

Fanotokha

A Play by Andy Hooper



An Introduction to Fanotchka

Having temporarily drifted into a backwater of gafia, I find it challenging to explain or even understand the motives and ideas behind a work as faanish as this melo-dramatic pastiche, Fanotchka. It is, certainly, a parody of Ernst Lubitsch' 1939 film Ninotchka, starring Greta Garbo and Melvyn Douglas. Released November 9th, 1939, the fantasy of a properly socialist Russian woman tempted by the wiles of a Parisian gigolo found its audience subdued by the advent of another European war, and the social evils of totalitarianism bearded by its comedy suddenly seemed trivial in comparison. Garbo was sublime in her first comic role, but lost the Oscar to Vivian Leigh in *Gone With the Wind*.

The idea of relocating the story to a comic opera version of science fiction fandom first came to me some time in the late 1980s. The dynastic and revolutionary back-ground of the film seemed easy to adapt to the endless and spurious conflict be-tween serious, constructive fans, personified by convention-runners and over-serious amateur critics, and more insurgent, fan-focused trufen and fanzine fans. Originally, I planned it as simple fan fiction, maybe as long as a novelette, but nothing as ambitious as a reader's theater play with a dozen characters to cast. But after writing several plays for performance at Worldcon, Corflu and other con-ventions, I found myself committed to finishing a new script for premiere at the 1996 Worldcon in Anaheim, California. Originally, I had boasted that I was prepar-ing a fannish version of the Donner Party tragedy, but ultimately this was just too sardonic even for my taste, and I had to devise something else without a lot of lead time. The fannish retelling of Ninotchka swam back up from my deep and distant memories, and the first draft was finished in one 12 hour session.

The context of the original production lent itself to a few cheap topical gags — you can never going wrong with jokes about William Shatner for an audience of Angelenos — still, I think the fun house view of fandom offered here will seem familiar to anyone who has been an actifan in the past two decades. I knew that stuff would go over well. What surprised me was how effective the love story at the center of the plot proved to be. Fans, it turned out, were big sappy romantics at heart, and simply swooned when I delivered a happy ending. Paul Williams and Cindy Lee Berryhill were brilliant in the lead parts, and brought a genuine affection to their interplay. The political aspects of the story were less thought out — I hadn't any real intention of accusing any part of fandom of totalitarian ambitions, any more than I expected the backwards "R" in the title of Apparatchik to be a correct use of cyrillic letters. If there is a real conflict paralleled by the fan club struggles in Fanotchka, it is in the personality of every fan, where the battle between the gosh-wow grinning fanboy and coolly slannish technocrat continues unabated in its second century.

—Andrew Hooper February 5th, 2002

Andy Hooper's

FANOTCHKA

THE CAST

Iranoff	Con-runner from the Tri-State Science Fiction League
Mudger	Con-runner from the Tri-State Science Fiction League
Beaupall	A slightly more cautious con-runner from the Tri-State Science Fiction League
Mr. Lansing	Day manager of the Builtup Hotel
Roberto Bolsa	A room-service waiter
Leon Dalghu	A frivolous fanzine fan
D. Jenny Winder	Big-name fan, long-time chair of the Tri-State Science Fiction League
Mercenaire	A famous huckster
Fanotchka Fettucini	Deputy convention commissioner, Tri-State Science Fiction League
Otto Fied	A mimeographer
MacArthur Ho Park	A fanzine fan
Lentil Hackberg	Another fanzine fan
John Barkenhorst	Convention Commissioner, Tri-State Science Fiction League

NARRATION (conversationally): This story takes place at the World Science Fiction Convention, in a hot, decadent city where dreams are the most important industry. The time is a labor day weekend in a happier year, perhaps one without a general election or other moral crisis, but with a tight pennant race, and more hope than fear. As registration opens on Thursday afternoon, three shabby fen in threadbare Constellation T-shirts stand outside the front door of the Builtup hotel. They gather up their courage to walk through the big revolving doors and into the vast, echoing lobby.

Scene 1: The Builtup Hotel

IRANOFF: Oh this is amazing. We haven't got a single hotel like this in Rain City, and they have at least three this big. But this the best. this is definitely the best. It's like a set from a Ridley Scott film. Or a James Gurney painting. Or something powered by a naked, pulsing singularity in a Greg Bear novel . . .

MUDGER: Get a grip, Iranoff. It's just a hotel. Somewhere in the bowels of the building a hundred Hmong refugees are polishing the silver for two groats an hour.

IRANOFF: You're like a human antidote to the sense of wonder, Mudger, you know that?

BEAUPALL: Don't start a fight, you two. That's all we need, for Barkenhorst to find out we were seen brawling in the lobby of the Builtup hotel. That would be a big boost to the bid's popularity.

MUDGER: Oh, I don't know about that, Beaupall. Remember the year the Texans made eight-alarm chili, and wouldn't let anyone get to the beer without buying a pre-support? People admire brass, they go for a little flash. And the bid that inspires the most gossip is usually the one that gets the most votes.

BEAUPALL: You need to stop having ideas like that, or we'll end up on the children's Animé committee when we get home. Commissioner Barkenhorst reads every voucher, and signs every check, and there a lot of people in the club who would have liked a free trip to the Worldcon. Now you want to betray his trust by putting us up in this gaudy hotel. Remember, our vote isn't for another four years, we can't afford full-time parties yet.

IRANOFF: Gaudy! That's a good word for it. It's like the cover of a C.J. Cherryh novel come to life. Imagine what the beds are like here! Free Sci-Fi channel and VH-1 in the room! Ice machines that really work.

BEAUPALL: Not like the Mystic Gherkin. I bet these people don't even know what an earwig looks like.

MUDGER: We're here to make money, not spend it. The Mystic Gherkin makes it just 12 dollars a head for us, 10 after Sunday.

IRANOFF: Of course you're happy with it. You've got the key. We have to wait until no one's watching and give the secret knock before you'll let us in.

BEAUPALL: If you feel like it.

MUDGER: I told you, I was taking a shower.

IRANOFF: But look, I didn't bring us here because I wanted more towels. If we're going to get the best price for the Winder collection, we have to be able to show it to people. Big time hucksters need to be near the action, ready to snap up a rare Arkham House edition of Chuch Harris, Frontier Nurse when it comes by, then lay it out in the black-velvet-lined display case with a \$700 price tag on it.

MUDGER: It's the Tri-State Science Fiction League Library, not the Winder collection. The court said so, Iranoff, and it doesn't help when even WE can't remember to use the right name.

IRANOFF: It's worth more as the Winder collection. She might have walked off with thousands of dollars in club assets, but the former Madame chair has a name fans recognize instantly. They'll be climbing all over each other to buy a piece of her collection.

BEAUPALL: Her name is on the flyleaf of every book, but she bought them with club funds, and they belong to the fans of Rain City, Doomstown and Particolor. Try to keep that in mind when you go off on one of your Fandom-is-just-a-source-of-income fantasies.

IRANOFF: Listen, all I'm saying is that we have to be smart about this business. You want to squat in the Mystic Gherkin like Jack waiting for a handful of magic beans, that's about what you'll get. But if we get a room here in the Builtup -- have an open party to show off the collection -- let it slip we want to hear some competing bids -- we could make a fortune, pay for the expense of the room and the party and still show half-again the profit we're going to

if we just accept what Barkenhorst is expecting us to.

MUDGER: I hear Mercenaire is an honest dealer, and offered a fair price.

IRANOFF: So he is! But we want an unfair price, and the only way to get that is to stir people up. Create a perception of demand and scarcity. Let it slip that the deal is nearly done, and we need some quick counter-offers. Get them bidding against one another until they need a bib to keep from drooling on their name badges. That's the way we should be running this show.

BEAUPALL: It would be nice to each have our own pillow, too. And maybe a mint on it, instead of a water-bug.

IRANOFF (Shivery): Oh, that's it! You go get the first of the crates, and I'll talk to the management.

MUDGER AND BEAUPALL: (As LANSING and IRANOFF reach the middle of their dialogue, one of the pair begins to make a noise like a truck engine, while the other emits loud beeps as of backing lights. When IRANOFF reaches the words "like this?" the engine noise should stop in



a loud “Zhhhhssshhh,” as if of the engine stopping and air brakes being set. Mudger can do a little mime of driving the truck, while Beaupall “Spots” him.)

IRANOFF: Excuse me, sir, are you the manager?

MR. LANSING: Yes sir, my name’s Lansing. What can I do for you?

IRANOFF: My colleagues and I are not satisfied with our current accommodations and were wondering if you could possibly help us in finding a room here at the Builtup.

MR. LANSING: Certainly! We were sold out, but we’ve had a number of cancellations.

(Begin Sound FX)

IRANOFF: Well, that’s good news. But I’m not sure if you’ll be able to meet some of our more critical needs. Do you have security boxes for your guests?

MR. LANSING: Of course.

IRANOFF: But are they large enough to handle rather large cases and packages? Like this?

MR. LANSING: Oh, I don’t know -- that’s a little large for the safe deposit boxes.

IRANOFF: Well, do you have any rooms with security lockers of their own? Safes? Secure doors to the room? Armored closets?

MR. LANSING: As it happens, we do have one such set of rooms. And they might especially appeal to you gentleman on the strength of your interest in “sci-fi” (elaborately, and pronounced as “sky-fi”)

IRANOFF: Really? How so?

