- well written, just the right balance between lasciviousness and bemusement. Terry Champagne's thing makes me wonder how she and Norman Spinrad would report on fandom if they were around members of the Lunarians instead of the LASFS.

Bob Tucker sent the clipping on him, with a note saying, "Now read about the Chelsea Quinn Yarbrow of Illinois."

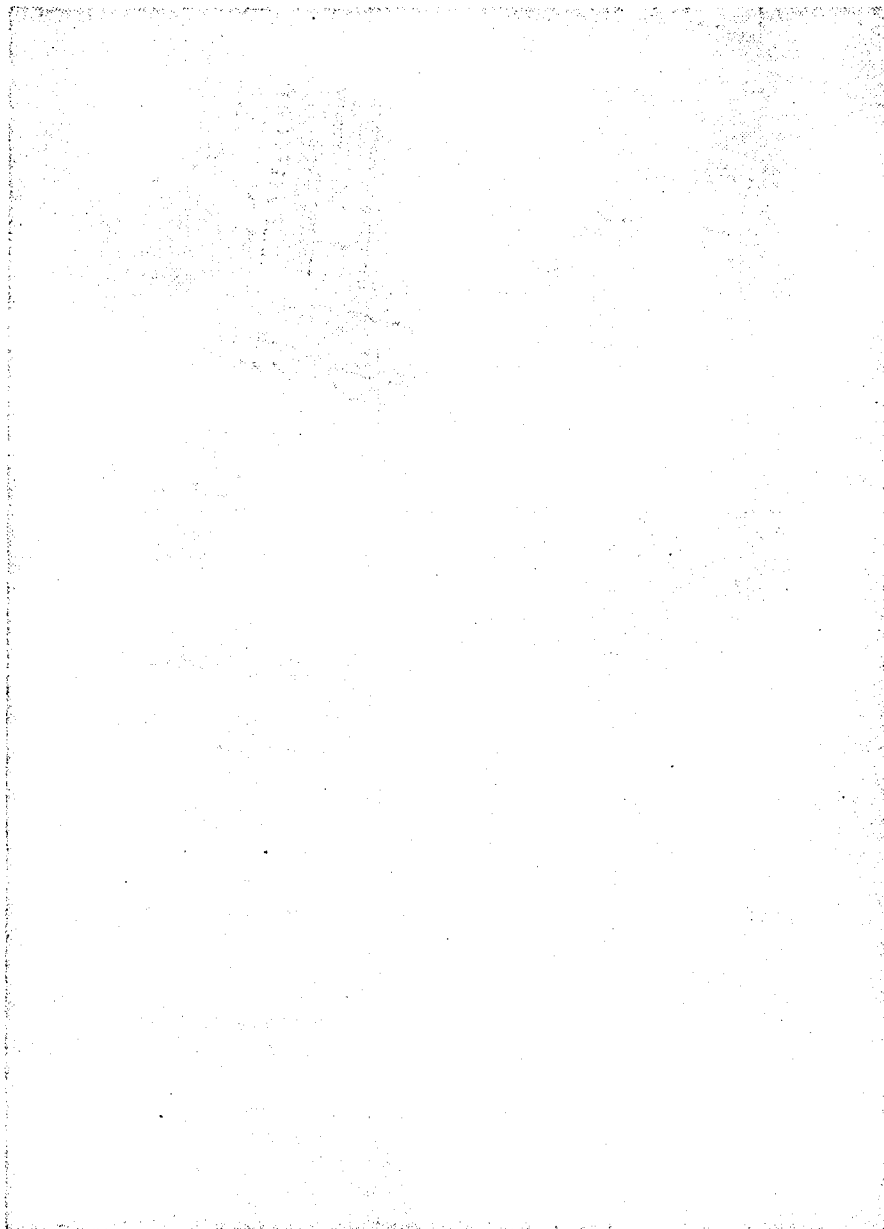
Which reminds me to mention that that Quinn Yarbrow interview I reproduced last issue wasn't the one Avram had mentioned in an earlier letter here; it's the second one she's placed in local papers about herself. (Quinn Yarbrow handles west coast publicity for SFWA.) I asked Greg Benford if there'd been any pieces in the papers out there about anybody but Quinn Yarbrow and he says not as far as he knows. I don't know about you, but I find this kind of self-promotion a bit sickening.

I didn't like the "line" of the interview, for that matter: the neo-McCaffrey bit about how it's only recently that women sf writers have been accepted as the equal of the men. Sure, and no one ever heard of Leigh Brackett, C. L. Moore, Nictzin Dyalis, Zenna Henderson, Margaret St. Clair, Katherine MacLean, Wilmar Shiras, Judith Merril or, for that matter, Mary Shelley.

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1971 Nebula novel nominees: Ringworld, And Chaos Died, Fourth Mansions, Tower of Glass, Year of Quiet Sun and The Steel Crocodile.

# Projectionist not in dark about his writing



*Well stacked*

Wilson Tucker had to use both hands to balance stack of books he's had published in last 25 years. Stack includes American and British editions but not the many paperback and foreign language editions that have been printed. His latest is an award nominee. (Pentagraph Photos)

## By Dick Stockfens

Wilson Tucker is a projectionist at the Castle Theater.

He's also an author.

It's Mr. Tucker who puts the writing in second place. He calls it a hobby.

Wilson Tucker may be the most unusual author extant. His uniqueness lies in a series of "nots."

He is not possessed with a burning sense of his own importance.

He does not complain about his agent.

He does not complain about royalties or accuse his publishers of not pushing his books properly.

He just writes good books and takes what comes.

There's little in his background that pointed him toward authorship. An eighth grade education seems a poor start toward publishing 19 novels.

Mr. Tucker was born 36 years ago, the son of a circus billposter. His mother died when he was six.

He went to Irving School for six years, then was sent to Victory Hall in Normal. While there he finished eighth grade.

After leaving Victory Hall he lived with his father at a rooming house on West Market Street. At age 15 he got a dollar-a-day job as delivery boy for Langhuller Printing.

His father by then was a stage manager at the old Chatterton Opera House at 163 East Market. At the theater, young Tucker picked up some old copies of Weird Tales magazine left behind by actors.

He also fell heir to a closet full of Argosy magazines — which in those days were stuffed with action and mystery tales — left by another tenant at the rooming house.

### Try, try again

There were a couple hundred of them. Tucker read them all.

A life interest was beginning to form.

When he was 17, his father got him a job as an apprentice projectionist at the small Front Street Theater, where Marben's now stands.

When he was 21 he bought a used typewriter and tried writing short stories for his ideal magazine, Argosy.

The magazine sent them back.

He sent them more.

They sent them back.

He never did sell a story to Argosy.

But in 1931, six years after he started trying, he found a buyer in Super Science Stories. The magazine took one of his stories for \$25.

Encouraged, he flooded the market.

The stories flooded back.

A few stories, his tale, totaled six by 1944, the year he was elected vice president of the National Fantasy Fan Federation.

"... I've tried to avoid that swollen ego that so many writers have."

"... I didn't go far in school. I've just accumulated a little knowledge over the years."

Discouraged with the reception accorded his short stories, he turned to books. He spent three years on a mystery, set in Bloomington and featuring a detective called Charlie Horne.

Titled "The Chinese Doll," the book was accepted for publication. It sold rather well. Then it was picked for publication by the Detective Book Club, which yielded more money. Then it was published in paper back. More money came.

## Detective

It was published in England and translated for publication in France and Argentina.

The movie projectionist made about \$3,000 from his first book. His ego expanded. He saw himself as a red-hot comer in the literary world. But a cautious nature made him hold on to his job as a movie projectionist.

More Charlie Horne books followed. They were hits. The fifth Charlie Horne book, in which a man was stabbed through the heart with a screw driver and a woman was pushed into the paddle wheels of a steamboat, was published in 1951. After that, Charlie Horne was dead, scrapped by his creator.

Later that same year he published his first science fiction book, "City in the Sea."

