

LETHE



SPECIAL PACIFICON ISSUE

The entrails are few, but here they are.....

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After turning the crank of our "Wards' Little Wonder Worker" over one thousand times, there are bound to be mistakes, due no doubt to that tired feeling in the muscles; so please excuse any cruddy copies. The idea of this collection of fanzines being to toot our own horns to promote circulation, or whatever, we shall endeavor to explain what Lethe is all about. We try to publish fantasy, straight and humorous, failing to get enough of that type of material, we decided to publish humorous science-fiction, or serious articles of an interest to science-fiction fans. This issue is staff written in order to meet the June 1st deadline established by the promoters of the Pacificon. We do need material badly and hope you who read this will help us out.

The price of this fanzine is cheap, a 3¢ stamp or a postcard will bring it to you for nothing. In order to receive each copy of Lethe, a letter commenting on the previous issue is requested. Naturally contributors will be entitled to two or more copies for free and without requests for another (take it and like it is our motto) The thing is published by:

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THE HEAD

by Jay Edwards

Unlal the sorcerer arose slowly from the ancient throne-like chair in which he had been sitting. The curious designs and symbols on his robes flashed and shimmered even in the gloom of his chambers. He crossed the uneven stone flooring and went to the slit of a window that overlooked the forest of Balmoor. Clasp- ing his gnarled hands behind him he began to speak in a measured solemn tone.

"Therese. I have not forgotten you, nor my pledged word to you. Many months have slipped past recall into the womb of time from whence they came, and yet I have not found the one that will sate you. Being an old man time is not important to me and possibly I have not bent all my efforts into the search.

"One grows infinitely weary in conversation with daemons and familiars and such. You have been my constant, comforting companion, and that also may serve to explain my tardiness in obtaining for you your dearest desire."

So saying Unlal turned and walked across the room to where the severed head of a beautiful girl rested on a tall pedestal. The head was a thing of singular beauty. Long rippling red-gold hair framed the perfect, pallid oval that was her face. High, arched eye brows accentuated the slumbrous blue-green eyes that were lined with long lashes. The nose was long and patrician, and the partly opened lips were hungrily sensual. Altogether a face to turn a mans mind.

The enigmatic grey eyes of Unlal stared into the hostile ones of the unhappy girl. He began to speak without a trace of emotion on his strangely stiff countenance. "Nature gods are a prankish lot, Therese. Their sense of humor is of a sardonic nature and runs to satanic jests. Your very lovely face and twisted, stunted body must have afforded them much amusement.

"When you came, asking that I use my magic to straighten your body, or supply a new, more exquisite one; I agreed. You were without an ounce of metal to pay. Such things have to be paid for, you know, but not always in coin. Your payment is almost concluded. The manner of settling your debt to me has not been too trying I trust?"

The lips writhed and spat, "I hate you Unlal! Give me a body and I will destroy you!" Her hair rustled in anger like leaves being tumbled about by the wind.

A gleam came to Unlal's watery eyes, a gleam that could have been one of amusement.

The delicately molded face softened and a large tear rolled from one of her eyes. "Please," she pleaded, "It's been torture to rest on this pedestal for months with no body." She lowered the lids of her eyes in defeat and despair. "Even my poor warped and bent body was better than none at all, give that back to me then, and I will depart." Raising her misty eyes to the unfathomable ones of Unlal, Therese silently begged for release.

The thin lips of the old warlock grimly lifted at the corners into a half-smile and he said, "You hated your body, so I took no pains to preserve it like your head. Would you then wear a rotted decomposed thing for your earthly vehicle?"

Her face contorted into a visage of utter hate and she screamed, "You devil! You...you...you fiend!" Then the full import of what Unlal had intoned struck her and she blanched. "You wouldn't! You promised me a new body!" The ripe, red lips gaped in horror.

"My word is inviolate, You shall have your desire consummated tonight." He turned slowly and shuffled back to the incredibly odd throne-like seat. "Someone has died," he mumbled almost to himself.

Her eyes blazing, Therese snarled, "You did that to tease me! You sadist! I'll kill you; I swear it by all that's holy. Watch to yourself old man!"

She continued to rave and call dire maledictions upon his head; but Unlal seemed not to hear. His eyes were closed now and the unyielding visage as relaxed as it would ever be. As from a great distance came the words, "We shall see, my tigress. We shall see."