MR. LANSING: I’m proud to offer you the William Shatner suite. Seven rooms, Minoxodil on tap, and the furnishings are sometimes yellow, sometimes green!

MUDGER: (pause a beat) We’ll still take it.

Scene 2: The Builtup Hotel, The Shatner Suite

NARRATION: Staggering under the weight of the Winder collection of pulps, prozines, hard covers, paperbacks, fanzines and Walt Kelly promotional figurines from boxes of Dreft, the three struggle into the freight elevator, and through the back door of the 24th floor. The surroundings are opulently clean, with none of the monkey vomit stains so common on the floors of the Mystic Gherkin Motel. They are assigned their own waiter to help them coordinate their party plans with the catering department. Unknown to the three, however, this is no ordinary waiter; he is in fact Roberto Bolsa, a former aide of former Madame Chairman Winder of the Tri-State Science Fiction League, whose collection they are hauling into their rooms.

ROBERTO BOLSA: Naturally, you’ll want some of our famous sliced pineapple plates.

MUDGER: What’s so famous about them?

ROBERTO BOLSA: They're 16 dollars a plate.

MUDGER: Treading the line between fame and infamy, I see. But if we're to beat out Garth Kreasing Books for most notable party on the floor, we'll need a bunch of them. I swear, the man gets to the convention a week early so he can start cooking.

IRANOFF: Wow! Look at this! Speaker phone in the bathroom! Electric sheets! And look (remote clicking noise) (Sound effects: Oh! Oh! Oh!) Bowdlerized porno movies with all the glorious dialogue and none of the genital shots!

MUDGER: Yes, we have drunk the milk of paradise.

BEAUPALL: I'm more impressed with these paintings from the life of Shatner. Here we have the hysterical transporter-accident double with too much eyeliner. And here the worst production of the Hound of the Baskervilles ever made. And here -- this goes beyond aesthetics, into something like -- uh --

IRANOFF: What's it say at the bottom?

MUDGER: "T.J. Hooker, season two: The Day the Truss Gave Way."

BEAUPALL: I don't know if I go for this modern art.

IRANOFF: Yes, but it's a little like a mid-thirties Astounding cover, isn't it? Here the whirling heterodyne -- and these bulges are like the teeming compound eyes of the alien menace.

MUDGER: Teeming?

IRANOFF: I can show you something just like -- see, I have the image here on my Newton. I have almost the whole Winder collection catalogue scanned in now. Course, I can't carry it all on disk at once, but if I need them --

BEAUPALL: Can't we even try to call it the Tri-State SFL Library when we're alone?

ROBERTO BOLSA: Pardon me for interrupting, gentleman, but did you say "The Winder collection?" Were you referring to D. Jenny Winder, the one-time chair of the Rain City Science Fiction Club?

MUDGER: Indeed we were. Why do you ask?

ROBERTO BOLSA: Oh, I -- well, you know I run something of a small book service myself. I specialize in Happy Hollister mysteries and Braille editions of Lucky Starr.

IRANOFF: Oooh! Cool!

ROBERTO BOLSA: My Card.

BEAUPALL: "F. Olding Munny, rare and disturbing editions."

ROBERTO BOLSA: A nom de guerre, of sorts. I would love to talk with you when my duties permit. I understand the Winder collection has a complete set of 3-D Insect Fear Film Trading Cards from Ma Rainey's Moleskin cookies boxes, Set I, January 1962 to June 1963? A buyer I'm acquainted with might offer a very high price. But right now, unless there is anything

further I can do for you gentleman, I should see to your lunch orders?

IRANOFF: Absolutely! I'm so hungry I could eat TWO bags of pork rinds.

ROBERTO BOLSA: Very good sir.

MUDGER: Interesting, isn't it, that in one hotel we should find a huckster with the soul of a waiter and a waiter with the soul of a huckster?

Scene 3: The Goulart Arms, suite of D. Jenny Winder, bnf

NARRATION: Riding the freight elevator directly to the subterranean garage, Bolsa the waiter jumps into his late-model Hyundai and speeds across the Anaheim to an exclusive resort complex known as "The Goulart Arms." Leaving his little towel in the car, he rides another elevator to the penthouse, where D. Jenny Winder and her latest boy-toy, the fan-editor and gigolo Leon Dalghu, are lounging on the verandah.

WINDER: Leon, do you think I should wear the Klingon nose or the Bajoran nose to the costumer's party tonight? The Bajoran nose is so much cuter, but someone told me it makes my eyes look too close together. Of course the Klingon nose makes it harder to eat, which is sometimes a good thing at these chili and pork-rind parties. But then, wearing a nose at all sometimes makes it hard to get into the SFFWA suite, even when I tell them I'm a personal friend of Diane Duane. Maybe the Bajoran nose is the way to go -- so much easier to accessorize, and sometimes people forget you're wearing a nose at all.

DALGHU: One great virtue of your conversation, DJenny, is that you are unfailingly happy to answer your own questions.

WINDER: Oh Leon, you're so bad.

DALGHU: Positively Satanic.

WINDER: So how did your dinner with all those publishing people go last night?

DALGHU: (Brightening) Oh, Djenny, it was perfect! We had the most wonderful time!

WINDER: Ugh! Publishers! I can't imagine what I would find to talk about with people who spend all their times worried about books. I'm glad I've left all that behind now.

DALGHU: Well, you'd be surprised. Some very nice people associate with editors and publishers. And you shouldn't scoff, because I have some perfectly marvelous news to tell you!

WINDER: Oh, is CBS bringing back *Beauty and the Beast* again?

DALGHU: Better! You remember that deluxe Gestetner Copy-printer that reads your thoughts and cuts them direct to stencil? You'll be able to afford to buy it for me now.

WINDER: Oh, Leon, how you spoil me. So tell me, what's behind this sudden tide of solvency?

DALGHU: Well, I had at least three publishers counter-bidding for the right to publish your memoirs. Offer them a few thousand words of "My Memories of Empire and Excess," and we'll be floating in money. The true story behind the Tri-State SFL scandal! Roger Corman is interested in the film rights, and someone told me Joan Collins would be happy to read for the

talking book, plus we could do a series of CD-ROM adventure games with --

WINDER: Honestly, Leon, sometimes you are such a huckster. Where is the simple young man I found publishing book reviews in his basement? Has it been so long since that night I showed you Vincent Price's star on the walk of fame? You know I could never submit myself to such public scrutiny.

DALGHU: Well, we need to do something around here. Pretty soon I'll be reduced to printing on the back of crud sheets again.

ROBERTO BOLSA: (sound like an intercom buzzer)

WINDER: Who is it?

ROBERTO BOLSA: (as if through the intercom) It's Bobby Bolsa, Madame Chairman, I have some extremely important news. Can I come in?"

WINDER: Bolsa! What could that weasel want? Let him in, would you Leon?

DALGHU: Of course I will. (a little beat of foley) Roberto! So nice to see you again.

ROBERTO BOLSA: Ms. Winder, I can only stay a moment, I'm in the middle of lunch service, so I'll come to the point. Your collection is here, at the Worldcon.

WINDER: What?

ROBERTO BOLSA: Your run of ASF, Madame Chairman. Your copy of Vargo Statten with the reversed color cover. Your E.E. Smith proofs. Your Gnome Press editions. The unburnt stumps from the Supermancon indoor cricket game. The cans of Leonard Nimoy's shoe polish. The set of chicken bones from the Walter Breen Picnic. All of it!

WINDER: That's impossible. All that stuff is under lock-and-key at the Rain City Clubhouse. All you need is a membership card and you can check it out like a copy of Curious George from the public library.

ROBERTO BOLSA: Yet, there are three fans in the William Shatner suite at the Builtup hotel, with the entire collection in a dozen crates, ready to sell them to the highest bidder!

WINDER: They wouldn't dare!

DALGHU: Oh, but they would. Their bid for the 2004 Worldcon is in big trouble, almost no one is taking them seriously. And for some reason, people are reluctant to give pre-supporting money to a club that has had so many financial scandals in recent years . . . they must need to sell the collection for bid capital!

WINDER: This is terrible! It was bad enough knowing that my books and tapes and fanzines and knickknacks were available to any fan with 12 dollars in dues money, but having them dispersed into the paws of a dozen dealers -- they can't do this, can they? When I gave all that stuff back to the club, the agreement was that they had to preserve the collection intact!

DALGHU: They probably can. It would require an amendment to the League bylaws, but they could do it if the need was great enough.

WINDER: If their part of the agreemant can be invalidated, so can ours -- right?

DALGHU: Of course! I know a judge who will write a restraining order in his sleep. They may be a registered corporation in TriState, but in California that and four bucks will get you a cup of coffee. We can keep them tied up in court for ten years. Come on, Roberto, take me to them. If I know the way the clubfannish mind works, we should come out of this with a big chunk of the profits.

WINDER: Go get them, Leon! Use the BIG Forceps!

DALGHU: Darling, you're beautiful when you're vengeful.

Scene 4: The Builtup Hotel, the Shatner Suite

(Sound EFX: Clinking of glasses)

IRANOFF: I don't care what people say, I think this California champagne is quite good!

BEAUPALL: Yes, and I don't think I've ever seen this many macadamia nuts in one place before.