"The Long Loud Silence" followed in 1952. It was called "his best to date."

By 1953 he published his 14th novel. Titled "The Lincoln Hunters," it was based on Lincoln's last speech in Bloomington. It's still his favorite book. But it didn't sell.

His best recent seller came in 1957 when his 19th book, a suspense spy story titled "The Warlock," was published. It is still in print in paperback.

It took him three years and two rejections to hit book 19: "The Year of the Quiet Sun," which was published in paperback last spring.

A paperback version of an earlier book, "Procession of the Damned," came out this past week. It's a suspense tale that starts in Las Vegas and ends in Heyworth.

And his 20th book, "This Witch," is to be published by Doubleday later this year.

That's the career of Wilson Tucker.

What does it add up to?

### Winter writer

A lot of winter hours spent at the typewriter — he doesn't write during the nice weather. That's one thing.

Another thing is some important extra income. He makes from \$1,000 to \$3,000 on each book.

What his career doesn't include as yet is the breakaway big seller.

Tucker doesn't fret about that. He just keeps writing.

He writes in a 10 by 10 room in his 15-year-old ranch style home in Heyworth.

The book shelves bulge with science fiction and suspense novels. His own books, in their various hardbound, paperback and foreign editions, take up one shelf.

On the wall are science fiction paintings and an enlargement of a Gordo comic strip dedicated to him.

Used as a bookend is a black plastic block presented to Tucker at a science

fiction convention last year. It is inscribed: "The Bob Bloch Black Block presented to Bob Tucker because he deserves it."

Bloch is the author of "Psycho." At the last minute he couldn't make it to the convention, but he sent the block anyway.

"It's some sort of gag," said Tucker, "but it was never explained."

### Movie offer

He's interrupted by a telephone call. Just like in a novel, it is a movie producer on the other end, asking about the rights to "Long Loud Silence."

Tucker tells him Warner Brothers has an option on it, but that it will expire this summer. He also suggests the producer read his latest, "Year of the Quiet Sun."

He was pleased but not optimistic about the phone call.

Since "Long Loud Silence" was published 18 years ago it has been under movie option "a half dozen" times. The fisherman who gets nibbles but no fish can sympathize.

But at least the book, even after 18 years, has another fish waiting to get in line.

He said he'd enjoy being the projectionist for a film taken from one of his books.

But he fears promotion of the movie in Bloomington would force him out of the projection booth and onto the stage. The thought makes him shudder.

There's another possible drawback to a movie sale.

His books are clean. Sex scenes are implied rather than described.

But a movie producer wouldn't need much imagination to make "Long Loud Silence" an X rated movie.

The Tucker image would change by association.

Why in this age of selling sex does he keep his books clean?

"I'd like to say it's principle but it isn't," he said. "My wife and all my kids read my books. I don't want one of my kids coming up and asking, 'Hey, dad, what's that mean?'"

As he said, he's a hobbyist.

He reinforces that definition by saying, "I think I have more fun writing the books than anyone does reading them," he said.

### Quality control

But he does admit, "I'd like to have enough success with books so I could quit the job without fear of the breadline."

"But if I did quit I'd have to find some other interest. If I stayed home and didn't do anything but write books I think I'd get stale."

He's also convinced the quality of his books would suffer.

"If I were writing for a living I'd have to produce much, much faster."

Isaac Asimov, the number one name in science fiction and the darling of the intellectual set, has written more than 100

books, he said. Tucker knows one author in New York who turns out 10 or 12 a year.

One reason, "The Year of the Quiet Sun" is a nominee for best science fiction novel of the year is that it's considerably richer in plot details and characterization than most of its kind.

That richness came the hard slow way, through three complete rewrites.

That isn't typical in his writing history. But "Sun" had more than its share of plot problems.

The book was born because Tucker is interested in archeology, particularly Biblical archeology. He's read almost everything published on the Dead Sea Scrolls.

In the winter of 1966-67, it occurred to him he could use a scroll as the pivot for a time travel story. (Time travel, he added, is the one thing in science fiction he doesn't believe will happen).

His idea: "Set up a hero who translates what he believes is a fictional forerunner of the Book of Revelations. Then put the hero forward to some point in time where the prophecies from his scroll come true."

### Persistent

He located the time travel project at the Joliet Arsenal, because, he said, "when I was traveling on old 66 I happened to see a sentry on duty at the gate there and the scene stuck in my memory."

His work log on that book shows he started an "untitled science fiction novel" on Oct. 15, 1966.

By Nov. 10 he had written 3,100 words. By Nov. 17 he was at 10,000 words. Ten days later he had 15,000 words written.

He then revised the whole thing and quit writing over the Christmas season and on into January.

By the end of that month he still had only 19,000 words on paper. By March he was at 25,000. Then he began to stay at his typewriter more and finished the book by the end of May. The word total was about 65,000.

It was titled "The Alif and the Odyssey."

"But I didn't really like that title and I had never read the Odyssey," he said.

He sent the story to Doubleday.

The next winter Doubleday returned for revision a suspense story he had sent them earlier.

He did that work and Doubleday accepted it, but at the same time returned his space travel story with suggestions for a major revision.

So he completely rewrote the book, from page one to page 250.

### Not hopeless

As he wrote, new ideas "would suddenly flash into existence," he recalled. "I'd get this idea on page 100, say, and it would mean going back and changing things on page 15 and page 30 and so forth."

He spent the winter on it and sent it to Doubleday again.

They sent it back. "The tone of the second rejection was that they considered the book hopeless," he said.

So he sent the manuscript to Ace Books, whose editor, Terry Carr, Tucker has known for 20 years.

"He both liked it and didn't like it," said Tucker. "and he sent a big long list of suggested changes."

"I liked this book — I really did — and I was determined to sell it somewhere," Tucker said, "so I started off and wrote a third version."

Subsequent reader and critic approval of "Sun" indicates his fondness for the book was well founded, and the third rewrite was worth the effort.

"I'm getting some unusual interest in 'Sun'," he said, with an optimism tempered by past experiences. A movie producer is dickering with his agent over an option, for one thing.

Perhaps more significant to him is the fact his fellow members of Science Fiction Writers of America have chosen "Sun" as one of five candidates for the Nebula Award as best novel of the year.

### Outdoor work

Meanwhile he works as a projectionist at the Castle Theater and takes his turn on picket line at Normal's new Cinema I & II. (The telephone call from the movie producer was balanced by a second call reminding him it was his night on the picket line.)

He does not have a book going this winter, although the editor of Ace has asked him to do a factual book on the Kickapoo Rock Festival held near Heyworth last spring.

"I could do a whole chapter on the rumors that went around Heyworth about the rock festival," he chuckled.

And his interest in things Biblical was sparked again by a small news article appearing recently on the discovery of a crucified body found in a rock tomb.

"What," asks the science fiction writer, "if the prophets all along had misinterpreted what form the second coming would take?"

The question may be the origin of book

# HOW I LEARNED ABOUT OBLIGATORY SEXUAL ETIQUETTE

text by Gregory Benford

She didn't fool around—she propositioned me flat out, no nonsense, in words of one syllable.

"Well, will you do it?" she said after a pause.

I was still trying to straighten out my reactions. Things like this just didn't happen to people like me in real life. Hell, they didn't happen to anybody!

"I'm not the world's expert, you know," I said, stalling for time.

She nodded. "You don't have to be." She looked down at the sand between us. "Just show me how."

"Be glad to," I said, trying for a throwaway line. "My place, or yours?"

"Ummm, it'll have to be yours," she said, pondering. "My mother will come by my apartment sometime this weekend, and there's always my roommate, too. Is that all right?" She looked at me earnestly.

"Sure, sure," I said with a casualness I didn't feel. "I may even throw in a free drink."

So began my education into what I call Obligatory Social Sex. It all happened in Southern California shortly after I moved out from the Midwest, and I think the geography is important. California isn't just another state these days; it's the future. Looking for signs of developing social trends, sociologists peer through their horn-rims at surfer colonies, biker gangs, wife-swapping clubs and nudists. The unwritten assumption is that when a new social form or pattern emerges, it will surface first in the Golden State.

Even before that late-summer day when the girl propositioned me, I had a hunch the sociologists were right. I hadn't been in California long, but already I was hearing about swinging parties, the Sexual Freedom League and girls who threw away their tattered copies of the *Kama Sutra*, al-



photo by Bruce Benton

ready outmoded at the age of sixteen.

I had been swimming in the rolling surf most of the afternoon and didn't notice the girl until I was back on my blanket, drinking some dollar-a-gallon wine and watching the sailboats. She was sitting some distance away, eyeing me. She had on a blue bikini that set off her crisp brown skin. I knew her slightly; I waved. She came over and sat down.

I searched around for something to say and finally came up with, "How's things going at the college?"

"Oh, okay," she said listlessly. "The social scene is a drag."

"How come?"

"Well, I was popular in high school, but this is my first year at college and I don't seem to turn anybody on. Nobody asks me for a date."

"Oh?" I said rather distantly because I didn't much want to ask her out, either. As she'd walked toward me, I had realized that she just wasn't my type. I like slim, tall girls. Alice wasn't fat, but she was Rubenesque. Her breasts were large and a pleas-

**We live in a hyperthyroid age of sexuality.  
Everything counts, you can't make mistakes, and you can't  
go back and start over . . .**

ant roll of flesh bulged out above the bottom half of her bikini. She was a lot of woman and she moved with the body-consciousness of a healthy animal. But as I said, Alice just wasn't my type.

"Well, I think—I think I might be a little naive," she said. She pronounced it "naigh-eh" but I let it go; maybe that was what some people meant by a Californian accent.

"Doesn't seem likely," I said.

"Gee, I don't know . . ." she glanced away at the waves, a little embarrassed. "The thing is," she said quickly, "I don't know how to go down on a guy, you know?"

I blinked. I had that sinking feeling that was a sure sign that I was losing my social footing. "Why not?" I said.

"I just don't know how," she said, as if I were a particularly slow student. "It's not that I have any objections or anything like that."

"You've tried it?"

"Gee, sure." She looked at me as though I was a social cretin. "I tried. But I keep, you know, using my teeth too much and things like that."

"Yes, I suppose that's easy to do."

"Say, you know, you could help me out. Let me practice on you," Alice said.

**W**e live in a hyperthyroid age. National reputations are made in a week. Rock groups rise and fall literally overnight. Kids grow up fast. But that doesn't mean social rules have broken down. Just the opposite: you have to be sure you know what to do, because everything counts, you can't make mistakes, you can't go back and start over. Tom Wolfe spent years zooming around the country, riding with bikers and teenyboppers, leather crazies and cocktail party arbiters, because he knew that's where it all *was*, that's all there was, there wasn't any-

thing bigger that made any sense.

With General Motors leering over your shoulder, the draft chasing your tail, and teachers nagging you about haircuts and saluting the flag, how could you believe they were part of your world?

Well, they weren't. Every kid learned that. Somebody wrote an article in the New York Times Magazine about "the youth culture," but it really was the only culture for most of the kids—the one world that counted. And to stay in that world, you had to stay hip, not fall behind.

Add that to the increasing equality of the sexes. Girls without a date don't sit around the apartment watching Jackie Gleason anymore—they do something about it. If they're only a little daring they follow the women's magazine cures: get a hobby, initiate conversations with men, flirt a lot.

That may work back in South Bend. In Los Angeles it will get a girl nowhere. There you've got to do more than smile prettily and confess a burning interest in the Rolling Stones. Within a mile of Sunset Strip there are thousands of girls who know erogenous zones that sixth graders know Presidents of the United States. They have to—their competition has read all the same sex manuals and seen the same foreign movies, and they're catching up fast.

The delightful fact is that the girls themselves don't question these ground rules, because for the first time in history the kids in college (and just generally anybody below age twenty-five) are making their own social rules. Curiously, that seems to make the rules all the more binding. Any social convention set up by one's peers has an enormous weight behind it, a tremendous impact.

If a girl doesn't know how to act in a social situation, she'd better find out, or—zap!—she won't run with that

crowd again. And nearly everything is, nowadays, a social context. Getting laid isn't private; girls talk about it, establish rules, have their own codes and code words and expectations. Fifteen years ago breathless coeds agreed in late-night dorm discussions that they wouldn't do it unless they really loved the guy. Now the burning question in some circles is should we make it on the first date?

Even after that hurdle is scaled, there are other niceties of convention that the Southern California girl worries about. Should I do *this* to him first, or should I wait until he does *that* to me? What if he doesn't do it right, I mean, should I say anything?

And what if *he* says something? Suppose I'm not doing it right? Is it just him, or is my technique wrong? How do I tell? If it is me, who can teach me how?

There are, after all, some things even your girl friends can't tell you.

**I** received a phone call from Alice on Wednesday. She talked about the college and friends we knew and—for God's sake—the weather. Then she said:

"Say, do you remember what we talked about at the beach last weekend?"

"Sure."

"Well, I was wondering if you were free this Saturday."

"Sure."

"Three P.M.?"

"Sure."

There is something in the clear, bright days near the beach that makes events in Southern California a little unreal, as though every building is just a false front on an aging movie set. Something in me doubted that the voice over the telephone was real, that what she said was for keeps. Anyway, that's the way I explained

to myself, and I forgot all about the appointment. Saturday morning a guy called, wanting to play tennis, and I met him on the courts at noon. At 2:45, in the middle of a serve, I remembered Alice and the telephone call. I jumped into my car and zoomed across freeways back to my apartment.

I was hot and tired and smelled like sour muskrat. Alice's car wasn't in the parking lot and there was no note. I went in and took off my shorts and took a shower.

Midway through, the doorbell rang. I wrapped a towel around myself and answered it.

"Hi," she said cheerily. She walked in, carrying a large handbag; she admired my view of some frothing white waves.

"Say, uh, if you don't mind, I'd like to finish my shower," I said.

She nodded wisely. "Good idea," she said.

I went back under the hot water, letting it relax and massage my muscles and not thinking about much of anything. After I had dried off I wrapped the towel back around me and went into the living room. Alice wasn't there.

I padded back into the bedroom. She was sitting on the edge of the bed, no clothes, putting on some bright orange lipstick. I had been right about Rubenesque: without her bikini she was even more voluptuous.

My towel was done in plaid. I stopped in front of Alice, framing some offhand but witty remark in my mind, and before I could speak she said, "I've always wondered if it was true, what they say about Scotsmen." She reached up under my towel and grasped me in a practiced manner. I felt a stiffening sense of anticipation.

I said, of course, the usual things. Compliments about her heavy breasts and remarkably smooth skin, accompanied by appropriate caresses. Alice smiled slightly. She unknotted my towel, letting it fall. Without a word she leaned forward and took me in her mouth, warmly, cupping me with one hand while holding my right leg with the other.

"Very good," I said judiciously. She used her lips and I felt myself slide further into her mouth, still swelling slightly, until the tip nudged against the back of her throat. Her hand stroked me slowly.

Abruptly she unswallowed me and said, "Okay, what am I doing wrong?"

"Nothing," I said.

"I must be. What about the teeth?"

"Maybe we haven't been at it long enough."

"Right. Say, do you want to lie down? That's the position I usually have to work in."

I laid down on the bed, head propped on a pillow to watch the proceedings with a judicial eye. Alice rolled between my spread thighs and went down on me again. Her orange lips formed a bright orange circle that moved back and forth, expanding slightly and then contracting again. Every so often she would pause to brush her long hair back out of the way.

After a few minutes I noticed that her teeth were nipping at me, not pleasantly, but with a definite bite. I tapped her on the shoulder.

"You're right. It is the position. Use your tongue more, roll it around over the crest." Pause. "That's it. Keep it over your lower teeth on the down stroke. Right. Good."

She kept on. The nipping was pleasurable now, an added bit of spice. After a few moments I was struggling to retain my objective mood.

"Alice."

"Mmmmmmm?"

"I think you could get it further in if you'd change position—like this."

I helped her up on her knees and eventually got her turned around, kneeling at my side. She was essentially in the standard sixty-nine position, head pointed toward my toes, but still on her knees.

She opened her lips wide and slipped them down over me. I struck the back of her throat with an intense burst of pleasure.

"Uhhh. Fine."

And then I came.

She had been properly instructed by her girlfriends, of course, and didn't think for a moment of not swallowing it all down. (To not do so is a bit rude. It is considered a sign of rejection and distaste and is impolite.) She was good at that, too.

I won't bore you with all the details. We were not finished, by any means. Alice wanted to try several positions she hadn't had a chance to try in social situations. She liked sitting on the edge of the bed, while I stood. My bedroom mirror was arranged so that each of us could watch in this position, and I think that was what appealed to her most. She was a born exhibitionist.

The so-called "dominant" position she didn't like—I sat on her breasts, taking most of my weight on my knees, and leaned forward into her mouth. She complained that I didn't get far enough in that way and anyway it was hard to keep her teeth from interfering.

It was all quite clinical. I wasn't a guy from her crowd so I didn't have to be impressed, and she had ample evidence when I was satisfied. I felt uncomfortable for a while, because

it seemed so impersonal. Then I realized that it wasn't impersonal at all, just friendly. The act was intimate, but to Alice that didn't mean it could not be done as a friendly gesture between people who knew each other but weren't particularly romantically involved.

After that point, I relaxed. Alice was picking up another social grace, like a new step in a course of ballroom dancing. Something in the situation stimulated or released my libido, and in three hours I climaxed five times. I enjoyed myself tremendously. Alice didn't know it, but I was learning as much as she was. My knowledge was about California mores and society. It has stood me in good stead ever since.

Partway through, I asked her if she wanted to ball so the pleasure wouldn't be one way. "Sure, it'll be a good break," she said, smiling.

She turned out to be a beautiful lay, as I had guessed. She wrapped her legs around me and thumped heartily in rhythm with my lunges. She had an orgasm, then another, and I finally came and lay with legs intertwined, panting, against her full breasts. I licked and sucked her nipples for a while, suspended between sleep and wakefulness. Then I felt a familiar sensation. Looking down, I saw Alice's head bobbing rhythmically. She intended to get as much practice as possible.

At six P.M. she noticed the time and announced that she had a dinner date. A few hours earlier I wouldn't have believed her; I would have thought she was brushing me off.

But now I understood. Nothing in Emily Post prohibits going from one party to the next, and nothing in the Obligatory Sexual Etiquette said a girl was chained to the guy she had just had sex with. She might well have learned her lessons in giving head (or, as an older generation called it, the French art) especially for the young man she was meeting for dinner that evening. Anyway, I was glad she was really as liberated as she had said; I had another girl on the line. And Alice, after all, still wasn't quite my type.

When she left she stopped at the door just before going out into the gathering California night; she turned to me, gave me a quick kiss on the cheek, and said just a little shyly, "I want to thank you. I've had a very nice time. Good night."

It sounded a lot like a freckled-faced little girl leaving a friend's birthday party, delivering the lines her mother had taught her and that she had practiced all day, just like it says in the etiquette books! □

Better living through group  
sex! Another good idea  
from the science fiction fans!

# LOVE IT AND LIVE IT SLANSHACK GROUP GROPE

BY TERRY CHAMPAGNE

**I**F YOU KNOW your science fiction, you know that Jules Verne created atomic submarines and H. G. Wells is responsible for rockets to the moon. Or are they?

Granted, none of those things were in existence at the time Wells and Verne wrote of them. Now, they are as common as the day after tomorrow. But neither Mr. Verne nor Mr. Wells was capable of actually inventing these wondrous machines.

Perhaps, if Jules Verne had not written *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, atomic submarines would not now be such an important part of our defense system. And who's to say that we might not have been the first to land on the moon if H. G. Wells had not thought of transport to the moon in his now famous *The First Men in the Moon*. Inevitably, of course, someone, another writer, a television producer, a comic book publisher, would have come up with one of these notions. And the idea would have captured the public's fancy just as it did in actuality.

For the role of Wells and Verne, and of all the other idea men, past and present, is a very important one. It is the shaping of the future. No change or invention is possible until the idea is a reality.

An inventor doesn't begin the process of invention by tinkering about to see what comes out. He always has at least a generalized notion of what he's after. Occasionally he is lucky enough to discover something completely different or even better than what he set out to find. But nothing is found unless something is looked for.

The ancient Greeks invented the steam engine, but evidently, the idea of steam transport had never occurred to them, so they did nothing but listen to it whistle. I haven't any idea what they were looking for when they happened on the *aleopile*, their version of a modern steam engine. But once they got it, they looked no further. No one had thought of power in any form other than man or beast.

Yet the Greeks did possess the concept of man in flight. It is quite likely that man has entertained the notion of flying since his very beginnings on this earth. The idea persisted through the ages until it became a technological reality. If man had no desire to fly, and had never dreamed of flight, there would be no planes today.

So, the big thing accomplished by such men as Wells and Verne is that they aroused the imagination of the people. Everybody recognized what good ideas these were when they read about them or heard about them from their friends. The more people who hear about it, the higher the probability of an idea becoming reality. For example, if the cat who thought of Buck Rogers' belt hadn't put it all down in the comic strip, no one at the defense laboratories would have bothered inventing a working model. As it was, a lot of kids liked the idea and some of them grew up to be military engineers.

The science fiction field has always been crammed full of ideas, some of them very good ideas. It's not surprising, then, that a sort of cult formed around the general concept of "science fiction." This cult calls itself "fandom" and numbers approximately 3,000 individuals. They all share roughly the same mythology and meet regularly at conventions to solidify their common bonds.

Although science fiction fans come from all walks of life, they have had very little, if any, effect on the world at large. Yet they themselves had been profoundly influenced by the abundance of fantastic notions at their disposal. The only outlet available for the expression of their reality was contained in their social life.

So, many fans took some of the ideas they liked best and began living them. Some were very heavy behind the whole medieval trip. They made up names for themselves and called each other lord and lady and enjoyed jousting tournaments. Others merely enjoyed liberalized sexual customs.

The conventions were not only oc-

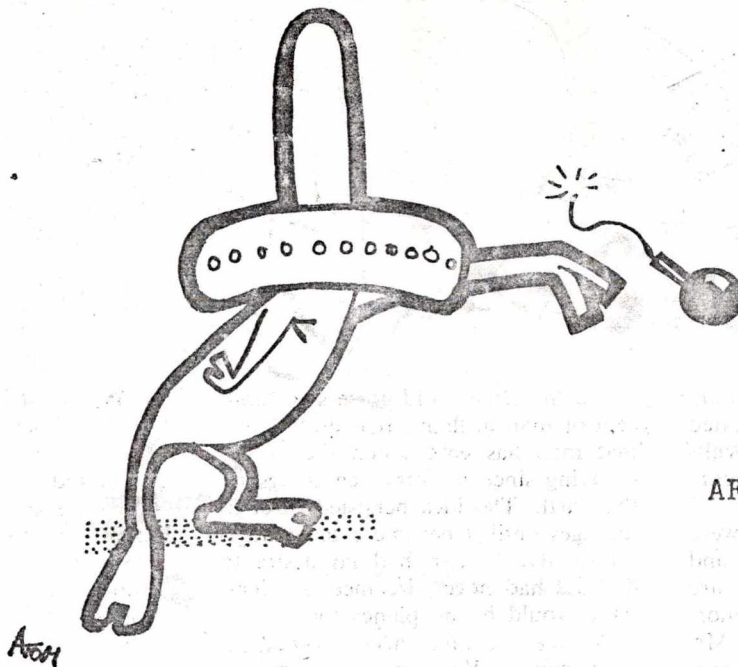
casions to meet and talk with old friends, but opportunities to fuck them as well, if one were so inclined. A sort of watered-down group sex came into being: the group grope. "Grope" is a Fannish word for touching, petting. At conventions or other gatherings it is common for a group of fans to congregate together in a room and participate in the grope. It is quite acceptable for husbands and wives to grope other people's husbands and wives.

The science fiction community is a close one. Their relationships are constantly changing and they seem to accept rearrangements as commonplace. They frequently exchange partners and intermarry with complete civility on the parts of all concerned. Jealousy is infrequent and ex-couples are very friendly.

Long before there was anything known as hippies, fans lived together in groups similar to communes. They called these households slanshacks. The name comes from a science fiction novel by A. E. Vogt, *Slan*. Slans were superhuman mutants, the next stage in evolution. Fans believed themselves to be a cut above the average mundane individuals who peopled the world. Fans knew a good idea when one came along. So they lived their lives in spite of their neighbors, convinced the world would inevitably follow.

And they were right. The world is following. Young people are accepting new and better ideas in ever increasing numbers. They're sure that better sex lives, peace and love and happiness, are good ideas. And they don't want anything less than all the good of living.

When you see ideas, think about them. If they're not too nice, don't let them be. But when you come across a good one, like the slanshack group grope, try living it. Try believing in it. If it's really a good idea other people will pick up on it. What I don't understand is how we got so many rotten ideas into our reality. Let's hope in the future, we find some better ideas. Fast. ☺



AFTER THE HEICON,

Part III

While Carol took a bath Sid and I went downstairs and sat out on the terrace drinking lagerbier while we watched sunset over Innsbruck so far below us. Patches and strings of lights went on here and there in the city and the suburbs; a waiter came out to turn on the lights on the terrace. Before long full dark had settled, and Innsbruck was a swathe of diamonds in the blackness below. We admired the view and congratulated ourselves for our luck in landing in this hotel, then went upstairs again.

An hour or so later we had dinner in the hotel's dining room. The food wasn't much, and the room was completely empty save for the three of us. The whole hotel, with its evidences of bygone richness and yet so few visitors today, had a melancholy aspect. But we sat by the window and looked down at the city and we didn't feel melancholy at all.

Afterward we went up to the room Carol and I had, and Sid brought the last of our Alsatian wine to drink while we did our nightly ritual with maps and guidebooks. "If we get up at a decent hour tomorrow we can go to the top of the mountain on the telepherique," Sid said. "I suppose that'll give you all the mountain scenery you'll need for awhile, so would you like to head south into Italy, or should we spend another day going east through the mountains?"

"Well, what are the alternatives in what we'd see?"

"If we keep going east through the mountains we'll see more mountains," said Sid. "If we go south from here we can spend tomorrow night in Verona."

"Let's go to Verona," said Carol. "We can see the Tomba di Giuliette."

"The what?" I said.

"Juliet's tomb. Romeo and Juliet took place in Verona, remem-

ber? Juliet's tomb is on the outskirts of the city."

"You've been peeking at the guidebooks," I said. "Besides, who says it's really Juliet's tomb? They probably just picked any old tomb from the middle ages to satisfy the tourists."

"Who cares?" said Carol. "We're tourists."

So we decided to go to Verona, and thereby lucked out again, because Verona proved to be one of the high points of the trip. We got up reasonably early the next morning and I went to the windows to look out at Innsbruck in the morning. But there was only white outside. Drifting white.

"Looking at the view already, hm?" Carol said as she began to get out of bed.

"In a manner of speaking, I guess," I said. I got dressed and stepped out onto our balcony. There was fog all around; I could barely make out the tops of trees only twenty feet away.

"Hey, Sid," I called, "come look at the view."

In a minute he came out, did a take, and muttered, "What have they done with Innsbruck?"

We went around the corner of the hotel, following the balcony, and looked up the mountain we'd planned to ascend this morning. Nothing. More white, more fog. Oh well, there'd be a telepherique at Mont Blanc later in the trip.

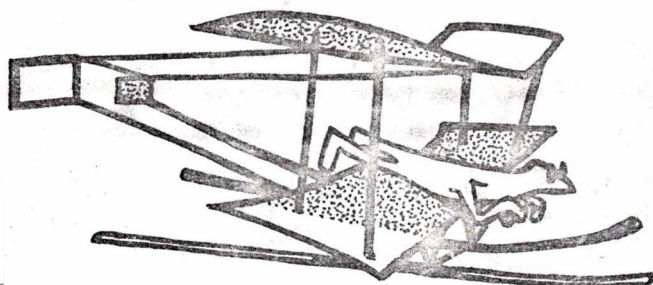
We drove down the mountain, skirted Innsbruck on a freeway and connected onto a new highway leading out to the Brenner Pass into Italy. Just outside Innsbruck, while we were still climbing into the mountains, we drove over a spectacular new bridge spanning a gorge hundreds of feet below; at the top of the bridge I noticed a parking lot on the right, and people walking up to a vantage point, so I pulled off the road. We'd hardly started the day's driving and here we were stopping already, but what the hellarchie, that was what this trip was about.

We went up a path and then a series of stairs to what looked like a memorial building of some sort, but it wasn't open. A path led around the back, and we found that this took us back down to the bridge, where we could use a pay telescope or walk out onto the walkway on the bridge itself. We went onto the bridge, though it was cold up here and there was a good wind in the gorge. But from the center of the bridge we looked straight down to a tiny stream far below, a few farms and a power station...maybe it wasn't such a tiny stream down there after all. The dense fog of an hour or two before had mostly cleared now, and we could make out almost unbelievable colors in the strata of the cliffs on each side of the canyon. It was really a spectacular view, and suddenly I realized where I'd seen something like it before: back in New York, when we were still planning the trip, I'd gone through any number of travel folders and such, one of which had used a color photo of this bridge and environs on its cover. I'd admired it, had looked to see where the bridge was, and when I'd found it was in Austria

I'd just sighed, because we weren't going to be in Austria, I'd thought. And I'd forgotten about it till now.

We got back in the car and drove on; just a little way further up the road we came to a toll gate, evidently to pay for the bridge. I didn't mind paying, and I thought it was nice that they'd put the toll on the other side of the bridge from Innsbruck, so that people could drive up from there for the view and turn around and go back without having to pay the toll every time they did.

We went through the pass and began to descend to Italy. The customs station was in a crowded little town where we dashed from an office in one building to an office in another, changing traveler's checks into lire and buying gas coupons. Gasoline prices in Italy, as everywhere in Europe, are fantastic, but to encourage tourism the Italian government will sell you a limited number of gas coupons which entitle you to a lower price for gas. The further you can drive



in Italy the more places you're going to spend money.

Customs was such a bottleneck that traffic from there on got very heavy; we crawled along down into the valley at five or ten kph. I cursed the traffic, and fretted, and my back began to hurt again. When we came to a gas station Sid suggested we fill the tank there and then he'd drive for awhile. So we did, and he did.

Sid hadn't driven for a year or two, and he wasn't used to this car's stickshift. Getting behind the wheel he said, "Let's see, the most important thing to know is...where's the brake? Ah, there. Good. Now, Terry, please fasten your safety belt." I started to protest that I wanted more freedom to move around, with my back hurting, but he added, "It's not that I'm a bad driver, but if I got you killed I'd never forgive myself. Do it for my peace of mind."

He can be convincing when he wants to be.

So, gears grinding, we pulled out into the bumper-to-bumper traffic. It must've been five kilometers before Sid had occasion to shift into second, and there was some more grinding and jerking. Sid hunched over the wheel and asked Carol to light him a cigarette because he was nervous, but with traffic moving so slowly we could have walked faster, what was to worry about?

Traffic came to one of its frequent halts. Sid stopped. Traffic started again, so Sid let in the clutch and we started off -- in reverse. Only for a second, of course, and Sid sure found that brake fast all right. But I'll bet the driver behind us was never so surprised in his life.

Sid cleared his throat and asked Carol to light him another cigarette.

Carol said, "Terry, how's your back feeling?"

"It's getting better," I said.

"Don't worry," said Sid, "if I crack up the car and you get killed, I'll marry Carol and take care of her. I'm a responsible person."

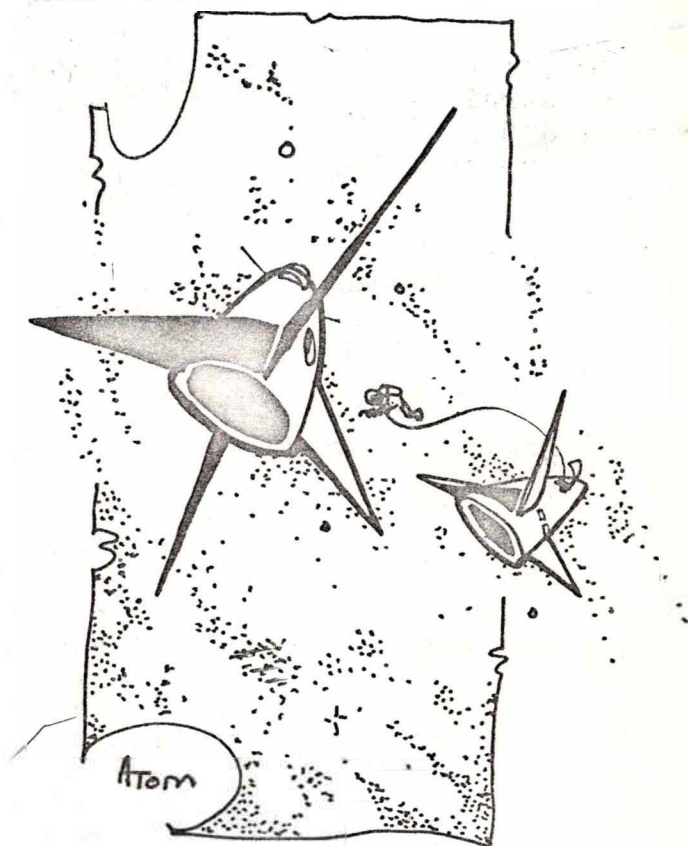
On we went, crawling down a winding two-lane road that descended into a valley with dark cliffs on either side. Whenever we came to a stretch of road that was straight for even fifty feet cars would pull out to pass, working their way forward to a truck ahead that was probably the current bottleneck. One car worked its way up to behind us, and then he pulled out to go around, but he had to drop back as Sid sped up, not having seen him. Sid was concentrating fiercely on the traffic and road ahead. The car came again next chance he got, and this time he got right alongside us before he had to drop back; Sid still hadn't seen him. What intense concentration these high-energy physicists have. I wanted to say something but I remembered times when I'd had to direct all my attention to something I wasn't familiar with and knew that adding another area to worry about would probably make Sid tighter.

Next time the car came to pass Sid did see him and let him around. But my back really was feeling better after a little rest, so when we came to a place where Sid could pull over I got to drive again. I pulled out into the traffic, fretted at the 10 kph rate of progress, and began passing cars. Two, three, four or five at a time I'd zip around them, till Carol began asking little questions like "Must you?" and "Sid, how's your back feeling?"

"I'm adjusting to local driving customs," I said, pulling out to get a look around the truck, which I'd finally reached. "They do this stuff here all the time; they must expect it of each other," and there came a break in traffic so I vroomed around the truck and found a clear road ahead of me. It was still winding and twisting alongside a small river, though, so I held our speed down to something reasonable.

"Anyway," I said, "Sid is a hell of a lot better at navigating than I am, and there's a turnoff somewhere down here that we'll have to take."

"Yes," said Sid. "It's right there." And I had to grab a quick right turn that I would've missed seeing myself. It led us to the



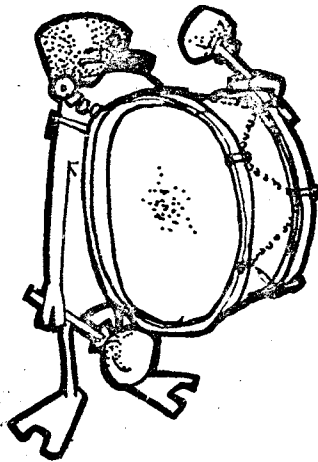
first of the Italian autostrada I'd seen, and it was something of a revelation: Two or three lanes on each side, a dead straight road, and virtually no other cars at all. It was like driving on the Nevada salt flats, and I responded in keeping with that; I floor-boarded the gas and shortly we were doing 140 kph.

"A hundred and forty?" Carol said. "Terry, that's ridiculous."

"It's only kilometers, not miles," said Sid. "About eighty miles an hour, which is typical on the autostrada."

So we drove for an hour like that, and during the hour I don't think I moved the wheel for a single curve in the road: perfectly straight. The cliffs that flanked the valley slowly drew further and further back, though there were still rocky outcroppings here and sheer mesa-like hills; we saw monestaries on top of these.

About 1:00 in the afternoon we decided we were hungry, so we pulled off the autostrada at Trente and made our way to the middle of town, where there was a parking lot in the piazza in front of the cathedral; we were to find this typical of most every Italian town or city we visited. Well, it only made sense: in these medieval towns the streets themselves were barely wide enough for the Opel to squeeze through and the only space for tourist parking was in the piazzas; there was always a piazza in front of the town cathedral, the cathedral was always a tourist attraction, so Q.E.D.



Another thing that we soon found typical in Italy was the old man who officiously directed people to parking spaces and charged for the parking. Sometimes these men were indeed parking lot attendants; more often, it seemed, they were just locals who'd go down to the piazza and see how much money they could make from the touristas. In this case the man got a little loot from us because there was only one space left and two different cars wanted it; Sid bribed him more.

We took a table beside the piazza and ordered toastes (spelling phonetic) and cappacine. "Toastes" are Italian tourist-food: toasted ham and cheese sandwiches. I didn't think much of them, but I loved the cappacine, which came with whipped cream on top. That was no doubt turista food too, and I think the whipped cream was out of a can, but it was good anyway. We sat and chatted and watched the local young louts struttin' and signifyin'. Piazzas in Italy seem to be heavily inhabited at all hours by kids out to pick up girls or girls out to pick up guys; the guys loll about making a show of being languid, which is why we came to refer to them all the time as louts (a word we'd got from Boyd Raeburn, whose vocabulary abounds in good dismissive terms for the stupid or indigent). They were all dressed in a very precise imitation of American hip of the upper-east-side Joe Namath school; their hair was always just long enough to be terribly fashionable, and the girls all wore slacks. But nobody dressed the slightest bit freaky, no one's hair was too long or ever uncombed, and the girls always wore bras. I began to understand how the Italians could make

the very plastic westerns and historicals that they do.

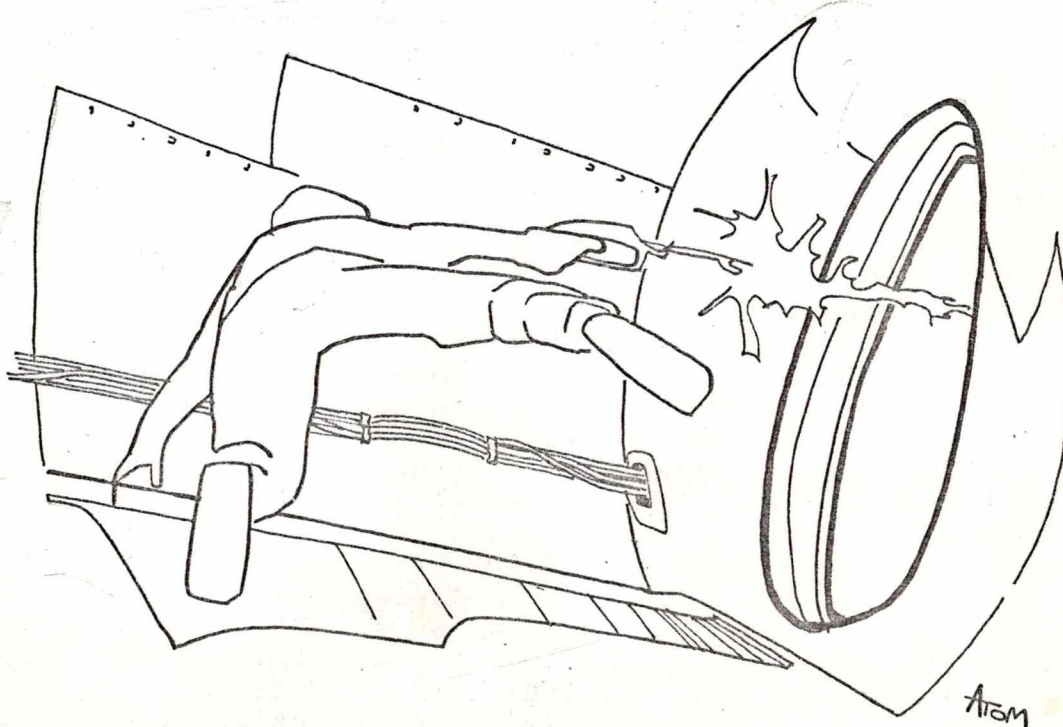
We went back on the autostrada and spent the rest of the afternoon driving to Verona. Actually, we were only on the autostrada for a little while after Trente; they were still building it further south. "They were supposed to have this autostrada finished all the way from Brenner to Verona six months ago; that's why I picked this route," said Sid. "But that's Italy for you." Instead we followed a small highway through small towns and miles and miles of vineyards.

When we got to Verona we did our usual thing: we headed for the center of town. And as usual when entering the town where we were to spend a night, we got there during rush hour. Driving in rush hour traffic in Italian cities is really something: the streets are narrow, as I've said, but that doesn't slow down local drivers who are used to driving there. So though Sid occasionally saw a street sign that correlated with something on his map, he was never able to give me a direction to go before the traffic surrounding us had forced me in some other direction. Finally, somewhere in the heart of the old town, Sid spotted a church on the left with parking in front and hollered, "Pull off there and we'll figure out where we are."

So I did, and Sid studied his guidebooks and maps; in a couple of minutes he looked up and said, "We're presently parked in front of the most expensive hotel in Verona. That must be it over on our right. Shall we spend a night there, or do you want me to try directing you to a less expensive one that'll be perfectly good?"

It was beginning to rain, and my back was hurting again. "What the hell archie," I said. Carol agreed.

So three scruffy looking touristas trudged into a lobby that



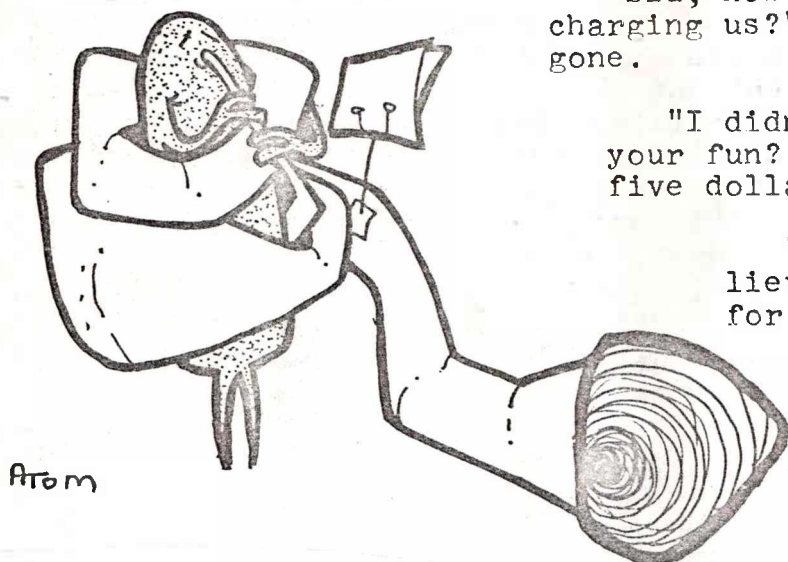
seemed to stretch for half a block. The floor was marble, covered with rich rugs; paintings and draperies hung on the walls. We checked in and a porter took us up to our rooms. The halls too were richly decorated, and very unlike the hotel last night in Innsbruck everything was very much in use here. Our room, Carol's and mine, had a chandelier and wallpaper that showed two-color engravings of landscapes probably from the 1800s, blown up to fill a wall each. The scenes were of explorers with high hats and parasols looking at natural rock bridges or ancient monuments in the Near East.

"Sid, how much did you say they were charging us?" I asked when the porter had gone.

"I didn't say; I figured, why spoil your fun? Your room is about twenty-five dollars for the night."

"Oh, is that all," I said, relieved. "We've paid close to that for rooms in lousy convention hotels."

"Well, this is Italy," Sid said. "The way you're thinking is why the Italians tend to think of Americans as marks. Not that I don't think the same way myself."



Carol and I wanted to rest awhile and I wanted to take a bath, so we agreed to meet in a couple of hours, by which time Sid would have picked out a restaurant.

And so it came to pass. Sid met us at our room and we walked down the stairs instead of taking the elevator; we wanted to look at the hotel. We found that on each floor there was a room full of objets d'art, just sort of a sitting room, and the stuff on view was fantastic. Beautiful small figurines, ornate gold jewelry, cameos in ivory, the everpresent paintings and wall hangings. It was really lavish.

"It's disgusting," Carol said. "It's ostentatious."

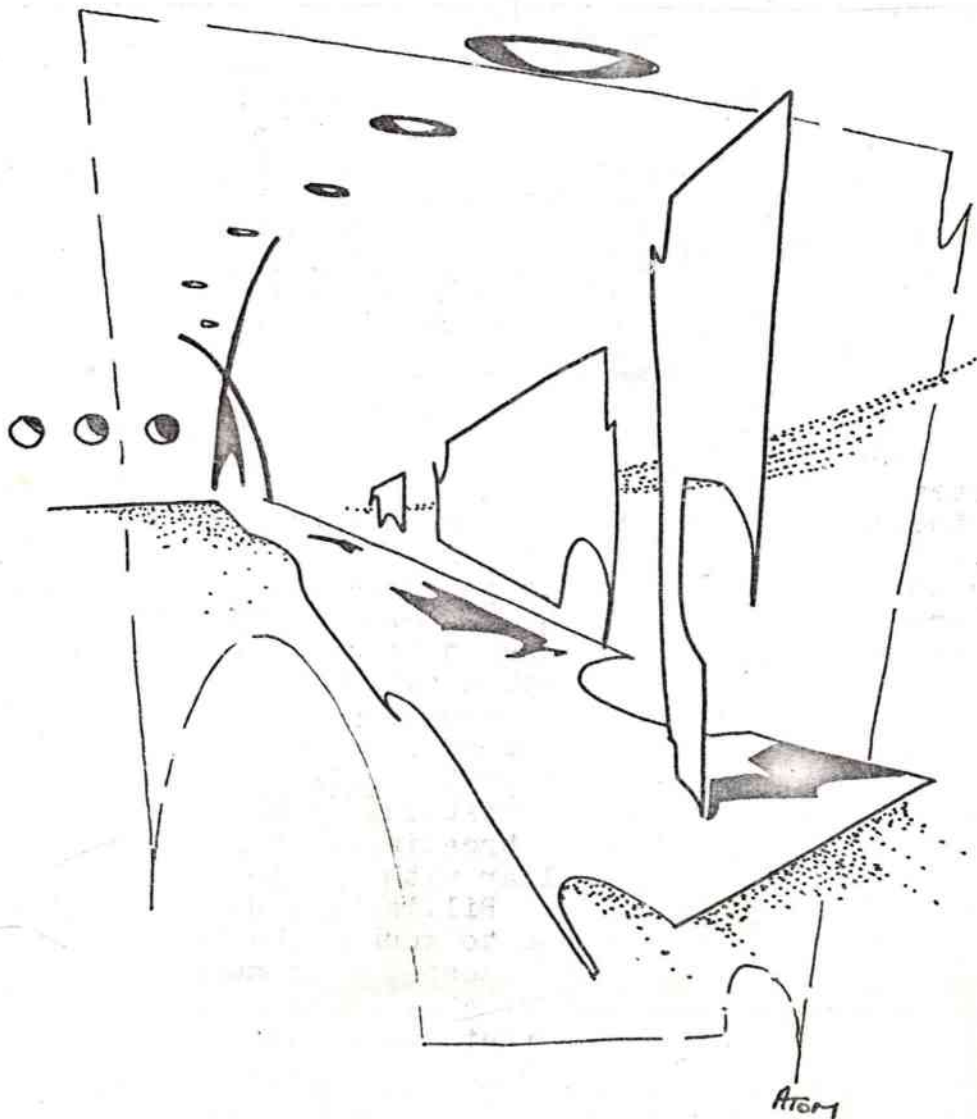
Sid said, "Ah, Carol, your socialist background is coming out. You're prejudiced against the upper classes. These things were all made hundreds of years ago; nobody's working for coolie wages to make it today."

"No, but why should all this be shut up in the highest-priced hotel in the city? Things like this should be in a museum, where anybody could see them. Oh, I really hate this place."

"I'll take you to a restaurant that will improve your mood," said Sid. And he led us through narrow cobblestoned streets and byways to the 12 Apostoli, a small restaurant on a dimly lit side-street. It was the only two-star restaurant in Verona. There are no three-star restaurants in Italy, since Chairman Michelin is French and admits his palate isn't sufficiently educated in Italian

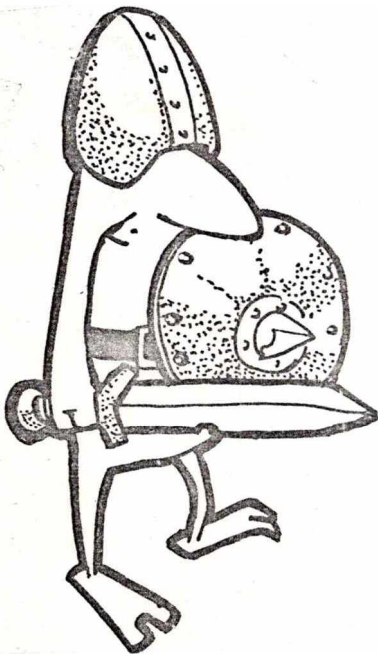
to distinguish the rarefied differences between a two-star restaurant and a true three-star restaurant in Italy. Some of the two-star restaurants in Michelin may be three-stars really, but the little red book declines to guess. (There's the natural suspicion that M. Michelin simply can't face bestowing his highest commendations to a restaurant that isn't even French, of course, but I choose to accept the Michelin explanation.)

Ristoranti 12 Apostoli was a treat, however the micrometer might measure it. Not big and expensive; much more like a very good neighborhood restaurant where people eating out this evening might drop in. There were a number of Italian couples and families there that night who didn't act like people going out to a famous restaurant. Yet the food was first rate; I had an appetizer of just sliced tomatoes in oil and vinegar dressing, and it was beautiful (tomatoes by themselves in place of salad turned out to be typical in Italy: Italian restaurants should only do it more over here). I chose the specialty of the house as listed by M. Michelin for main course: petto di pollo ala crema e funghi. Oh my goodness I liked that. Carol and Sid had other things, equally good. "Molto bene," said Carol. So was the service; the waiters were genuinely friendly and helpful. On the walls -- on the wall I faced, anyway -- were repro-



ductions of medieval maps of Verona: really imagined aerial views of the town, with all the buildings drawn sort of three-quarter angle from above, and names of cathedrals and piazzas lettered in that beautifully clumsy medieval script.

We left the restaurant and decided to walk around town for awhile. The air was sparkling fresh after the rain that had ended earlier; we walked through alleys and dark piazzas till we came to a miniature Colosseum, a Roman arena, around which the night life of Verona clustered. Gay young Italian blades of all kinds paraded the streets across from the arena, which from the outside looked to be in perfect preservation. Hordes of guys with tight pants, hair curling neatly around their ears, shirts open to the third button, paraded in search of partners among the gaggles of girls who clustered at tables on the piazza, all wearing slacks and their hair curling down their backs. The Italians still seem to dress in uniforms.



I looked for Harlan Ellison books in a book-stall till I was chased out by glares from the proprietor, who didn't like the length of time it took me to look through Barbarella in Italian. We decided to cross to a small park in the middle of the piazza, and the easiest way, considering the traffic that whizzed by on the street, was by going down into the subway on one side of the street and coming up on the other side. So we made our only visit to an Italian subway in this fashion. In Italian subways, or in this one at any rate, stores line the corridors much as they do in some American subway stations. There are also posters for this and that entertainment, and from these posters we learned that the Colosseum was not only well preserved, but still in service; performances of various operas were advertised to be performed there.

We wandered through the park -- really just a triangular block with trees and grass on it -- and stopped for a cappuccino at a streetside table, and then wandered off through the night streets of Verona. "The night streets of Verona" probably means little or nothing to you, but the phrase is incredibly evocative to me. I loved Verona; it was beautiful and exotic and old and full of small surprises: tiny alleys that opened into sudden piazzas, basilisks on the edges of roofs silhouetted against the stars; lighted windows of clothing and home appliance stores even long after the stores themselves had closed. As we wandered I periodically sang snatches of my Billie Holliday version of What a Piece of Work is Man, song from Hair (lyrics by Shakespeare), pastiche by me. Carol knew what I was doing, since she's used to me breaking into impressions and such at odd moments and is also familiar with Billie Holliday's records, but I wonder what Sid made of it. Billie Holliday was a woman, not a man, and my impressions of her tend to sound like W. C. Fields, alas. But Carol understood, and Sid doesn't care much about music, so I guess it was all right. (All right, hell: it was brilliant. It's just too bad there isn't a market today for Billie Holliday impressions that sound like W. C. Fields.)

"If you like Verona," said Sid, "wait till we get to Florence: it's just like Verona, only bigger."

Verona was also the town in which we first saw the Italian Male in his fully-dressed wolfish guise. Carol was wearing...oh hell, pretty much the usual sort of stuff she wears, skirt and sweater, but the number and intensity of the looks she got was noticeably higher than usual. One guy turned completely around in his tracks as she passed. But no pinching: lots of looks but no pinching. (Pinching has always struck me as beside the point, anyway; are there really people in the world who think pinching a girl's ass is a thrill?)

And eventually, back to the hotel we went. We agreed with Sid (as we always agreed with Sid, to rather little effect) to rise at a propitious hour on the morrow, in order that we might see a few of the sights of Verona before leaving it. I arranged at the desk to have breakfast rolls and coffee sent to our room at 9:00 next morning, and as we ascended in the elevator I considered how useless that gesture would be: you can lead a sleepyhead to coffee, but you can't make him drink it. (Copyright © 1971 by Terry Carr.)

## Pantyhose Latest Men's Style Idea

DETROIT (UPI) — This city first shipment came in black, the self-styled white sock blue and brown. capital of the world, has come up with something new in men's fashion — pantyhose.

"A lot of guys have been cold for a long time and not admitted it," said Marion Nemchek, a saleslady for a department store chain which was besieged with orders before the first supply of 200 pairs reached the shelves last week.

"The men wear them for warmth," she said. "They want something lighter in weight than normal long johns but something that's warm."

The hose are ribbed from the calf down to the toes to resemble regular socks. The

"We expect to get some in various shades in the future," Miss Nemchek said. "One guy asked for them in white."