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The dusk partially hid the misshapen things worrying the fresh earth on the new grave. The mound of dirt grew as the hole went deeper. Claws scratched wood. Loathsome sounds came from the pit scrapings and a slavering. The soft sound of a coffin lid being raised. A slopping and grating noise, then a grotesque figure took to the concealing night air bearing the headless form of a woman.

* * * * *

The head of Therese dreamed; dreamed of a body, the most gorgeous body in the whole continent of Relthys. Visions drifted slowly by; visions of mighty kings, handsome princelings, and nobles of varying stations; all in an endless train, coming to pay homage to her beauty

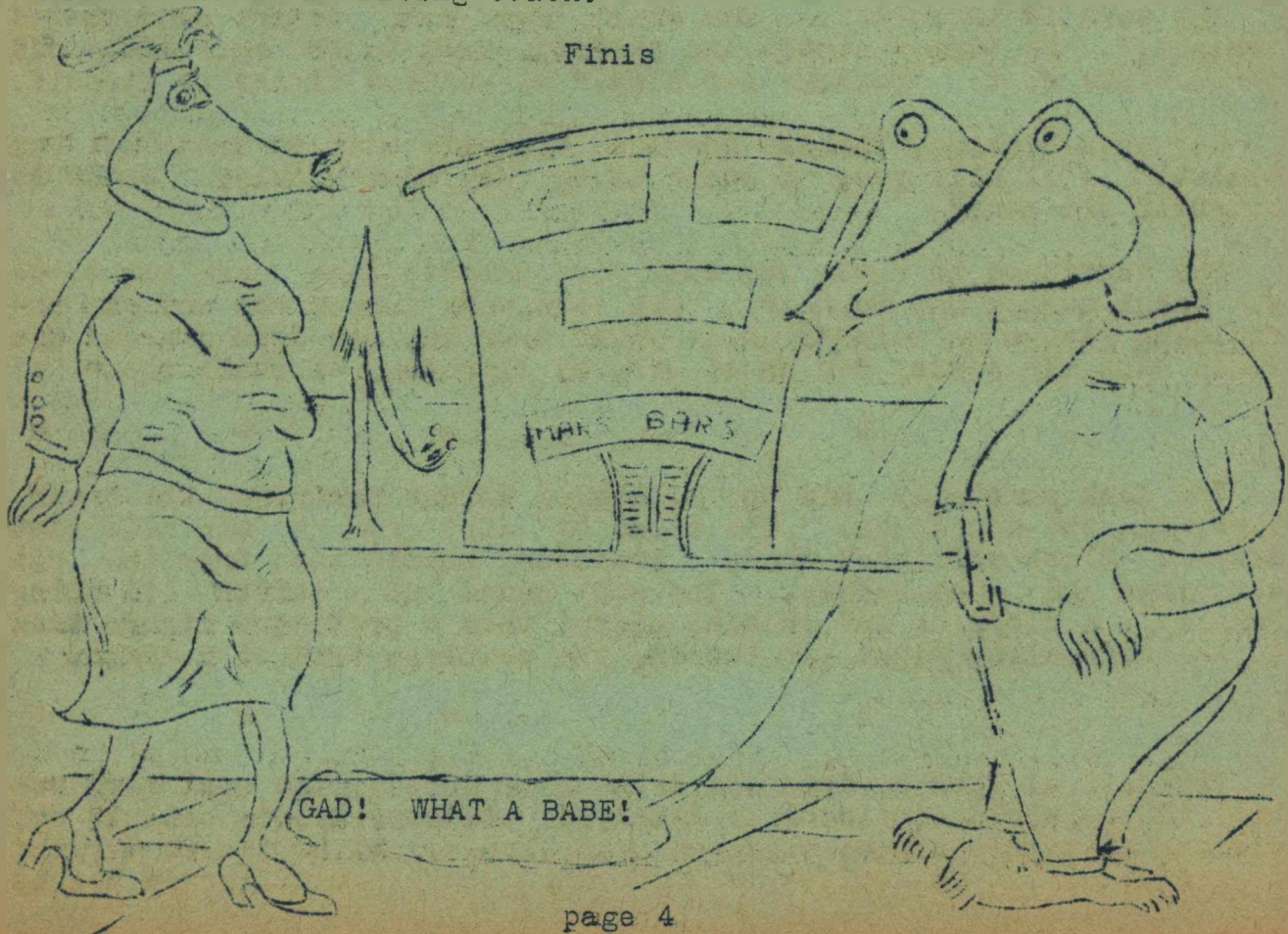
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Then the scene changed; changed to the hateful room that had been her prison for months. Therese crept on silent cat feet toward a sleeping figure. She held a long wicked knife and the sleeping form was that of Unlal the sorcerer. The knife went high then plunged to bite deeply into the withered chest. She smiled sleepily. Then a voice droned, "Awake. Awake. Awake Therese. Awake. Awaken to new life."