MUDGER: All right, you two drunkards leave the talking to me now. Remember, this is the richest dealer on the entire west coast, and if anyone afford to buy the whole collection, it's him!

(Sound FX: Door-knock)

MUDGER: Please come right in, Mr. Mercenaire.

MERCENAIRE: Oh, call me Hank, everyone does. What a nice -- OH! T.J. Hooker. The second season, I presume?

MUDGER: Uh -- yes.

MERCENAIRE: Bill had to use a different tint that year, the FDC outlawed Tawny # 24.

IRANOFF: You can't fool the expert eye!

MERCENAIRE: Well, thank you. Now, you had some signature pieces you wanted to show me?

BEAUPALL: Well, yes, there are a few things we actually left off the catalogue, in case we ended up holding a public auction. Things we assumed we'd do better offering to a few discerning collectors.

MERCENAIRE: Ah, I love a conspiracy.

IRANOFF: Shahm-pahn-ya?

MERCENAIRE: Oh, thank you.

MUDGER: The first thing I wanted you to see was this collection of eraser carvings attributed to the young Francis Towner Laney. You'll note the donkey in this one --

(Sound FX: Knock on door)

BEAUPALL (on top of Iranoff) : Who can that be?

IRANOFF (on top of Beupall) : I'll get it.

DALGHU (hustling in): Good afternoon, is this the office of the TriState Science Fiction League?

MUDGER (over Dalghu): Excuse me, sir, but we're having a private luncheon. Who are you and --

DALGHU (Over Mudger): Hi, Hank, how've you been? You ever get your money back on those mis-cut Steven King trading cards?

MERCENAIRE: Leon! Well, this is a surprise! Are you bidding on the Winder collection too?

BEAUPALL: Oh, no, no, we're not showing it to anyone else yet, Mr. Mercenaire!

DALGHU: Well, I have to admit that's why I'm here. Is that Champagne? (sniffs) Hmm, Mondavi.

MUDGER: Sir, I must insist --

DALGHU: Oh, right! No, Hank, I just wanted to make sure that you didn't put yourself under a charge of receiving stolen goods.

MERCENAIRE (all together): Well this is an interesting development. I was told that --

BEAUPALL (all together) : Oh, no, no, Chairman Winder herself agreed --

IRANOFF (all together) : Stolen goods? The only people these goods were stolen from were the members --

MUDGER (cutting them off, very loud): IN AN AGREEMENT WITNESSED BY THE RAIN CITY ATTORNEY, D. Jenny Winder surrendered all title to these science fiction materials in exchange for assurances that the TriState Science Fiction League would not pursue charges against her , to wit: Embezzlement, Fraud, Grand Theft , Simony, impersonating a Federal Poultry Inspector --

DALGHU: All noted and stipulated to, sir, but you're in the State of California now. And this -- (crinkling paper) -- is a court order restraining you from the sale of the items listed in the official catalogue and any additional goods attached thereto, pending determination of the true ownership of said articles in a California Court.

MUDGER: That phony order isn't worth the paper it's Xeroxed on!

MERCENAIRE: Let me see that. Uh huh . . . Uh huh . . . oooh, this is bad.

BEAUPALL & IRANOFF: D'ohhh!

MERCENAIRE: Yes, this looks like a completely legal and valid court-order to me, gentlemen. I'm still quite interested in the collection, including those Tijuana rubber stamps, but you'll have to have the matter resolved in a California court before I can afford to even offer a bid. I'll be in the dealer's pit the rest of the weekend if you can find a way to resolve this.

(sound FX: door closing)

MUDGER: I don't know who you are, pal, but you've bought yourself a world of hurt.

DALGHU: Well, let me make that much right, anyway. My name is Leon Dalghu, and I am here as an official representative of Madame Chairman Winder. Plus, I publish a few fanzines, let me know if you'd like to see a copy.

IRANOFF: Jenny Winder doesn't have a legal claim to a single book in any of these crates! Not only did she steal them to begin with, she signed away any and all rights to them to stay out of jail.

DALGHU: Well, that's quite true. We all know that. The problem is that the California court system doesn't know that, and it will take some convincing to make them believe it. And who knows how long that might take? Two years, three . . . all the while, the collection will sit in some extra-large evidence locker somewhere, while the Rain City Worldcon bid slowly withers and dies on the vine . . .

BEAUPALL: I don't believe this is happening. Barkenhorst will kill us.

MUDGER: Shut up, Beaupall. I take it there is some way that this legal nightmare might still be averted?

DALGHU: Of course there is. After all, it doesn't do me any good to have the collection locked up either. So I'm prepared to offer a very reasonable arrangement that will be of aid to both parties.

MUDGER: And that is?

DALGHU: A fifty-fifty spilt of all the money made from the sale of the collection, half to the TSFL and half to Jenny Winder.

MUDGER: There is no way we can possibly accept such a solution, Mr. Dalghu. We haven't the authority to do such a thing. And even if we did, I'm sure I would have to --

DALGHU: Please, please, sir, I'm sure that everything under the sun might prove to be negotiable if we ponder it long enough. But for the moment, I'm happy to consider your offer . . .

IRANOFF: Our offer? What offer do you mean?

DALGHU: Why, didn't you say something about lunch? Here, let me have some of those macadamia nuts.

Scene 5: The Shatner Suite, the morning after

NARRATION: It is the Friday morning of the Worldcon. The Shatner suite looks as if either a tornado or the Klingon Diplomatic Corps has gone through it. Iranoff, Mudger and Beaupall lie sprawled on various pieces of furniture, each rather eccentrically half-dressed. Iranoff snores gently under a large red fez, bearing the legend "I've been to see the BEAVERS at BEAVERWORLD!" This falls off his head and on to the floor with a thump, just as the telephone rings. Mudger leaps from the love seat, scattering a lap-full of empty cans and picks up the phone.

MUDGER: What? Yes, this is -- oh, yes, since it's -- ELEVEN THIRTY! Oh, yes, please send up the housekeepers and -- yes, voice mail -- all right, I'll hold -- WAKE UP YOU IDIOTS! Which one of you phoned the Commissioner's voice mail?

IRANOFF (sick): I did. I thought we'd agreed I would. And then after we finished one of those tiny little bottles of the green stuff, you sent me for the phone, and after Bubbles got off my lap --

MUDGER: Shut up, they have his reply! Here, I'll put it on speaker.

BARKENHORST(tinny, phone-like) "This is Jim Barkenhorst calling. What the hell do you mean, you have to split the profits with Jenny Winder? If you three dolts give her so much as a bus token, you better not show your faces around here again! You'll be drinking your dinner through a straw, in case you aren't already doing that, you no-good drunken, idiot -- I better not be paying for all that booze, you -- oooohh -- gahhh -- SON OF A BITCH! (dial tone)

BEAUPALL: I'm going to be sick.

BARKENHORST (still on the phone) "This is Jim Barkenhorst calling. I'm sorry I got so mad earlier, but you know how it is. Modern technology, just lets you make an ass of yourself even faster, heh-heh. Anyway, boys, I'm sending you some help. I never anticipated you'd have to deal with this kind of problem. So, deputy commissioner Fettucini will be out there to take charge of the situation. Just meet the commissioner at the airport; the noon plane from Rain City. And have fun!" (dial tone)

MUDGER: NOON! OK, we have to work fast. Iranoff, get over to the u-park and get the Pinto. Beupall, help me pick up all these bottles. And get those nitrous cartridges out of the bathroom!



BEAUPALL: I AM going to be sick.

(sound FX: Phone bail clicking)

MUDGER: Hello, desk? No, we don't want more condoms! Listen carefully, I need this taken care of right away. I need you to take all of our things and move them from the Shatner Suite to the smallest, most modest room you have. Yes, right next to the kitchen, that's fine. No, we'll still need the Shatner Suite, but it should be switched to the name of a -- Commissioner Fettucini.

IRANOFF: (giggles)

MUDGER: What are you still doing here?

BEAUPALL : (discreet retching noises -- pour glass of water into

pail)

Scene 6: Orange County Airport

NARRATION: The three hungover fans get themselves as close to upright as they can and hustle to the Orange County Airport, to meet Deputy Convention Commissioner Fettucini

IRANOFF: What kind of a name is Fettucini, anyway? The guy must be Italian, don't you think?

BEAUPALL: Are you sure he said Orange County? Are you sure we aren't supposed to be at Ontario instead?

MUDGER: No, this is the flight number. Now try to look like human beings, and help me find the commissioner.

IRANOFF: Look, that guy's a fan -- look at the buttons Maybe he's the one.

MUDGER: No, look, he's with those furry fans over there.

BEAUPALL: God, how can they stand it? I'd hate having all that hair on my tongue.

MUDGER: Maybe this big dude, huh?

(Sound EFX: "T'plah!" T'plah!" Loud smack of forehead on forehead)

IRANOFF: Everybody's a Klingon . . .

FANOTCHKA: Iranoff, Mudger and Beaupall, I presume.

MUDGER: Umm, I believe you have us at a disadvantage, miss. We're --

FANOTCHKA: I'm Fanotchka Fettucini, deputy convention commissioner for the TSFL. You were expecting me?

IRANOFF: Here, let me take your bag!

FANOTCHKA: I can carry it.

MUDGER: I'm sorry, I -- well, that is, we -- If they had --

FANOTCHKA: You didn't know I was a woman? Don't you read the club bulletin? My appointment made the front page last issue.

BEAUPALL: We've been pretty busy with this business of selling the Win -- I mean the member's library.

FANOTCHKA: Yes, and you've made a hash of it. I don't know why they didn't recall you immediately, but maybe it's cheaper to fly out in mid-week. Or perhaps they'll just have you shot right here.

BEAUPALL: (miserably small) : Shot?

FANOTCHKA: Calm down, it's a joke. We'll fix all this and come home covered in glory. but

only if you pull you're own weight. No, I can CARRY it! Just show me where the car is.

Scene 7: The Shatner Suite, Friday afternoon:

NARRATION: The four return to the now-cleaned and fumigated Shatner suite.

FANOTCHKA: I'm not sure what to make of this; which part of the room is mine?

MUDGER: I know it's a bit much, but this is all yours, Deputy Commissioner.

FANOTCHKA: Were you planning on trying to get all this by the financial committee? As I recall, you were supposed to be at The Mystic Gherkin Motel.

IRANOFF: Well, we were, but it turned out no one was willing to come see us there.

FANOTCHKA: Mr. Mercenaire was willing to.

MUDGER: I take full responsibility, Deputy Commissioner. We felt that we ought to entertain rival offers before we met with Mercenaire. See what the market would bear.

FANOTCHKA: And in doing so, you attracted the attention of the former club chair. Who, understandably, has leapt at the opportunity to lay her hands on the books and memorabilia once more. So, do you understand why the directorate would have preferred to see you stay in the Mystic Gherkin after all?

MUDGER: Of course.

FANOTCHKA: But don't worry, Mudger, you're off the hook. Now that I'm here, I'm the one responsible for the success or failure of the mission. All you have to answer to is me. Which may be worse, once you get to know me.

MUDGER: I'm sure --

FANOTCHKA: I think you should reserve judgment until we're through. Right now, I need you to get us some legal advice. See if you can log on to the convention database and find out if any con members are lawyers who might be willing to take a look at our situation. Iranoff, you should take the collection catalogue around the dealer's area, see what kind of interest we'll face if we do manage to get the injunction lifted. Which we will do. We'll make Madame Chairman sorry she ever poked her head back out of her hole. And we WILL keep the bid going, and we WILL win the chance to host the Worldcon in 2004. And Beaupall --

BEAUPALL (rather too brightly): Yes!

FANOTCHKA: Any chance we could get some food up here?

BEAUPALL: Food! We forgot to cancel our lunch order!

(Sound FX: Cacophony of carts, dishes, rather like the stateroom scene in "A Night at the Opera.")

ROBERTO BOLSA: The salmon will be along in a few minutes, folks.

FANOTCHKA: Oh, boys, boys -- you didn't need to order all this on my account

IRANOFF, MUDGER AND BEAUPALL: (Heavy, relieved sighs)

Scene 8: The Shatner suite, two hours later.

NARRATION: Following some gastric fortification, and a lot of phone calls, the situation begins to look much brighter.

FANOTCHKA: All right. So we have assurances from the California State's Attorney's office that they will not respond to any request for seizure of the collection. That's good. But neither can they do anything to free us from this nuisance lawsuit. Not as good. While we have bids on the total collection in excess of \$40,000, which is very, very good, yet no one is willing to sign a contract to that effect, pending resolution of the Winder claim, which is worst of all. We need earnest money to seal hotel contracts, create web sites, brochures, bribe teamsters, all of the little things that can make a Worldcon go. And we have no way of raising that money in the short term, apart from the sale of this library.

MUDGER: In fandom, money isn't everything, Commissioner Fettucini.

FANOTCHKA: That's true, and that's a good attitude to take if you don't have any. But hopeful platitudes will not bring the Worldcon to Rain City, Mudger. Still, I'd prefer if you called me Fanotchka -- my last name seems to make people hungry.

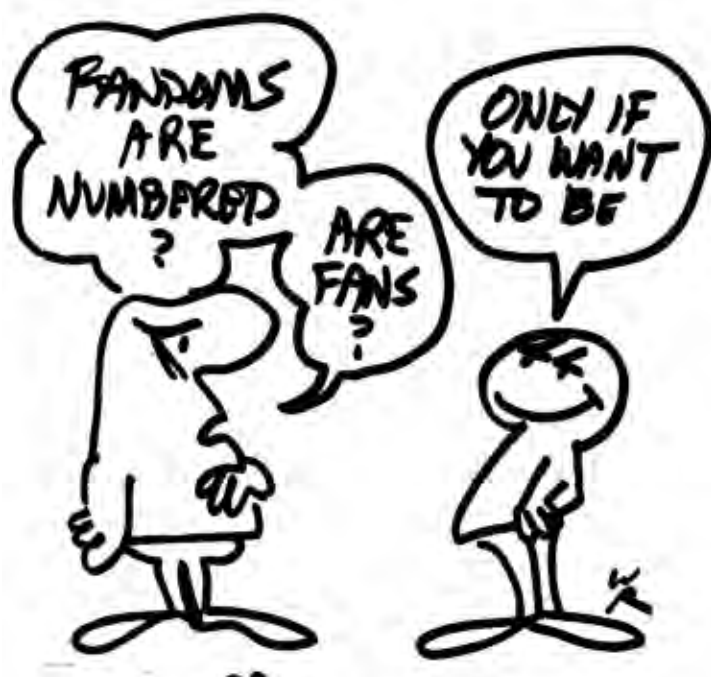
MUDGER: And you can call me Mark.

IRANOFF: Tom.

BEAUPALL: Garret

FANOTCHKA: Pleased to meet you all.

BEAUPALL: I just assumed that Fanotchka Fettucini was a badge name.



FANOTCHKA: No, that's really who I am. My father was a member of The Diggers in the sixties and changed his name from Robert Clarke to Frankie Fettucini. Legally. And he and my mom were big fans of the Strugatskys and Andre Tarnkovsky, so they named me Fanotchka, little fan.

IRANOFF: Wow. A second generation fan!

FANOTCHKA: There are third and fourth generation fans around these days.

MUDGER: Well, we're sorry that you had to come all the way down here, Fanotchka. I'm sure Barkenhorst would never have sent you if it wasn't for that eel Dalghu -- I swear,

he could talk a person into anything.

FANOTCHKA: What he is, Mark, is a gambler. He's gambling that our need for money is so great that we'll agree to his conditions in order to make a sale during this weekend. If wonder if we wait another day, will his request for a percentage drop from one half to one third? And then to one quarter? Of course, if he actually takes us to court, he'll lose his case and be in line to pay us damages for the income he's cost us. This is a very bold play, and the act of a supremely irresponsible person.

BEAUPALL: True, responsibility doesn't seem to be very high on his list of features. But he has such a surplus of charm that perhaps he has been shortchanged in other areas.

FANOTCHKA: Well, I'll be on my guard. For now, let us proceed with the assumption that he will drop the injunction as the end of the weekend approaches, and continue showing the catalogue to as many customers as possible. I, for one, am going to take an hour to enjoy the Worldcon.

MUDGER: An hour! Best not be too liberal with yourself, Deputy Commissioner.

FANOTCHKA: You're right. 45 minutes ought to be enough, all I really want to see is the art show. I'll see you in -- but why such long faces, boys? After all, we're at the Worldcon!

IRANOFF: Well, it's just -- we're -- none of us had a lot to cash to spare when we came, and we had to rent the car, and there were a lot of tips last night --

BEAUPALL: We're broke.

FANOTCHKA: Good Ghu, who really needs money to have fun with 8,000 fans thronging the place? But I know what you mean, so here's a fifty from my personal expense account.

IRANOFF: Thank you very much, Deputy Commissioner!

FANOTCHKA: Bring me back 35.

Scene 9: The Convention Center lobby

(Sound FX: Rhubarb, Rhubarb)

NARRATION: Entering the convention center, Fanotchka has the sensation of stepping into a surging tide. There are people everywhere, occupying almost every available space. There are message boards, and maps and guides and newsletters to direct her from place to place, but she can't even get to them. In desperation, she climbs onto a garbage bin to see over the crowds. And is in this manner that Leon Dalghu lays eyes on her for the first time, unable to push an empty soda cup into the bin without dribbling melted ice on her shoes.

DALGHU: I wonder if I could help you find something or someone, you look kind of lost.

FANOTCHKA: Oh! I suppose I am -- help me down from here, will you?

DALGHU: Gladly.

FANOTCHKA: I was hoping to find a way to the art show, but there are so many people here it seems quite hopeless.

DALGHU: The key is to take the back corridor off the green room. Saves about twenty minutes

of struggling against the tide. I'd be happy to take you there --

FANOTCHKA: Oh, I couldn't ask you to do that.

DALGHU: I was curious about taking a look myself. Just follow me, if you like.

(Sound FX: much muted Rhubarb Rhubarb)

FANOTCHKA: Jim Burns! Oh, I love Jim Burns!

DALGHU: He's one of my favorites, too.

FANOTCHKA (laughing): Oh really? How convenient!

DALGHU: No, I do! I like all those slightly dour British illustrators, the one's who'd love to make money illustrating Warhammer manuals, but can't bring themselves to paint that much blood.

FANOTCHKA: It's really something to see the paintings at full size like this. And there's so much missing, they just put a little bit of the total picture on the front of a book.

DALGHU: And then hide it with the title, the writer's name, the bar code.

FANOTCHKA: Everyone should have a chance to see these before they decide on who to vote for in the Hugos. It's like seeing a completely different work.

DALGHU: I've always thought so.

FANOTCHKA (looking at name badge): You're a very agreeable man Mr. . . . Degler?

DALGHU: It's a friend's badge. I'm afraid I'm ghosting the convention to save money.

FANOTCHKA: I'm trying to avoid thinking of money right now, myself. So you --

DALGHU: My real name is --

FANOTCHKA: No, don't tell me! You can be Claude Degler for a while. I just -- I just want to be part of the crowd. You too.

DALGHU: All right. If it pleases you. And I can call you (reading badge) "Member # 4, TriState Science Fiction League." Funny coincidence, I was just at a party with some members of your club last night.

FANOTCHKA: I hope they behaved themselves.

DALGHU: That's a very proprietary attitude to take.

FANOTCHKA: We're bidding for the Worldcon ourselves. We have to be careful about the image we project to potential voters in the site selection ballot.

DALGHU: In my experience, bids that worry about their image come off as tight-assed and alienate people. Besides, you're bidding for 2004. You won't be up for another five years. That's a long time to worry about what people think of you.

FANOTCHKA: And do you never worry about what people think of you, Mr. Degler?

DALGHU: Oh, my reputation has been a lost cause for many years. And do I call you Member # 4, or . . . ?

FANOTCHKA: Oh, I -- I have a really silly name, I'd rather -- just call me . . . Trina. After Trina Robbins. I always thought that was really cool name. I always wanted to be a Trina.

DALGHU: Trina and Claude, together again. Two star-crossed souls trapped in a world they never made. Crisis on Infinite Earths!

FANOTCHKA: Lovely.

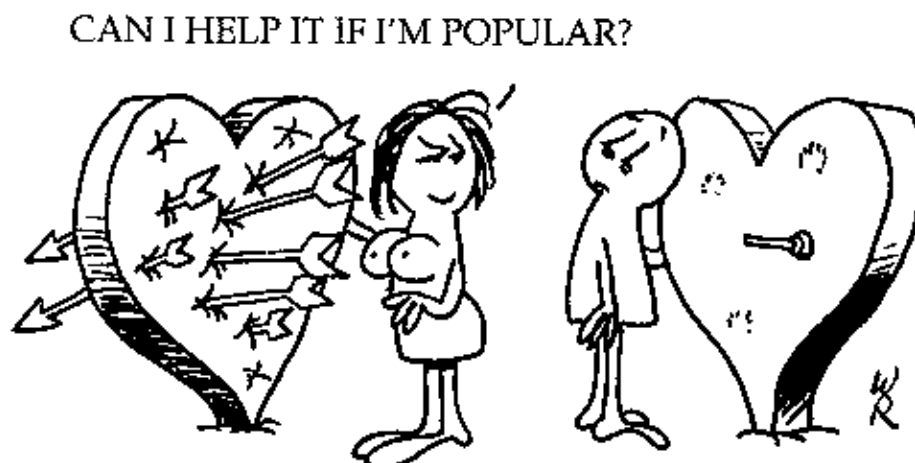
DALGHU: Tell me, Trina, would you like to get a drink with me? We could go up to the fan lounge and you could meet some very friendly fans I know . . .

FANOTCHKA: I was supposed to be meeting some friends about now . . .

DALGHU: I'm sorry --

FANOTCHKA: But I have a feeling that they are most likely having fun themselves. I'd hate to show up and be the only one there, alone in a room with the Worldcon whirling around me . . .

DALGHU: To the third floor then!





Scene 10: In the Fan Lounge

NARRATION: The Fan Lounge is a pretty cool place, you should check it out. Tables full of fanzines, comfortable places to sit, usually a good crowd of conversationalists. Into this warm embrace come Dalghu and Fanotchka, to a tiny table in the corner.

DALGHU: So, is there a Mister #4?

FANOTCHKA: No comment. But Trina is definitely single.

DALGHU: One supposes the same must be said of Claude, although I doubt it was his idea.

FANOTCHKA: Poor fellow. Doesn't get out much?

DALGHU: Too busy cataloging references to Doc Smith in *Yandro*.

FANOTCHKA: Well, one can see the attraction. Although my taste runs more toward Connie Willis and Misty Lackey.

DALGHU: I'll spare you my guilty pleasures. Tastes in science fiction, like religion, are best not discussed in polite company.

FANOTCHKA: What a funny idea. Why else would you be a fan, if you didn't love science fiction?

DALGHU: Hmmm. I think I'll get us another drink.

FANOTCHKA: What I'd like you to do is kiss me.

DALGHU: What? Right here in the fan lounge?

FANOTCHKA: Are you afraid of what your friends will say? Kissing some strange con-runner girl right here in the very center of fanzine fandom?

DALGHU: I wouldn't say you were strange.

FANOTCHKA: So kiss me!

(Sound FX: A short smooching noise.)

FANOTCHKA: Is that the best you can do?

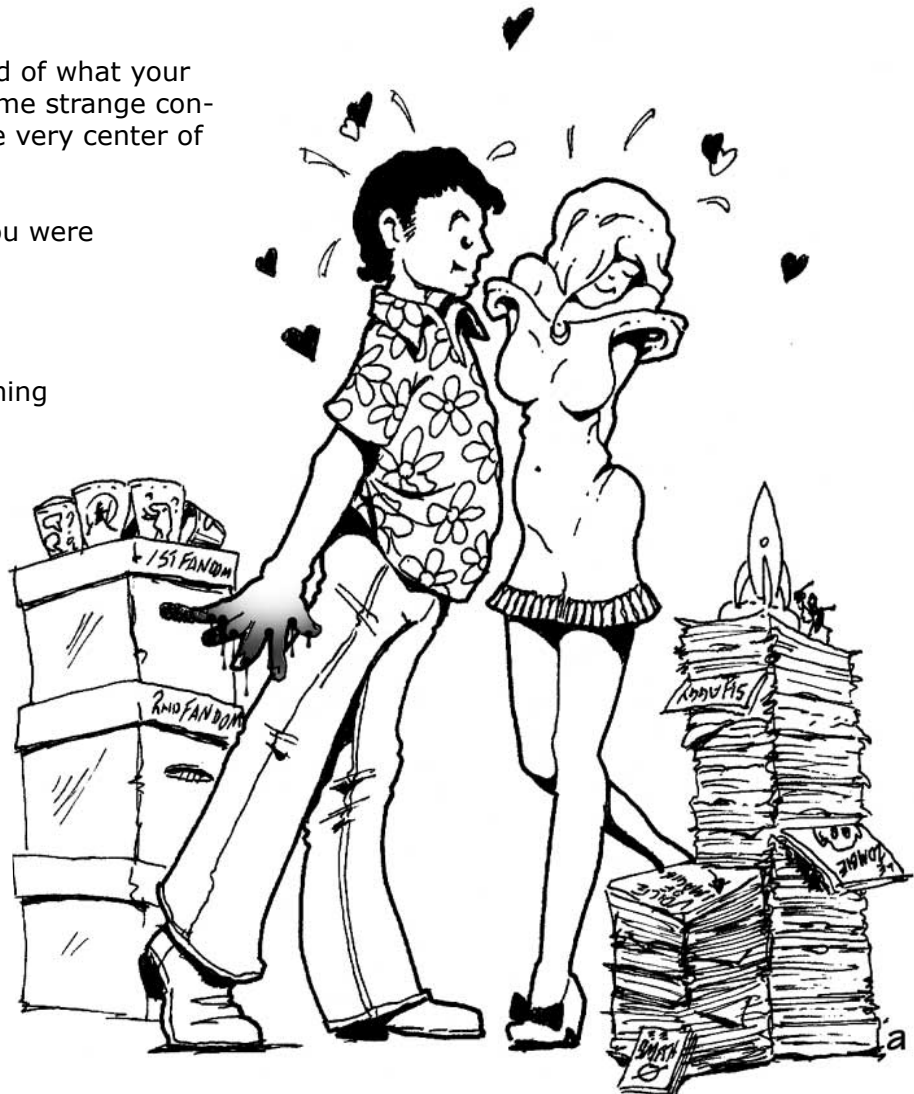
(Sound FX: A bit more tenacious this time)

DALGHU: Was that better?

FANOTCHKA: Mmmm. Maybe I should have taken a look at Fanzine writers a little earlier.

DALGHU: Personally, I'm glad you waited for me.

(Sound FX: A large, inky, sweaty person running up)



OTTO FIED: Hey, Leon! Here's the latest hoax-zine! Your article is on the cover!

DALGHU: Thanks, Otto -- look, here's some of my stuff!

FANOTCHKA: Leon? (a beat; reads) Leon Dalghu!

DALGHU: I'm afraid so, I'm not the real Claude Degler.

FANOTCHKA: You Bastard!

DALGHU: Um, not as such, but I --

FANOTCHKA: You're the creep representing D. Jenny Winder!

DALGHU: Ah...y-yes, I do some work for Ms. Winder, we're friends but I don't know what that has to do with anything.

FANOTCHKA: You're the reason I'm here in the first place. You know those books were stolen! How could you help someone who stole from us, who took --

DALGHU: I'm sorry, I had no idea that you were associated with the collection. But I should of known (striking forehead), three stiff from Rain City show up and then I meet a woman who has #4 written right on her chest.

FANOTCHKA: I have to go.

DALGHU: Listen, I don't want to have anything more to do with those books, I was acting as Jenny's agent.

FANOTCHKA: Would you PLEASE let go of me?

DALGHU: All right! I'm very sorry I didn't tell you who I was right away, but YOU were the one who didn't want to know . . .

OTTO FIED: Ah, let her go, Leon. This is Worldcon. People meet, fall in love and break up almost once every eight seconds. Convention romances decay faster than an unstable isotope.

DALGHU: You say the most stfnal things, Otto . . . but you're right. So, when is the next issue collating? I feel like doing some real work for a change.

Scene 11: The Fanzine Lounge

NARRATION: It's hard to portray subtle introspection and heavy thoughts in a radio play, so you'll just have to take my word for it that both Leon and Fanotchka thought about each other constantly for the next six hours, as she totaled up expense vouchers and he labored to put together a convention one-shot. After checking to see that Iranoff, Mudger and Beaupall were safely loaned out to a Boston bid party, Fanotchka went wandering around the Builtup Hotel, trying to find the room where the fanzines were produced. And on the way she asked a few questions about Leon Dalghu, and found out a few surprising things.

FANOTCHKA: Hi, is this the -- wow, what a nice room!

MACARTHUR HO PARK: Welcome to the fan library -- uh -- "Fanotchka Fettucini." Huh, cool. I'm Mac Ho Park, and welcome to Decker fandom hour at the Worldcon.

FANOTCHKA: Gosh, thanks, I had no idea -- is that in the program book?

MACARTHUR HO PARK: Oh no -- this is all stuff we scheduled ourselves. Actually, Decker fandom hour is a lot like the Las Vegas Pancake Feast we had two hours ago and the Winston-Salem Whipporwill Wingding that starts at eight. It's just a way to personalize our shifts supervising the party.

FANOTCHKA: Oh, so it's just another set of bid parties.

MACARTHUR HO PARK: Har! That's funny. no, this is just a regular party-party. You'd have to hand me a full run of *Energumen* to get me in the door of a bid party.

FANOTCHKA: But why?

MACARTHUR HO PARK: Oh, God, where do I start? Mostly because they're so damn crowded. And if you do get in the door, and find your thimble of scotch or your walleye cheeks, they start in trying to suck money out of you. (sing-song) "Put this sticker on your badge! Would you like to presupport our bid? Did you know Ross Pavlac can lie down full length in one of our hotel rooms?" And you have to shout like crazy, because you can't hear over the bagpipes or the cows or whatever. No thanks, I like a party like this one, with lots of couches and people you want to talk to.

FANOTCHKA: Yes, you certainly have a lot of couches.

LENTIL HACKBERG: Thank you for noticing. I had to bribe eight teamsters to get all these couches.

MACARTHUR HO PARK: Lentil Hackberg, meet Fanotchka Fettucini. Lentil is in charge of the library, plus she publishes the fanzine "Vercingetorex."

FANOTCHKA: Now where did I hear that name before?

MACARTHUR HO PARK: Probably on the Hugo ballot.

FANOTCHKA: OH, of course! I'm sorry, I didn't vote for you. I didn't know what any of the fanzines were like.

LENTIL HACKBERG: I wish people felt that way about presidential elections too. But that's okay, I wouldn't win anyway, I only make 200 copies of each issue.

FANOTCHKA: Only 200 copies? Why do you bother then?

LENTIL HACKBERG: Well, if I sent out too many more than that, I just wouldn't be able to read all the letters and fanzines I get back in trade. We publish fanzines for the response we get, not for money or awards . . . oh, but if your from Rain City, you'd know that. Great fanzines come out of Rain City. Or they used to anyway -- have you seen a copy of *Fry on the Spamless* recently, Mac?

MACARTHUR HO PARK: Not for a few years now.

LENTIL HACKBERG: It's a shame. That was a great fanzine.

FANOTCHKA: I can't believe there are so many fanzines out there -- you guys are almost out of table space!

MACARTHUR HO PARK: Oh, and I got two or three big boxes that I don't have room to put out. People have been publishing fanzines for over sixty years. Look, this one is from 1948.

LENTIL HACKBERG: Yeah, those Portland fans in the late forties were something. Look, Roscoe Wright!

MACARTHUR HO PARK: That's nothing! Check out this copy of Science Fiction Five-Yearly, with the three color cover -- acrobatic mimeography!

LENTIL HACKBERG: That's nothing! Look at this issue of Plokta! Art carved into potatoes, then modeled by a holographic magnetic imager, greyscaled in photoshop, printed on a 1200dpi laser printer, and captioned by a cabal of staring idiots!

MACARTHUR HO PARK: That's nothing! Look at this beauty! *Real Soon Now* -- a fanzine so rare, it *doesn't even exist!*



LENTIL HACKBERG:
That's nothing! Look at
this cover of Outworlds
#15. Jim Shull -- Jeff
Schalles -- printed on
human skin . . .

MACARTHUR HO
PARK (together): Oh,
Roscoe...

LENTIL HACKBERG
(together): Oh, Ghu...

FANOTCHKA: So,
um . . . do you have
any fanzines by Leon
Dalghu?

MACARTHUR HO PARK:
Hee hee -- do we have
any fanzines by Leon
Dalghu? Here, check
these out! (Sound as
of a heavy box being
placed on a table)

FANOTCHKA: All those?

LENTIL HACKBERG: And
these are just the ones
he put his own name
on. I have another box
with material by his
pseudonyms, Frank
Silversure, Dr. Twonk,
The Hermit of Twink

Hollow . . .

MACARTHUR HO PARK: Here, these are extras I culled out of some donations. Go ahead and take them!

FANOTCHKA (flaring): NO! I mean . . . I really shouldn't

LENTIL HACKBERG: Why not? You'll read them, right?

FANOTCHKA (fighting): I -- wouldn't. I -- would.

MAC HO PARK: Of course. Who can resist opening a fanzine?

FANOTCHKA: What does this mean, member fwa?

Scene 12: The collation room

NARRATION: As Fanotchka opened her newly-acquired copy of Leon Dalghu's FAPazine *Fret*, Leon was hacking out an editorial for a convention one-shot. The project was ambitious, and it took several hours to complete, but the big drum turned, and the night rolled by . . .



DALGHU: Okay, that's the last page done. We're ready to collate. Go out to the lounge and see who's still around Otto. No, lay that page on it's back, just like the others. We have to let the stack dry for a few minutes. Now are the staples we have long enough to handle eight sheets of this thick fibretone, or do we need -- Oh. (beat) Hello. (beat) How long have you been standing there?

FANOTCHKA: See, you're not afraid of hard work after all, are you?

DALGHU: Not if it's in pursuit of a good time, I'm not.

FANOTCHKA: You don't really need to take things that don't belong to you, do you?

DALGHU: I'm just a regular fan, Fanotchka. I do what I do.

FANOTCHKA: So you found out who I am.

DALGHU: When you have a friend with a laptop and password to access the convention database, you can find out all sorts of things.

FANOTCHKA: Similar things can be achieved with the telephone. Why wouldn't you accept the Hugo nomination for best fan editor?

DALGHU: Ah Christ, not that business all over again.

FANOTCHKA: You've been scribbling away behind the scenes for years. Look at all the names you write under! You have more pseudonyms than Lionel Fanthorpe! And last year you finally had the votes to make the final ballot for a fanzine Hugo award. Most people would call that the climax of a career in fandom. But you wouldn't accept the nomination. Now why would a man so eager to make off with anything that's not nailed down refuse something which he legitimately earned and deserved?

DALGHU: Ms. Fettucini, that is a very complicated story, and I have over a thousand copies of a fanzine to collate. Since you've taken such a powerful dislike to me, why can't we just leave it at that, so I can done with this work before three in the morning?

FANOTCHKA: I never said I didn't like you, Leon. I just can't stand what you're trying to do to my fan club.

DALGHU: The point was never to do anything to your fan club, it's just -- ah -- well, okay, I imagine some of Jenny's plan was to damage your fan club. She was very hurt when they threw her out, you know.

FANOTCHKA: She made off with more than \$50,000 in club money!

DALGHU: No she didn't! She came away with nothing but a bunch of ugly shoes and a deposit she forgot to take to the bank until after you'd brought charges against her! The woman is addicted to shopping, Fanotchka, and she took the monthly library budget and spent it faithfully until someone got nervous about her being too popular and found a way to get rid of her! She's still the same way, only now she's into costuming. You know what they say: She who dies with the most fabric wins? She has so much fabric that she could outfit an entire Dino De Laurentis film and have enough left over to do the road company of "Cats."

FANOTCHKA: So you do care about her.

DALGHU: No! I - Yes! Yes, I do, she's been a great friend to me. We've . . . we meant a lot to each other. But things are different these days. You get tired, always having to be "up" for things, not being able to publish on your own nickel -- it's just a lot of work not working, you know?

FANOTCHKA: So she's the one who paid for your fanzines. And that's why you didn't want to accept the Hugo nomination.

DALGHU: Partly. And partly who wants an award that once went to *Science Fiction Advertiser*?

FANOTCHKA: You and I have very different ideas about what we owe our friends. But you're not a creep, Leon. I never really thought you were.

DALGHU: High Praise I suppose, or at least the highest I'll get tonight.

FANOTCHKA: Do you really need to stay here? Can't your friend Otto handle a collation on his own? It's not like it's brain surgery.

DALGHU: I don't know -- you have to make sure no sheets stuck together, and then the placement of the staples is actually very important . . .

FANOTCHKA: I'm asking you to go to some parties with me, Leon. But you shouldn't expect me to beg.

DALGHU: Let me get this ink off my hands.

FANOTCHKA: No...no...I like these hands the way they are Leon, dirt and all. Let me hold one for a little while, okay?

DALGHU: My pleasure

Scene 13: The Shatner Suite, 1 am

NARRATION: They did not dance on the tables, and they didn't get blind drunk. They didn't fill a bathtub full of lime jello, and they didn't climb the outside of the building. But they did have a good time. And at one that morning, more than a little high, and with bid party stickers all over their chests, Leon and Fanotchka found themselves back in the Shatner suite surrounded with rare and garish paperbacks.

DALGHU: My God, look at these Doc Smith first printings! Look at the covers on these Ace doubles! Colors that do NOT appear in nature!

FANOTCHKA: And there's a lot more than just books, too. Look, this box is all full of fanzines!

DALGHU: I know, I saw the catalogue. But I can't believe the condition these things are in. "Ah, Sweet Idiocy!" Issues of Le Zombie and Slant! There are people at this convention who would be willing to pay a pretty penny for these things!

FANOTCHKA: But not you?

DALGHU: Ah, I've read almost all of them in reprint editions. Or heard people go on about them for so long I feel like I have. But it does make me think of something. I wish we had a few of these titles in the pile of stuff for the Trans-Oceanic Fan Fund auction. Maybe we could raise some real money for a change.

FANOTCHKA: Everyone has a cause at this convention.

DALGHU: But not you?

FANOTCHKA: I don't really know anymore. I've spent most of the past three years working to get our Worldcon bid up and running. But what is the Worldcon really for? We spend so much time and money putting them together, but I don't know who we're really working for. For fandom? what's fandom? I've found more definitions of that tonight than in the whole time I spent working with the tee-ess-eff--ess ... the teeiseff-leff . . . Snaffhaff --

DALGHU: In the old days, they called it RICSFIC.



FANOTCHKA: Riff -stick?

DALGHU: The Rain City Science Fiction Club. RICSFIC. Oh, and they published some wonderful fanzines. Fry of the Spamless. Tales from the Basement. Don't they know about those things any more?

FANOTCHKA: I've never heard of them, anyway.

DALGHU: See, that's the problem with your bid. You even HAD a Worldcon in Rain city, back in the late sixties. Lots of fun, too. The Trans-Oceanic Fan Fund brought Joan W. Carr over from England. Heinlein stormed in at the last minute. Someone locked Harlan in a steamer trunk and said they were going to throw him in the sound. Then they opened the box and it turned out he was never in it, it was just some Rain City fan throwing his voice. What was that guy's name? Freddie something

FANOTCHKA: I had no idea. Can you imagine that, trying to run a Worldcon bid without even knowing you've already had one? I guess everyone was just so eager to put all the scandal behind them . . .

DALGHU: The past remains locked around our ankles as we try to break into the future.

FANOTCHKA: Who said that?

DALGHU: I did.

(Both Laugh)

FANOTCHKA: I'm getting so sleepy. I don't normally drink so much you know. At home, I tend to drink Fresca or just water

DALGHU: Before you go to sleep you should take some aspirin...drink a lot of water ... I'll go . . .

NARRATION. But by the time he got back to the bed, Fanotchka was fast asleep. Leon looked at her for a long time, then left the aspirin and the glass of water on the night stand, and went back to his own room. This is a family play, you know.

Scene 14: Masquerade pre-judge, 8 AM Saturday morning.

NARRATION: His head smarting and his eyes stinging, Leon still felt better than he could remember feeling in a long time. At 8 the next morning, he went in search of D. Jenny Winder at the masquerade.

WINDER: Leon! What an amazing surprise! I didn't know anyone with a brain in their head was up this early in the morning!

DALGHU: I'll omit to comment on what that might say about you, Jenny dear.

WINDER: Oh, you know it's these idiot masquerade regulations! We have to start pre-judging now if we ever want to get the presentation done before midnight. Turn around dear, let us see -- oh, that's all right. You can just face left while you cross the stage.

DALGHU: I have something to tell you, Jenny. I hope it'll make you happy for me.

WINDER: Of course, dear. What is it? Have you won another award for your writing?

DALGHU: Nothing like that, Jenny. The fact is, I think I'm falling in love. In fact, I'm quite sure I'm in love. By all rights I should be too hungover to move. I had about seven cups of blog, and one of those giant beers the Croatians were passing out, and then Ghu only knows how much I drank at the Australians party -- yet, I feel fine. Ecstatic, even. I don't think there's any doubt about it, Jenny, I'm really in love.

WINDER: That's very nice, Leon. I'm very happy for you.

DALGHU: Is that all you have to say?

WINDER: Well, what else can I say without being impolite dear? Please let us see the blood worms really shake as you walk by -- that's it, that's a potential best novice award! Not you, of course, Leon, you're far from a novice at this sort of thing.

DALGHU: (leaning in to kiss her forehead) I knew you would want to be practical, Jenny. But we both know what I owe you. All you have to do is ask me to, and I'll do my best to forget her.

WINDER: What a dramatic way you have about you, Leon. You know I would never ask such a thing. and you also know there will always be an extra towel by the Jacuzzi for you.

DALGHU: I hope someone else will be drying off with it soon.

WINDER: Thank you, Leon. Giselle, can we do SOMETHING about these lights? Run along now, dear, I have hours of these costumes to go through. No, little one, SMILE ! Flap your poison sacs and SMILE! (A beat, A very, very long beat) Giselle, I need you to take over for me here, for just a little while. I have something I need to take care of. I assure you, I'll be back soon.

Scene 15: The Shatner Suite, 11 am Saturday

NARRATION: Fanotchka came awake with a dreadful pounding in her head, and the feeling that she had swallowed a large bucket of sand. Some thoughtful soul had left a glass of water and some aspirin by the bed. Even after swallowing, the insistent tapping continued, until she realized there was in fact someone at the door.

WINDER: Good morning, dear. I hope I haven't come at an inconvenient time. I know it always feels far too early when you're still wearing last night's dress.

FANOTCHKA: Oh my God.

WINDER: Yes, I'm sure it's a shock to meet someone you've seen only in mug shots.

FANOTCHKA: I don't know what -- I'm not so sure I'm willing to believe all the things I've heard about you Ms. Winder, but I hope you'll appreciate that I can't talk with you under the present circumstances. So I'll have to ask you to leave.

WINDER: I'm not sure I know what circumstances you're referring to. Do you mean that silly little litigation over some books and plastic toys?

FANOTCHKA: Of course.



WINDER: Well, that's all over now, Ms. Fettucini. As you can see, you no longer have any collection to protect.

FANOTCHKA (running around): What? What do you mean? I -- WHERE IS IT?

WINDER: To be honest, I really have no idea exactly where the books are. But they're someplace safe. Which is where you should have kept them, instead of using them to put stars in poor Leon's eyes. The benefit of having a personal friend on the catering staff, with a set of keys, of course.

FANOTCHKA: What? Uh -- you're mistaken about Leon, He's not here.

WINDER: I didn't come looking for Leon. (holds up his name badge) Or his name tag.

FANOTCHKA: So why DID you come here? Just to gloat?

WINDER: No, I want to propose an exchange. You have something I want, in exchange for which I am quite willing to return the collection.

FANOTCHKA: What do I have that you could possibly be interested in?

WINDER: Why, Leon, of course.

FANOTCHKA: I don't know what you're talking about.

WINDER: Well! This is a first. Leon mooning around in the morning light with words of love

on his lips, and the object of his affections doesn't even know it yet. I am sorry, I'm sure he would have preferred to tell you himself.

FANOTCHKA: I don't -- I hardly even KNOW Leon. I only met him yesterday afternoon.

WINDER: Yes, he can be terribly impulsive. But also very stubborn, and loyal to his decisions once he's made them. I'm taking this very seriously, so I advise you to do the same.

FANOTCHKA: What do you want me to do?

WINDER: I want to give you what you came here for, Ms. Fettucini, the keys to the kingdom. You can have the books back, every box. I have just one condition.

FANOTCHKA: Name it.

WINDER: I want you on the four o'clock plane back to Rain City. I have a ticket for you right here -- Stromboli Airways, I hear they're good -- they serve real meals. I promise you -- I don't know if that's worth anything to you, but it is to me -- I will never attempt to lay claim to any item in the hands of the TriState Science Fiction League again. All you have to do is walk away, and forget about Leon. If you've known him for such a short time, as you say, there ought to be no question as to what you ought to do.

FANOTCHKA: Of course you know I don't have any choice. I have to fulfill the trust placed in me by the TriState Science Fiction League.

WINDER: I know.

FANOTCHKA: Just out of curiosity, Ms. Winder, what do you think Leon would say about all this if he found out?

WINDER: He'd be scandalized, of course. He would thunder and blow. For a while. Then he would calm down and forgive me, and go off to spend a little more of my money. He wants to be man of principle, Fanotchka, but few of us have the luxury of being able to live off our principles. A few weeks from now, things will be back to normal again.

FANOTCHKA: But what about you? Don't you ever wonder if it's you he loves, or just the money?

WINDER: Look, this is very simple, my dear. You're not sure if you love him yet. But I know I do. Go somewhere and make up your mind, have a good cry if you like, smash up some crockery or eat a pound of chocolate. My love for him was there when he was kissing you, and it will be there when he's kissing someone else next week. I'm not going to give that up on the odd chance that you might turn out to love him too. Who would take that chance? Do you think Leon would want me to?

FANOTCHKA: (A beat) No. If you'll excuse me please, I'm going to take a shower. And I'll have to pack quickly if I'm going to get to the airport in time for my flight.

WINDER: Orange County, dear. Not Ontario.

Scene 16: The TOFF Auction

NARRATION: The hours pass. A buzz of anticipation runs through an eager crowd just before the Trans-Oceanic Fan Fund auction. At the back of the room, Iranoff, Mudger and Beaupall

sit in silence, with glum faces.

DALGHU: Would everyone please sit down? We have an enormous number of things to get through this evening -- If you'll please just sit down, we'll have a brief presentation on the TOFF from delegate Michael Simpson, and then get to the auction!

OTTO FIED: This note just came up from ops for you, Leon.

DALGHU. OK, OK, thank you Otto . . .

NARRATION: Because people don't actually read letters aloud in real life, I'll do it for poor Leon. What Fanotchka wrote was: "Dear Leon, I hope you will forgive me, but I will be unable to attend the TOFF auction, because I have been unexpectedly called home. P.S. Thank you for reminding me about my father, and the old-time fans in Rain City. Ventriloquism was only one of his many talents, something which I had forgotten. Please accept these fanzine for your auction, with the compliments of the RICSFIC.

DALGHU: (Looonnnnggg beat) Very good! Thank you very much Simo, you're a credit to your debased and inbred culture. Now to lead off the program, I have hear a copy of SKYHOOK #4, edited by the late Redd Boggs.

(Sound FX: Oooooohhh!)

Scene 17: Fanotchka's apartment.

NARRATION: Some time has past. In the small, but airy apartment of Fanotchka Fettucini, the phone rings. Although Fanotchka sits in the large chair on the sun porch, with rain running down over her glasses, she does not answer the phone. And answering machine picks up, and after beep, a familiar voice speaks:

DALGHU: Fanotchka? Are you there? Aren't you ever home? I keep leaving messages for you, but you won't return them. I suppose you must think that for the best, but it doesn't seem that way to me. I wanted to tell you how much we appreciated your gift of fanzines, they really impressed everyone, and when I told them where they had come from, the bidding was even more intense. Everyone left vowing they would support your bid for the 2004 Worldcon, so I think you'll find that you made more money off that one box of fanzines than you did on the rest of the collection. I got your address and number from the convention database. (pause) I put you on my mailing list. (pause) Maybe you could write and tell me if you like my fanzines some time. (longest pause) Well, I probably ought to leave some room on your tape for someone else's message. I hope you're doing okay.

FANOTCHKA: Would you please just SHUT UP?!!

DALGHU: I hope you're . . . well, I really enjoyed it, Fanotchka. I'll see you again sometime, maybe in 2004.

Scene 18: Rain City Science Fiction Confederation Clubhouse

NARRATION: Even more time has past, nearly a year. Back in a musty little office under the eaves of the Rain City Science Fiction Clubhouse, Convention Bid Commissioner John Barkenhorst pauses in his study of the New York Times Crossword as Fanotchka Fettucini enters the room.

BARKENHORST: Ah, Fanotchka. Good to see you. Your report on bid expense trends impressed

everyone on the committee. Especially fine work.

FANOTCHKA: Thank you, John. It was a pleasure to write.

BARKENHORST: But that isn't why I asked you to come in. We have something of a problem I would like you to attend to.

FANOTCHKA: I'll certainly try.

BARKENHORST: It's about those three party organizers you worked with at the Worldcon last year, Mudgie, Beaupall, and Earanoff?

FANOTCHKA: Mudger, John. Mark Mudger. He wants to be a film editor when he finishes school.

BARKENHORST: Yes, well, we were all ready to put them onto something like Children's books when they ran afoul of that business with the library sale. But your reports of them were so strongly worded on their behalf that there was no way we could even consider it. You made them sound like the heroes of the whole thing, when we all suspected that you were clearly the one who should have received the praise.

FANOTCHKA: They're nice guys, John. Everyone likes them.

BARKENHORST: Nice guys we have plenty of, Fanotchka. What we need are people we can trust with the purse strings a thousand miles away. And it was on your recommendation that we've given them that kind of control again at Westercon.

FANOTCHKA: I'm sure they'll do fine.

BARKENHORST: Your confidence seems to be misplaced. I'm getting phone calls, e-mail: Everyone says the same thing; the three of them are out of control and we have to do something about it. So, since they seemed to pull their weight pretty happily with you around, the only logical thing that comes to mind is for you to head down to San Diego.

FANOTCHKA: Oh, no! Not me! Not again! I can't do it, John. I just about lost myself the last time I went to one of those big conventions. They make me crazy, there's just too much -- there has to be someone else you could send!



BARKENHORST: Who, Fanotchka? Who can I send who has a good relationship with the three caballeros? who can I trust not to pad the expense account? And as far as big conventions go, you seem to forget that we're bringing the worldcon here in another five years. Are you going to spend it lying at home with a damp cloth over your eyes?

FANOTCHKA: Did you know you look and sound like Vince Lombardi when you get going?

BARKENHORST: Out! Get thee to San Diego, and find out what those three chimps are doing with my money. I want full reports! And Fanotchka --

FANOTCHKA: Yes sir?

BARKENHORST: Bring me back a T-shirt. And a run of the daily newszine if you can get it, I'm thinking about who to ask to edit one at our conventions. There never seems to be an end to the kind of trivial detail you have to handle in this job . . .

Scene 19: Westercon 53, The Bid Suite of the TriState SFL

NARRATION: Down in San Diego, the bid party is in full voice as Fanotchka arrives, lugging her bags with her. A tall white-haired man is doing something odd with a malomar balanced on the navel of a nubile young woman lying supine on the coffee table. Outside, there is a dreadful clattering, as a group of fans try to build a beercan tower to the moon. Fanotchka looks about in confusion for a moment, until at last she sees a familiar face.

FANOTCHKA: Beaupall!



BEAUPALL: Fanotchka! You came!

FANOTCHKA: Of course I did, you fool. You spend money at twice the rate you're authorized, you set off fire extinguishers on the balconies, throw a perfectly good life-size cut-out of William Shatner into the pool -- who do you think they will send?

BEAUPALL: Mudger! Iranoff! Look who's here!

MUDGER: At last!

IRANOFF: We knew you'd come!

FANOTCHKA: People keep saying that! I can't say I expected you to be so happy to see me.

IRANOFF: We're ecstatic! Delighted! Here, have a copy of my fanzine, "Pulsing Naked Singularity #1" Look, I got Rotslers!

FANOTCHKA: You should see a doctor then.

IRANOFF: (as Pee-Wee Herman-like as possible) Ha ha! That's a good one. But there's someone here who you'll want to see!

FANOTCHKA: Oh yes?

MUDGER, IRANOFF & BEAUPALL: (rather Beavis-like) Uh-huh!

DALGHU: I hope so, anyway.

FANOTCHKA: Leon!

DALGHU: Jenny got mad one night and told me the whole story. The deal you and she struck. She's dating David Brin now, so I suppose she got what she deserved. But I always wondered if maybe you'd wanted things to end differently. And since I couldn't get permission to come see you, I had to find some way to make you come see me.

MUDGER: And nothing draws your attention like people having too much fun.

DALGHU: Aren't you going to say anything?

FANOTCHKA: I'm waiting to see if perhaps you have something else to say to me.

BEAUPALL: I wonder what she means?

IRANOFF: Shhh!

DALGHU: Maybe so. But maybe I ought to say it down here, on my knees . . .

FANOTCHKA: No, no. No complaining later that the track lighting was in your eyes, or you got a charley horse down there and the pain went to your head -- you stand up here and look me in the eye.

DALGHU: All right. Eye to Eye. I love you, Fanotchka.

FANOTCHKA: And I love you, Leon.

(They kiss)

MUDGER: Woo hoo! Fire up that grill, Tommy! We got a lot to celebrate tonight! The fourth of July! Rain City in ought-four! And now we gots Cupid in the house!

BEAUPALL: Man, don't you love happy endings?

(Thunderous Applause, and introduction of the actors)

-oOo-



Fanotchka Cast, Corflu Wave Performance -- Walnut Creek, 1998

Victor Gonzales, Paul Williams, Cindy Lee Berryhill, Jerry Kaufman, Stu Shiffman, Richard Brandt, Andy Hooper. (Photo by Mike McInerney.)

Andy Hooper's Fanotchka

written by: Andy Hooper

art credits:

Alan White: cover, 20, 21, 24, 25, 27, 30, 33, 34

Steve Stiles: 5, 13

Rotsler: 16, 19

assembled by: Lenny Bailes (April 2008)