Her eyelids opened drowsily, then widened to pools of astonishment. She saw, facing her, her face surmounting a body of incredible loveliness. A slim, white body with a skin texture like satin. Soft round shoulders, small perfectly pointed breasts, slender waist swelling to sleek hips and downward to long, tapering legs and tiny, well-formed feet. "Mine?" she breathed questioningly.

"You have but to step forward," came the measured tones of Unlal. "'Tis but a mirror of reality that you see."

She took a hesitant step forward, then smiled languorously, and undulated closer to the mirror. Clothes were piled on a seat beside the mirror, wonderful, rich clothes; with a long wicked knife resting on top. Tossing the knife carelessly to one side, Therese arrayed herself in the resplendant finery. Whirling, dancing, and pirouetting, she swirled to the door, blew a mocking kiss to Unlal and waltzed out to a waiting coach.



INCIDENTAL

by E. J. Wyers

The Sixth World STF Convention. Namreka and the convention president stood in the doorway casually watching the excited mob of junior fans. They were crowded around the complete collection of Amazing, Wonder and Astounding. They pushed and shouted, rattled the bars and tried frantically to touch just one magazine some actually fighting for the privileged places next to the locked and barred bookcases. Others, the more experienced, were huddled together on the outskirts of the herd, evidently, to judge from the covetous glances cast at the collection, planning to pilfer a mag. or so.

Finally the president looked at his watch and shouted. "All right, youse guys, it's time for chow." Then, as the fans reluctantly turned from the stacks of magazines, "that ain't nuttin', anyway, Namreka here has a whole garage full down in L.A."

It was customary for the junior fans to pay silent homage to number one fan Namreka but now they clamored around him. That is all but one shy looking young fan from northern California. This individual paused and watched the mob surround the first fan a speculative gleam in his eye, his tongue lolling on his chin.

If Namreka hadn't been slightly worn and torn while conducting an auction later that night and if the ensuing excitement had been less intense, it might have been noticed that the shy young fan was missing from his usual place on the outskirts of the group. As it was the number one fan departed for home, in order to get another suit of clothes, amid a tremendous ovation from the fan. Especially from those who possessed shreds of his former suit.

Well, what with one thing and another Namreka didn't arrive home until well into the wee small hours. When he finally did get home he made his way to his bed room and proceeded to prepare for much needed rest.

Half way through this process he heard a peculiar noise from outside. Peering out the window he observed a truck backed up to the wide flung doors of his garage. Like a flash the meaning of the scene penetrated his mind. Swearing vividly he found his

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automatic and dashed madly downstairs in his night shirt. This was unfortunate. He made noise.

Outside, in the garage, a shadowy figure dropped the stack of old, very old Astoundings it had been loading on the truck and stood quite still, listening. Then it faded back into the inky darkness and produced a long wicked looking 45.

Namreka rushed into the building vowing angrily he'd kill every lousey mag. thief in the joint. He stopped. "Well, where the ~~##'%&'~~ are you? Come out or I'll spray the place with lead."

An evil chuckle drifted to his ears. "What, and mess up this treasure trove."

"Yes, dammit." The number one fan groaned at the thought.

"To bad Namreka, in that case you've got to die."

The garage reverberated with shots. Through the smoke a staggering figure could be seen. It's knees folded. Then. Flop! It pitched forward on its face.

A rush of feet. The whir of a starter and the truck leaped into the street. It vanished around a corner.

The police were stumped. Days lengthened into weeks with no results. Nobody would kill a man for a few moth eaten old magazines, they said. They laughed at the fans who pointed out the fact that a whole garage full of old moth eaten magazines was missing.

In northern California a youth crouched in a basement, drooling. Around him were stacks and stacks of rare old Amazings, Astoundings, etc:

