

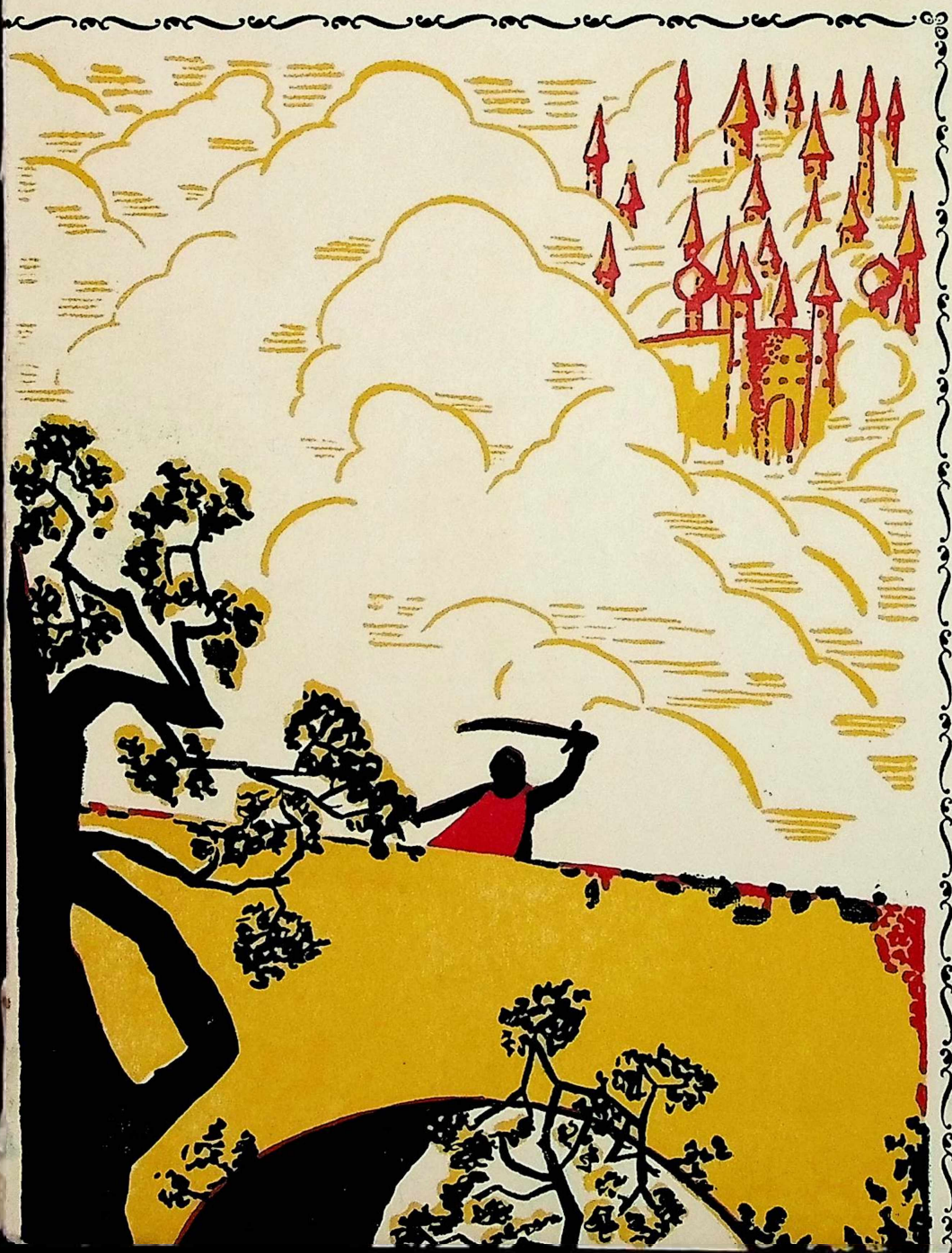
The Doom Of Cassandary  
Stanton A. Coblentz

King Of The Golden City  
Lin Carter

*Amateur Magazine of Weird and Fantasy*  
Volume 1, Number 4 Winter 1950-51

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# The NEKROMANTIKON

*Amateur Magazine of Weird and Fantasy*

*Manly Banister, Editor-Publisher*

*Winter 1950-51*

*25¢ A Copy*

*Volume 1, Number 4*

COVER BY BANISTER

INTERIOR ILLUSTRATIONS BY JON ARFSTROM, LIN CARTER, JOHN DUNN,  
RALPH RAYBURN PHILLIPS, JACK SANDERS, JAMES WHITE, and the omnipresent BANISTER

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IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: 1 shilling the copy. Subscription (4 issues)  
4 s. Send to Walter A. Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, North Ireland.

THE NEKROMANTIKON is a non-profit amateur publication, published four or fewer times per year by The Nekromantikon Press, 1905 Spruce Avenue, Kansas City 1, Missouri. Single copy, 25 cents; \$1.00 per 4 issues. No payment is made for literary material or artwork beyond a free copy of the issue containing the creative work. To insure return of unacceptable material, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope. All rights to material published remain the property of the individual authors.

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

VOLUME I, NUMBER 4

# GLASS HOUSES

IGNACE Q. CRUDLEIGH, President and sole member of our local Oak Ridge Fantasy Science-Fiction Skittles and Beer Club dropped in with the newsnote that, while enroute through Jackson Park the other day, he saw one of these here now flying saucers sitting plump in the middle of the baseball diamond with a passel of little men skittering around. "Good gracious, what did you do?" we asked. "Skedaddled fer hum to fetch my Kodak," Crudleigh told us. He paused, squinched up his eyes, and explained, "Figgered I'd take a pitcher of 'em." We wondered how the pictures had turned out. "Didn't git none. By the time I got back with m'Kodak, them little fellers had saucered and blowed!" Crudleigh said.

FURTHER EVIDENCE that the atom bomb did more than lay waste Hiroshima is shown in the recent interest of McCall's Magazine in J. W. Campbell's Astounding Science Fiction Magazine. . . . a case of the lion patronizing the lamb, no doubt. The issue for October carried not only an article in the nature of a review, but also a full page color reproduction of one of Chesley Bonestell's matchless paintings, and a pair of Orban illustrations reprinted from Astounding. In the article, entitled "Outside Our World", John Gunther took us along the perilous path of fantasy versus science-fiction by means of a literal interview between himself and Mr. Campbell. In spite of a noble effort to absorb the spirit of s.f. in a single interview, Mr. Gunther definitely lost the struggle. He left us with the impression that science-fiction is something for which he carries a special ten-foot pole not to touch it with. This was just an impression.

AMONG THE NEW THINGS with which our age ever glorifies itself, no new thing is greeted with more interest in some quarters than a new book. We are apprised by Mr. L. Sprague de Camp that the new book in this instance is his forthcoming LOST CONTINENTS: THE ATLANTIS THEME IN HISTORY, SCIENCE & LITERATURE. Excerpts from this notable work have appeared article-wise in Astounding. A mere taste, however, for the main work contains 90,000 words of text, plus 20,000 more in appendices and end matter, a compendium for the student as well as the laity interested in such matters.

WE HAVE FINALLY MANAGED to acquire a copy of GALAXY--number 3--after having been showered with dummy covers in a manner to arouse our interest. What went with numbers 1 and 2? We buy our fiction at a marvelously complete neighborhood newsstand, and take it amiss to be obliged to visit metropolitan Neek the Greek for our reading matter. We understand word has got around that K.C. is in the heart of "The Great S.F. Desert", but we respectfully submit to the editors of this new and promising magazine that the expression is purely figurative. Just because some other towns can find three fans at once to cook up a "fan club" signifies nothing. Water runs deepest where it babbles the least.

IF YOU DON'T GET "WORLDS BEYOND" where you live, either move to where you can get it, subscribe, or think up something like the remarks above and write to the editor. Edited by Damon Knight, published by Hillman Periodicals, Inc. Editorial offices at 535 Fifth Avenue, New York 17. The first issue of this most unusual magazine has impressed us forcibly with the fact that Damon Knight has done a superlative job of combining weird, fantasy, and science-fiction in a manner compatible both with literary taste and intellectual appreciation. WORLDS BEYOND is, by all means, a magazine we hope to see around for a long time to come.

APROPOS OF NOTHING AT ALL, it occurs to us that there are two kinds

of people in the country--those who own a television set and those who do not. This latter type of person is a nagging ache in the heel of the television-Achilles, which is to say, to those who manufacture this mechanical variation of Lethe-water. Until put an end to by the powers that be, radio commercials were pregnant with appeal in their attempt to convert families of non-peekers to the desideratum, peekers. And so, they struck at the heart of all the American housewife holds most dear--her children. Will your child be outcast from his playmates, never knowing the latest television-subject of conversation? Such was the trend of their theme. We are unaware that our little story proves anything pro or con the argument respecting television, but here it is as we heard it. The small daughter in a no-peek family, having listened to a loquacious radio commercial of this nature, fixed her mother with a reproving glance. "And what do you have to say to that?" asked she.

To which Mother replied, "There are other interesting things in the world besides television, dear. Why, I can read to you."

This information having been spread upon the wind of childhood gossip, Mother was besieged by hordes of little people (who should have been home watching television), clamoring to be read to. And they were. But the climax arrived one day when Mother was indulging in an afternoon siesta. A small boy (who really should have been home watching television) marched unannounced into the sleeping woman's bedroom, smartly pinched her nose, and cried, "Wake up, lazy, and read to me."

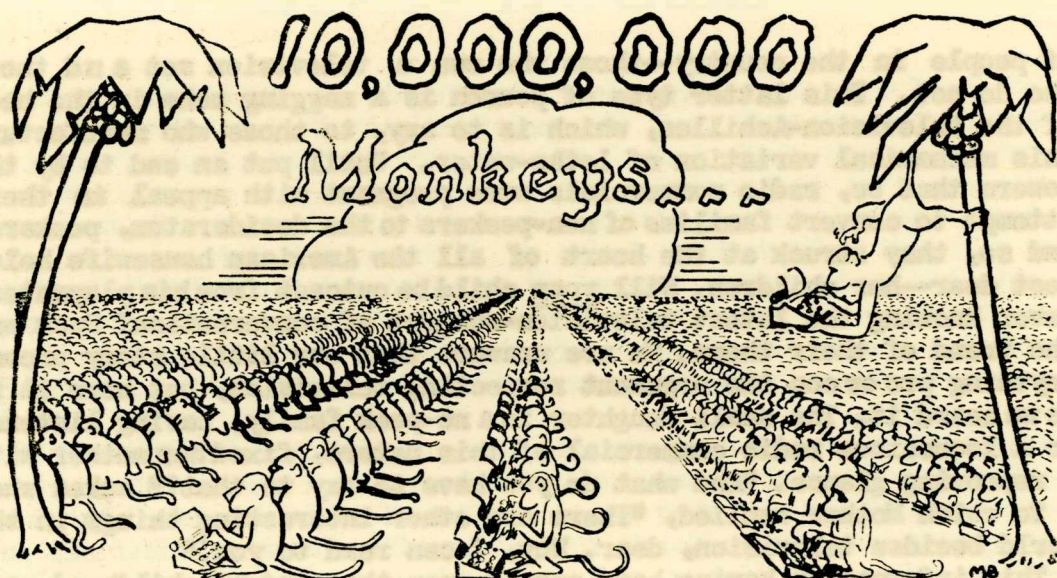
FROM FANTASY STORIES, November, 1950: "Dear George: I cannot thank you enough for talking Mary out of the Reno trip. For the first time since I undertook this assignment, I feel some peace of mind. But not peace of body." A fine talker you were, George.

Ibid.: "Outside the solar system other stars--22 in number--besides the sun have satellite planets." Quick, Henry, my telescope!

Ibid.: "...Jekka said, 'We'd better go back. We'll need all sorts of things to find out what we're up against. Chemical and magnetic analyzers, perhaps a new mathematics.'" Sorry, Son. After you learn to use the math you already have, then we'll think about getting you a newer one.

THROUGH AN UNHAPPY ERROR this magazine was recently listed in the market list of Author & Journalist as paying for submitted material upon acceptance. We take this opportunity to point out to our readership that The Nekromantikon makes no payment for material accepted. Our policy is explained in our title-page footing. At any rate, A&J will be pleased to learn that writers actually read their listings and depend upon them. We were deluged with a flood of manuscripts from every quarter. By the time the cause of our sudden popularity was ascertained, we had already accepted several scripts for publication--and still had a bushel basket full, more or less, on hand for return to their authors. We spent a week writing letters of apology for the error. In most cases of manuscripts that had been submitted and accepted under this misapprehension, the authors were very kind and permitted us to retain possession. It is, therefore, with great appreciation for the generosity of Mr. Stanton A. Coblentz, who needs no introduction to fantasy fans anywhere, that we bring you in this issue THE DOOM OF CASSANDANY. Our thanks to him for this privilege. A&J has been notified of its error, and we hope such an embarrassing circumstance will not rise again.

REGULAR READERS with a penchant for numbers will note in this issue fewer pages than we have offered in some issues past. As a matter of fact, little, if any, reduction has been made. We have both widened and deepened our page form to the extent that something over 15%  
(Please turn to page 15)



Somebody once coined a phrase about "10,000,000 monkeys with 10,000,000 typewriters, typing for 10,000,000 years, would write all the literature, etc." Well, we haven't yet been going 10,000,000 years, but so far as we have gone, a pretty nice job has been done. The nicest part, perhaps, is that we're still hard at it--if not the original 10,000,000 monkeys, their descendants, at least.

So, we couldn't think of a better name for this department, in which, from time to time, we shall look over a few of the knottier problems obfuscating the concept of writing as a whole. Don't look for pontifical statements, for "story blue-prints", for an "Open Sesame" to professional markets, or for "secrets" that explain in ten words how to write a saleable story. There won't be any. Especially no secrets. How to write a story is no secret--read any magazine and find a half dozen or more examples of how it is done.

A complaint we frequently hear is that pro editors, rejecting a script never say why. In this connection, it occurs to us to sit back and enjoy the beauties of amateur editorship.

Editors are in business to make money for their publishers. They do this by selling a commodity purchased originally from the author who produced it. The author's work (and by extension, the author) becomes an investment which the editor, for the sake of his job, his wife, his kids, and the poor politicians depending upon the tax from his income, cannot afford to endanger.

Whether or not an author is as lousy as any given piece he submits is a question an editor hesitates to fool with. If Author A submits a stinkeroo, should Editor tell him it stinks? He would poke holes in his own head to do so. Author A might--just might, you understand--really be a budding Hemingway. In such event, if Editor is the least bit nasty about a rejection, his big headache will come later when he sees a hated rival making millions off Author A, now no longer budding, but a full-blown Hemingway. And another thing, if Author A really is a lousy writer, why encourage him? Reserve opinion, and you're safe either way. Nobody is so sensitive like writers. They disagree with editors as a matter of principal, even when the editors buy their stuff. They always feel they're underpaid. (How am I doing, you pro eds?)

The amateur editor, not in a position to profit from a writer's labor, is not bound by self-inspired ethics. Ask an amateur editor what

he thinks of your story, and he is just likely to tell you, not caring one whit whether you agree with him or not. He has nothing to lose save the nebulous nascency of what might otherwise have developed into a beautiful friendship. And, strangely enough, you just might like the sound of what he has to say.

If you submit your story to a competent approval, be prepared to stand by the judgment rendered. Too often, a writer does not. He is really looking for a pat on the back instead of just and serious criticism. Oh yes, we know whereof we speak!

There is a point, however, at which discretion is the better part of good sense. No sense wasting words on an obvious ham. No words can help him, no criticism move him, no encouragement change him. He is already lost in a profound admiration of himself; and there he stays in his rut of self-admiration, and a good place for him it is.

Every potentially able writer passes through a stage of pure and simple dithering--"expressing himself", he calls it. He considers himself inordinately clever, and thinks his writing proves his stand. After having passed this stage, if ever he does, he has an excellent opportunity to develop.

We have had it expressed to us in divers ways, from low insinuation to cries of blatant outrage, that if we are so hot with the advice, why are not we in the forefront of professional ranks. And the only possible answer to that is, that if you are so far beyond the need of advice, why are not you in equivalent locus--and why did you bother us in the first place? We used to write a great deal and even sell some of it. Lately, we have come to the conclusion that pro editors know their business, and realize that we are only about a tenth as good as we used to think we were. The art of self-deflation of the ego is a difficult one to learn, but the importance of it can be measured in the distance it will carry you along the road to professional authorship. Learn the art well. . . and practice it.

We have, God help us, upon occasion taken the bull by the horns and our life in our hands to the extent of suggesting revisions in a submitted manuscript to make it suitable for use. Even pro editors have been known upon occasion to do this. In no other way can you so quickly discover the potentialities of a probable writer. In most of such cases, the would-be author takes the same attitude you would take if your doctor suggested you remove your own appendix. But if you knew how to remove your appendix, and were in a position where not to remove it meant death, and you might succeed and live, you would likely take the chance. Re-doing a bad story is not nearly so serious, but you would think it were from the attitude some writers--the hams--take.

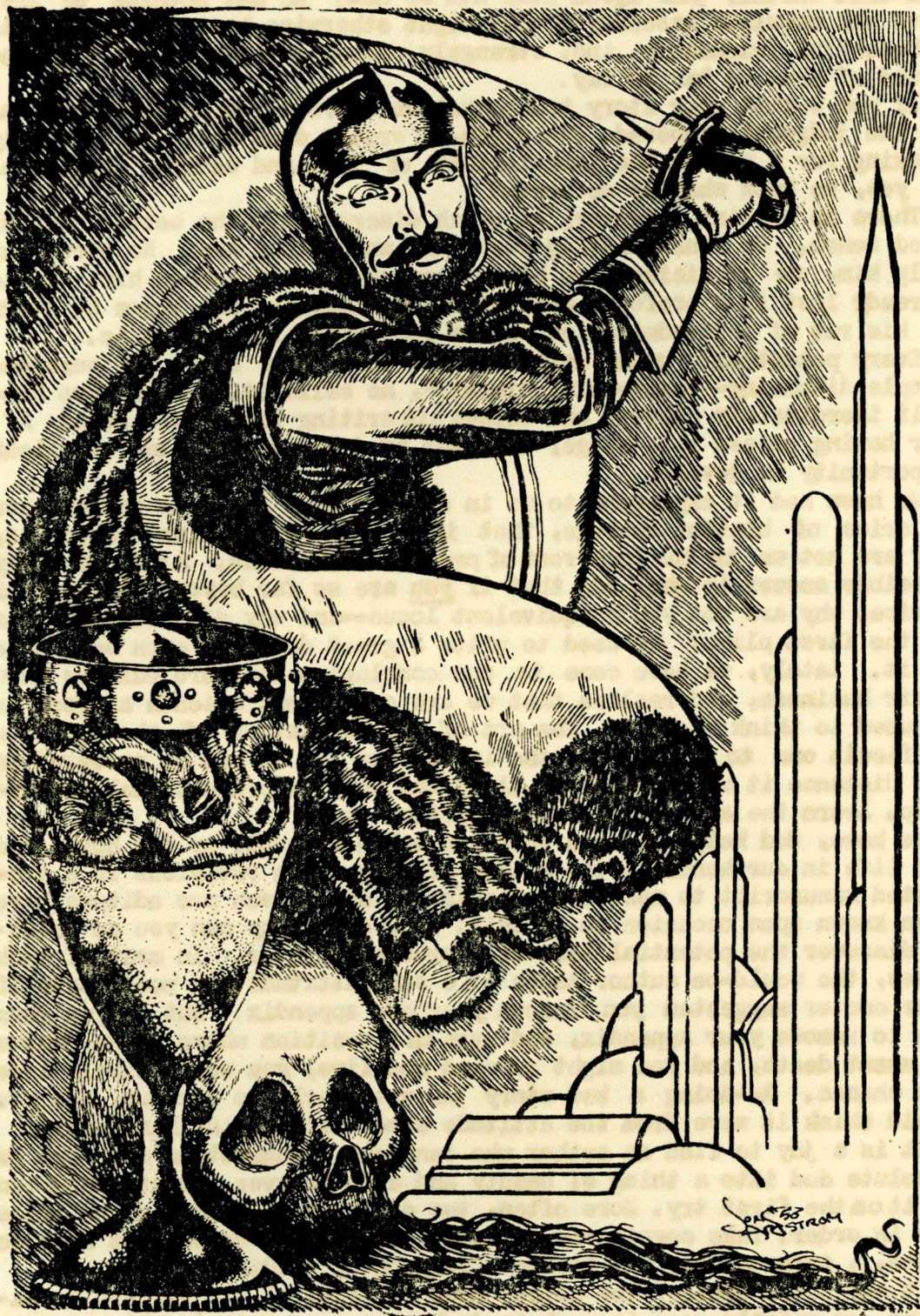
It is a joy to find an author who can take a suggestion and turn an absolute dud into a thing of beauty and a joy forever. Sometimes he can do it on the first try. More often, two or three or half a dozen tries are in order. Take cognizance of this. To learn to write, you have to write. A surgeon does not become a surgeon by reading a book.

At any rate, whether the author mans the guns of his defense mechanisms, or quietly goes to work to do better, something has been accomplished. If he has the stuff in him, after the rattle of his protest has died out, he will himself see the fundamental silliness of his excuses for his faults, and will take another step in the direction he wants to go--toward becoming a selling professional.

And so we arrive at "saleable stories." What are they? Stories that are good enough to sell, naturally. Any well written story is a saleable story. What it is not is a sold story. And there you have it. A saleable story is not a sold story. Nobody knows what makes a story

(Please turn to page 44)

He sought in the Golden City the Draught of Eternal Youth



ILLUSTRATED BY JON ARFSTROM

He fought and slew his way to the goal of his desires. . . driven by Greed, Lust, and Ambition. Whether the weapon be pen, sword, or atom-bomb; the fight waged in behalf of this Unholy Triumvirate seems always somehow to turn out the same. Who rules the Golden City is ruled by Death. . . !

# King OF THE GOLDEN CITY

*A Fantasy in the Ikranos Series*

By Lin Carter

"Beyond the hills and sweeping plain,  
Beyond the ocean's rise,  
Beyond the forests, dark with rain,  
The Golden City lies..."  
--Song of the Troubadour

Once there ruled in the City of Kyre, a great and powerful King called Leodonek the Strong, who was widely known for his prowess in battle and for the same reason feared. Tall and strongly built was Leodonek of Kyre; black of hair, keen of eye, and swift of hand, and much skilled in the art of war. But little he knew or cared to know of Statecraft and the duties of Kings. More oft than not, on a moment's whim or a fancied insult, he would rise up from his feast-table to war upon a neighboring land with neither thought of consequences nor clearness of reason.

And it happened that Leodonek, being in the vanity of his youth, gloried in his strength and health, and became vain and proud. But when it came to pass that he reached his three-and-thirtieth year, he began to fear his approaching age with an unnatural intensity. He realized that he held his rule over the war-like peoples of Kyre by reason of his strength and prowess in war, and to his egotistic and brooding mind it seemed that to lose that strength would be to lose his throne. So his vanity and egotism drove him to secure his throne by fear. He became a tyrant, and a blood-thirsty treacherous monarch, who feared not even the Gods.

But Time is stronger than the Gods, and Leodonek came more and more to fear age. On stormy nights, when the castle walls shook with thunder, and the wind howled in rainy gusts about the battlements and towers, he would lie awake and restless--brooding on his fast-fading youth. He visioned with horror the time when his flesh would shrivel on his weary bones, when his eyes would weaken and his black hair become as the frost had touched it; when his hand would be so tremulous that he could no longer swing his fabled sword, King-Maker, in battle. On nights like that, he would weep aloud and curse the Gods who created Time,

And so it came to pass that Leodonek held a great feast on the anni-

versary of one of his past victories, hoping to lighten his melancholy spirits. The nobles and their ladies, the lords and knights of all the Kingdom, came garbed in their most festive splendor to feast in the great hall. At length they perceived the King was moody and sullen, that his spirits were unmoved by all their singing and carousing. The Great Hall of Feasting was ablaze with lanterns; gaily costumed jugglers and dancers did their tricks amid drunken applause; the stout oaken tables sagged under the weight of mammoth roasts and rich sweets. All was gaiety and glitter. But amid all the roistering and laughter, Leodonek sat unmoved, brooding and sad.

Now, there was among the feasters a strange Troubadour but newly come to the Kingdom. And when Tyrshak the Ever-Faithful, who sat upon the King's right, perceived the Troubadour, he called upon him to sing, hoping the fellow would know some new ballad or clever song that would entertain his Liege.

So the Troubadour rose from his place among the feasters and bowed low to the King's table. He was a strange, slim man, with wild flowing locks and mocking dark eyes sunk in a pallid face. Though dressed in motley rags, yet he moved with a strange majesty and grace as if accustomed to a finer raiment. Having made homage, he seated himself on the steps of the King's dais, and let his slender fingers wander idly over the lute strings. Then he began to sing.

He sang a curious song, wild and elfin. Of lands far off and little known, lands where strange peoples dwell in curious splendor, and foreign knights go adventuring on alien quests, lands where undreamed-of monsters await the unwary traveler, and strange treasures lie in fabled realms. And as he sang, the vast hall became uncannily silent. A magical spell seemed to fall over the glittering throng, and they were enchanted. The Troubadour sang on. He sang of dark magicians and weird monsters, of strange dragons and legendary Kings, of the wonders of the fabled cities of the West, of Shong, Kasharna, and Tharleon the Many-Towered.

And he sang, at last, of the Golden City that lies beyond all these. The fabulous Golden City, that is the fairest of the Wonders of the World. A city all of purest gold, with shimmering domes and tall minarets, shining like a golden crown atop some far-off peak to the West. A City fair as morning, before whose glory even the stars of evening pale.

And he sang, too, of the legended Goblet that is the greatest treasure of those lands. A Goblet of carven gold, that sits alone in a great hall hung with precious tapestries, resting on a throne that even an Emperor might envy. In this Grail, he sang, is the Draught of Immortality and whosoever drinketh of it shall never age or die, but have Everlasting Youth and rule as King of the Golden City forever. As the dark Troubadour sang to his rapt audience, a fire was lit in the breast of Leodonek and he leaned forward eagerly drinking in the strange song. Never to die! To be young...forever! By the Eight Hundred Gods, could this thing be?

And when the song was done, and the last rapturous note died away in silence, the throng stirred slowly, then thundered with applause! The feasters had been fired with this vision even as their King; the nobles and soldiers sprang to their feet, drunk with enthusiasm, and set the walls to ringing with their shouts.

"What a quest this would be, O King!" bellowed one knight, pounding the table with his wine-cup. "Adventure, riches--and Immortal Youth!"

Another drunken lord sprang atop the table, tore his sword from its scabbard and waved it about his head. "A City of Gold," he shouted hoarsely. "All the treasures of fabulous kingdoms, the wealth of the

West! What an adventure!" Now all the men were clamoring of this wondrous quest and the riches of the fabled City. Leodonek, himself, was aflame with avarice and desire, his sullen melancholy torn from him as a dark cloak. Here was the answer to his fears! Immortal life! He sprang over the table and ripped King-Maker from its scabbard with a great cry.

"We'll do it!" he bellowed to the drunken crowd. "We'll fight our way to the Golden City, though the Hosts of Hell stand in our way!" All the knights and warriors set the Hall to ringing with their vows and cries.

But amid all the shouting and confusion, the strange Troubadour left the hall unnoticed, his head bent and his face in shadow so that none could see his sad and mocking smile.

And so it came to pass that Leodonek the Strong and all his host rose up, shouting and singing of the wonders of the Golden City, and left the palace and the City of Kyre, marching into the night and the darkness.

All that night they marched westwards, drunkenly, boasting, swinging their great swords and swilling their red wine. And when morning showed her fair face above the edges of Ikranos, and flooded all the Lands of Dream with her glory, she found them far on the rising slopes of the mountains that guarded their land. On they marched, though more soberly now, still burning with greed and the fervor of their vision. The army straggled along through the mountains, pausing only to raid a frightened peasant's fields, and slaughter half his cattle for provisions. Through that day they marched, while the sun climbed over the blue slopes of the mountains and moved down the sky in the west, toward their goal. Early in the evening the fumes of the wine left them altogether, and they pitched camp in a rocky mountain-pass and took their bearings. And when the nobles and warriors fully awoke to their surroundings, and realized they had risen up in the middle of the night to march to war, they began to wish to return, for many among them had wives and children in Kyre, and were loathe to forsake them for a drunken dream.

But the King would have none of turning back, for if they were sober then he still was drunk, drunk with greed for golden riches, drunk with lust for eternal youth. Later in the morning something of the wonder and magnificence of the Troubadour's song returned to the warriors, and they took up the march again. As enthusiasm returned to their hearts, they recounted to each other songs and antique fables they had heard at their mothers' knees, tales and legends of the Golden City that lies beyond the furthest hills and of the wonders that await men there. So they marched into the morning, through the pass and across the rocky plains, down boulder-strewn slopes.

And when they had passed the mountains, they found a thick forest of gnarled trees before them, and were forced to hew their way through with blade and battle-ax. As they worked, they grumbled amongst themselves.

"Legends say the City is far and far away and far away," muttered one brawny knight. "I have heard it is even across the great deserts and beyond the Sea of Neol-Shendis."

A tall red-bearded soldier beside him, wiped his brow and growled: "Further than that, so I have heard. Even further away than Carzund or Shong or the City of Rubies!"

"By the Gods, it may be even farther than that!" another man said. And on they grumbled, cutting through the forest. But even tales of great distances and insurmountable hardships could not quite dim their avarice. For they were greedy men, war-like and cruel, driven on by fear of their King and lust for riches. It was noon when they emerged from the forest, sweating and torn with brambles, their scarlet cloaks in shreds and their rich tunics splattered with mud. But they went on.

By twilight they had reached the Hills of Tang, and camped there.

versary of one of his past victories, hoping to lighten his melancholy spirits. The nobles and their ladies, the lords and knights of all the Kingdom, came garbed in their most festive splendor to feast in the great hall. At length they perceived the King was moody and sullen, that his spirits were unmoved by all their singing and carousing. The Great Hall of Feasting was ablaze with lanterns; gaily costumed jugglers and dancers did their tricks amid drunken applause; the stout oaken tables sagged under the weight of mammoth roasts and rich sweets. All was gaiety and glitter. But amid all the roistering and laughter, Leodonek sat unmoved, brooding and sad.

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But amid all the shouting and confusion, the strange Troubadour left the hall unnoticed, his head bent and his face in shadow so that none could see his sad and mocking smile.

And so it came to pass that Leodonek the Strong and all his host rose up, shouting and singing of the wonders of the Golden City, and left the palace and the City of Kyre, marching into the night and the darkness.

All that night they marched westwards, drunkenly, boasting, swinging their great swords and swilling their red wine. And when morning showed her fair face above the edges of Ikranos, and flooded all the Lands of Dream with her glory, she found them far on the rising slopes of the mountains that guarded their land. On they marched, though more soberly now, still burning with greed and the fervor of their vision. The army straggled along through the mountains, pausing only to raid a frightened peasant's fields, and slaughter half his cattle for provisions. Through that day they marched, while the sun climbed over the blue slopes of the mountains and moved down the sky in the west, toward their goal. Early in the evening the fumes of the wine left them altogether, and they pitched camp in a rocky mountain-pass and took their bearings. And when the nobles and warriors fully awoke to their surroundings, and realized they had risen up in the middle of the night to march to war, they began to wish to return, for many among them had wives and children in Kyre, and were loathe to forsake them for a drunken dream.

But the King would have none of turning back, for if they were sober then he still was drunk, drunk with greed for golden riches, drunk with lust for eternal youth. Later in the morning something of the wonder and magnificence of the Troubadour's song returned to the warriors, and they took up the march again. As enthusiasm returned to their hearts, they recounted to each other songs and antique fables they had heard at their mothers' knees, tales and legends of the Golden City that lies beyond the furthest hills and of the wonders that await men there. So they marched into the morning, through the pass and across the rocky plains, down boulder-strewn slopes.

And when they had passed the mountains, they found a thick forest of gnarled trees before them, and were forced to hew their way through with blade and battle-ax. As they worked, they grumbled amongst themselves.

"Legends say the City is far and far away and far away," muttered one brawny knight. "I have heard it is even across the great deserts and beyond the Sea of Neol-Shendis."

A tall red-bearded soldier beside him, wiped his brow and growled: "Further than that, so I have heard. Even further away than Carzund or Shong or the City of Rubies!"

"By the Gods, it may be even farther than that!" another man said. And on they grumbled, cutting through the forest. But even tales of great distances and insurmountable hardships could not quite dim their avarice. For they were greedy men, war-like and cruel, driven on by fear of their King and lust for riches. It was noon when they emerged from the forest, sweating and torn with brambles, their scarlet cloaks in shreds and their rich tunics splattered with mud. But they went on.

By twilight they had reached the Hills of Tang, and camped there.

But this was barren country and gameless, so they were forced to subsist on what meager berries and herbs they could find. They spent the night grumbling in their tents, or standing a cold watch, hungry and sullen. With the dawn, Leodonek ordered the march, and they obeyed surlily. All that day they wandered on through the hills, following what roads they could.

The day was long and hot, and the road dusty. By noon their scouts slew a great dragon in his cave, and they feasted hungrily on his rank flesh. They camped late that night in sight of the hilltop town of Dzan, and Leodonek and the Captains planned a battle in the morning.

With the morning they rose somewhat heartened, having food and drink in their bellies and the prospect of battle before the day was ended. They shattered the stillness of morning with their songs, and with the King and Tyrshak at their head, went into battle shouting their war-cries with vigor. All that day they fought across the battle-field and up the hillside, where they rested beside the walls of Dzan, and licked their wounds. The men would have remained to lay siege to the hill-town, but Leodonek changed his plans and refused to waste the weeks it would take. Nor could his weary men tempt him with the fabled wealth of the town, for he was still afire with greed to win the Goblet of Eternal Youth, and would not be turned from this purpose. No doubt the frightened warriors of Dzan breathed a sigh of relief when they saw the invaders march off past their walls, on into the wilderness.

On the next morning, Tyrshak came to the King's tent to inform him that thirty of his soldiers had deserted during the night. Possibly they were afraid of the great distance yet to be covered; perhaps they longed to see their wives and children in Kyre; maybe they had returned to Dzan to attack it themselves, unable to let such wealth pass out of their hands. Whatever their reasons, they had left before morning with their weapons and possessions.

Leodonek went into a towering rage. That his own soldiers who owed him allegiance, that these frightened curs should flee his army! Not only did they weaken his force, but delayed his advance on the Golden City. The pride and vanity of the man were hurt. Bellowing curses on the traitors, he ordered Tyrshak to hunt down as many as he could still catch and bring them back to the camp. Those who were caught, only a few, were returned later in the day.

Striding back and forth before the frightened men, Leodonek vented his rage on them.

"You sniveling, frightened cowards!" he thundered. "You dared to desert, to let your wishes stand in the way of the King's! You dared delay my march, impede my progress! Here's how I deal with traitors!"

He commanded Tyrshak to tie the men to stakes, pile brush beneath them and set it afire. Tyrshak, always faithful to his King, reluctantly had the orders carried out, and with evening the men were burnt alive before the horrified eyes of the host, who had been ordered to be present so that they might learn beforehand how they might be dealt with, did they attempt such a thing. After this, all of the King's commands were carried out hurriedly and no more dared desert. But the men hated him.

And so it came to pass that Leodonek's army marched into the great wilderness toward the west, on and ever on. They charged into battle with strange yellow men of the desert country. They fought mailed dragons aquatic monsters, and lost some of their number to them. But ever they marched on, seeking the riches of The Golden City, and Immortality. At first the lust for treasure and adventure drove them, and later they were

spurred on by fear of their cruel King. But as the months went by they went on simply because they no longer knew how to return by the way they had come and could only go forward. They passed Carzund and Darloona, and their numbers were lessened by battles and wars. Once they struggled across a vast desert of volcanoes, and lost a quarter of their number to the rock slides and rivers of hissing lava. The months lengthened into years, but still they went on and ever on.

They crossed strange rivers and forded rushing streams; they pushed and hacked their way through swamps and jungles, and lost more of their ragged ranks to quicksand and fever. The years rolled by, but still Leodonek drove them on across the world. Whenever they would pause for rest from sickness or exhaustion, and camp for a while and think of turning back to their wives and little children, who must be grown and wedded by now, the hated King drove them on. Tyrshak knew the King was mad now, but still he served him and helped him fight his way on, follow his mad dream of Eternal Life. Sometimes Leodonek managed to relight the dream of the Golden City, that shone like a star on some far-off peak to the West, within them again and they went on with renewed vigor. And sometimes the dream left them completely, and they tried to turn back. But always there was Leodonek, blustering, cursing, slashing with his dented and blunted King-Maker, to force them on. For if the grand dream of Immortal Youth died and flickered within their breasts, it burned fiercely and ever brighter in his. For now his youth was gone, his hair had whitened with years of wandering, and Age began laying its icy hands on him. So ever there gleamed before him the glorious vision of the Golden City, and the Goblet that could restore his faded youth and give him Eternal Life.

And so he drove them on. But they were few now, and every battle they fought took a brutal toll among their ranks. Once, as they wandered over the forested plains of Nuamek they thought they glimpsed a golden spark to the West, but when they reached the place it proved only a reflection of the sunset in a mountain stream. They went on, though weary and disillusioned. Again as they paused in the Land of Griffins by the City of Black Stone, Leodonek sent a handful of his warriors to consult the sorcerers of the city, who, it is told in idle tales, keep their lawful King in a magical sleep and rule in his name. The soldiers returned with tales of incredible wonders, and the Sorcerers' replies to Leodonek's question. The City lay even further West. And on they went, and on. When they reached the Kingdom of Kasharna where Thuttar Kamontaa rules as King from a throne of human skulls, they met a great army of Kasharna's little yellow warriors drawn up for battle on a rocky plain before a range of mountains. Leodonek looked over his sixty men, old and weary now, all that were left of the hundreds, with dented, rusty armor and blunted swords. And he looked at the ranks of little yellow men in their black chainmail and crimson cloaks.

"We must be close to the Golden City now, my old comrades. One more battle, and the Treasure of Ikranos is ours!" he shouted, drawing rusty old King-Maker from his ancient scabbard. He cheered them and led them down the slopes to the field with song on his lips and sword in his hand. Sixty men went into the battle, and forty came out, still singing lustily, and wiping their wounds. Wisely, Leodonek refrained from returning to ride through the carnage again. That one sweep had nearly cost him the full strength of his force. They fled through the foothills, and into the slope of the mountains. Forty men, Leodonek cursed, once they were beyond the reach of the archers. But surely the City must be near. So on they went--forty men, old and weary, in rusted, dented armor, with the hated Leodonek and his Captain Tyrshak, the Ever-

Faithful, at their head.

And then one day late in May, as they toiled up the steep side of a rocky cliff, they spied a flash of golden light on a distant peak. The Golden City! It shone there ahead of them, beyond many mountains and across a rocky plain. For long moments they stood frozen with astonishment and a sort of awe. Through all of these long years that Leodonek had driven them on with his stories of this fabled city, they had lost belief in it long ago. But now--there it shone before them!

The years fell from them. They laughed and cried, danced in their rusted, patched armor. Joyously they pushed ahead, across the dangerous mountains, and down the steep cliffs. Some of their little number they lost to the thundering rock-slides and the dangerous footing, but the handful that remained pushed on as hotly as before. Leodonek drove them mercilessly, now that Immortality was in sight.

At last they climbed the final mountain and stood before the Golden City itself. It was a fairy city of delicate spires and tapering domes, all of the purest gold, wondrously carved and worked with strange monsters and weird creatures. It clung tightly to the steep mountain, rising in tier on tier of glittering golden minarets and full-bodied domes and sparkling battlements of pure, red gold.

They entered the City by a great gate. All about the portal that towered many feet above their helmets was a carved frieze of marvelously worked dragons and djinns, knights in armor, elves and demons.

Once in the City, they found it deserted. It was evident no men had lived here for centuries. They pushed on eagerly through the great avenues with glittering pavements, past fabulous palaces and mansions built all of purest gold. Strange to tell, they had no thought of loot now. They were old and weary. In each mind gleamed one thought: the Goblet. And each heart bore one fear: would there be enough to give Eternal Life to all?

Blinded to the enchanted city around them they hobbled past the Golden palaces until they reached the magnificent castle at the City's heart. When they had entered the castle and stood at one end of the Golden Hall--and saw the Goblet flashing on a Throne at the far wall, they knew at last that their long quest was over. Immortal life was theirs, the richest of treasures. They would be Kings of the Golden City forever.

They started down the long, tapestry-decked Hall, pushing and shoving each other to be the first to drain the Goblet. Past Leodonek and Tyrshak they ran.

"Wait!" Leodonek shouted, "I am the King! I should taste the Goblet first!" But they only laughed and went on. With an inarticulate scream of rage, the hated King tore his old sword from its scabbard and laid about with it, cursing them for selfish traitors.

"Are you with me, Tyrshak?" Leodonek cried, "Or do you desert your King like these other swine?" Faithful to the last, Tyrshak entered the fight. Back to back, Leodonek and his lieutenant fought their last battle and slew their old comrades down the length of the Hall. When the two reached the foot of the dais, the last man had fallen. As they stood gasping for breath, the thought came to Leodonek that perhaps there would not be enough for two. He turned and struck at Tyrshak.

A few moments, and his best friend lay gasping his life out on the carpeted steps. But he had dealt the King a death-blow before he fell, and Leodonek sank on the first step. For a moment he lay there, feeling no sorrow at Tyrshak's death, and no disgust at his own betrayal of his friend. He lay basking in an ecstatic pleasure. The Goblet was his now. He would be King of the Golden City!

"You all failed!" He screamed to the skies, "You all failed--jungle,

swamp, mountains, deserts, men! All! And I've won!"

Babbling and drooling with greed, Leodonek began dragging himself up the steps, heedless of the bloody trail he left. Only a few minutes of life remained, he knew, but in those precious moments he could drain the Goblet. Slobbering with desire, he crawled upward, heaving his dead weight up step by step with trembling hands. At last he sprawled before the Throne. With the dregs of his strength Leodonek lifted himself up and clutched the priceless Goblet in one quivering hand. He lifted it to his slobbering lips. And then, with a horrid scream, flung the Goblet from him! He sank sobbing to the steps--and died--

For the Goblet was--

Empty!

THE END

**North Ireland's Amateur Magazine Devoted To  
Fantasy And Science-Fiction**

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Battell Loomis

## THE CHINESE CURSE



I ran the derisively named "Crescent Mammoth Emporium" as an aid in proving up on a Colorado mountain homestead. It was a store the overall dimensions of which were about 12x12 feet. The sign nearly spanned its front, and people passing on the Moffat railroad laughed at it and forgot it. It made 3/4's of a year's living for us, then five.

On a snowy day a tired man entered from the tracks and dropped 11¢ on my counter,

"What will that buy the most of? It's all I have."

"It'll pay for a pound of soda crax. But that's no food for a man. Come into the house and rest. Dinner'll be ready soon."

He refused to rest or to eat until he had chopped me some wood for his meal. He had just completed a snowy walk from Walsenberg, in southern Colorado, not far from Pueblo. No rides--he was too shabby. He was on his way over the summit to Granby, where he owned a share in a coal mine, lignite, his last possession. He was too weary to use an axe. I craftily hid my chopping axe and unsmilingly handed him a broad axe, for hewing. I knew that would get him down quickly, and it did. After a few manlike strokes, he fell across the chopping block and I led him into the warm kitchen. He remained with me two weeks, helping me in carpenter work I was paid for but refusing to accept any money because I needed no help. In every respect he impressed me as an honest man in misfortune.

During our work together, he told me what had got him down.

"I was a captain of cavalry in China after the Boxer Rebellion. I had nothing to do with my troop but drill them and exercise the horses. I was studying the Chinese dialects and lost no opportunity to try my lingo on any native who would talk to me.

"One hot day I had led my troop on a long ride, and we stopped in a grove to rest the horses. I sat with my back against a big bole. I heard a native voice behind me, walked around the tree, and saw a coolie sitting in a slump of despair. I asked him what ailed him. He stood up in respect for my uniform and told me:

"I was cursed by the priest."

"What had the Buddhist against you?"

"I was unable to pay the tithe he demanded. He gave me the three-fold curse."

"Its terms?"

"I should lose my wife. She tripped, fell face down in an irrigation ditch and was drowned. I should lose my farm. I had no money for rent

and was ousted by the landlord. I should lose my life. And now, I die.'

"He pitched forward on his face and arms and was dead when I turned him over.

"I had never had any faith in the power of a priest to curse or bless. I thought: 'Jesus! Some priest. I must see him.'

"So I went to his temple--the most hare-brained step I ever took, but I hadn't the least belief in his mental powers. Buddhist priests don't marry, but they aren't all celibate, and it was the priest's daughter who greeted me in her father's absence. What does one do with a willing comely woman? I did it, and her father caught us at it. He gave me the three-fold curse, his eyes blazing sultry fires. I laughed at him. He, a yellow-belly, I, a white man! He had no power over me.

"I must have forgotten to cross my fingers.

"The first war came on and my troop was recalled to the States. I was transferred from the cavalry to be made Captain Advocate for the defense of deserters. The Judge of the military court in Seattle was General Ballou."

"I took exception to some of the Judge's sentences, far too severe against men who merely wanted out. He was furious. He had me transferred to the commissariat where I had to keep books, an unaccustomed task that I soon fumbled badly. I was charged with misappropriation of funds and cashiered from the army.

"The first term of my case had been that I should lose my savings. I spent \$6,000 seeking reinstatement. The second term entered into effect when my wife left me. Do women marry men or money? The last term is that I shall die. I am on my way to Granby to see about that. Could that Buddhist have done anything to my mind?"

"Do you want to live?" I asked.

"Why sure!"

"I think you will beat the rap," said I. But after he left me, I did not receive the card he had promised to send telling me all was well. I never heard of him again.

THE END

GLASS HOUSES (Continued from page 3)

more text matter has been added, making 48 pages equivalent to about 55 pages in the old form. This has been done in the interest of economy. The addition of one page more would push us over the edge into the next higher postage bracket. We like to save where we can.

Do authors read the works of other authors? We come to the conclusion that they do, and cite in evidence the increasing use lately of the word "heuristic" in various s.f. yarns. You can't just toss a word like that off the arm, if you will pardon our resort to the vulgar vernacular. It takes practice and a keen cognizance of semantic values to manage it with any kind of aplomb at all. The case is further worsened by the fact that you must avoid straining for effect in its use. You have got to use it as though it were old hat with you, the sort of word you are accustomed to hearing around the house at all hours. At any rate, this unusually heuristic word, we are confounded to discover, has been in the dictionary for no telling how long. Better it should stay there.

DR. DOUBLETHINK'S DEFINITIONS: FANTHEISM:--God complex; psychosis afflicting some fans with a desire to re-make fandom in their own image; evidenced by writing hortatory epistles, articles, etc., telling (a) professional writers how to write; (b) editors how to edit; and (c) fans how to fan.

TRIM THE JETS, MISTER, AND STAND BY TO PLANET!

# THE DOOM OF CASSANDANY



By Stanton A. Coblentz

ILLUSTRATED BY BANISTER

How do we know that Life is *a* life. . . or *many* lives? If Life is indeed a plural existence, is it in the nature of a simultaneous or a progressive plurality? The ancient question, "*Have I lived before?*" still whispers in the mind of Man. ❀ ❀ ❀

It began like a glimpse into fairyland, and ended like a drop into Inferno. And it all seems so strange that today, when I think back upon it, I hardly know whether it was real or some half enchanted, half nightmarish dream.

My name is Frank Wylie. I am not by nature a man given to fantasies; I am a geologist employed by one of our leading American oil companies. And when I was sent to Iran to prospect for new petroleum deposits on a wind-bitten desert plateau, there was nothing more dreamy in my mind than the thought of the high wages and the hope for an early return. If I had known what awaited me--

But let me tell about it from the beginning. We were in some outlandish region known as Kuh Banan, with broken ranges of blue mountains in the distance, and the chilly air of the uplands in our nostrils; and we pitched camp one night on a deserted grassy plain that didn't look as if it could have changed in one leaf or blade since it saw the shepherds of Biblical times. I slept well that night, as I usually do in the wilderness; but I awoke early, to see the faint rosy sun-glow just beginning to diffuse itself above the spiky shoulders of a far-off ridge. And then all at once I had my shock, I blinked, and let out a low cry, which no one seemed to hear. And without quite realizing what I was doing, I began staggering away.

About half a mile beyond, on a slight elevation of the plateau, a city stared and glittered. It was built on a huge platform of earth or rock, which raised it many feet above the plain proper; and the approach was by means of a double stairway, with long, low, wide stone steps. It was surrounded by an indented wall, composed of stones skillfully fitted together; and behind this wall there were dozens of buildings, interspersed with date palms, columned like Greek temples, and colored with the most exquisite elfin tints - pale shimmering blue and delicate bud-green, faintest orange and seashell pink, misty lavender and diluted lemon, all blended as by some master artist; while massive sculptures of kingly heads, griffins and lions were visible even at my distance. Along the tops of the walls, scores of guards were pacing, armed with long bows and even longer spears, and dressed in leather jackets and vari-colored tunics that came down to the knees.

It was as if some force not quite of myself was drawing me toward that city. My powers of reason had been suspended--I did not ask myself how so majestic a settlement had suddenly lifted itself in the heart of the desert. I did not even wonder at the classic shapes of the buildings, nor at the fact that the guards carried bows and spears. Somehow, it seemed quite natural to see that city--as if it were something I had always known. I gave not a thought to my slumbering comrades as I started away.

But even as I started away, I realized that I was not alone; not sight but some deeper sense told me so. And then all at once I saw her at my right hand - and something within me went fiery hot. She was a strange red-haired creature, with long locks flowing behind her; and she had a sharp pixie-like little face, with a pointed chin, a pointed nose, and two small points of eyes that burnt with a sea-green light. She wore a long purple robe, decorated with flowered designs, her sleeves loose-hanging above her gloved hands, her slim neck and arms adorned with heavy bands of gold. And yet there was something filmy, almost insubstantial about her.

"Cassandany!" her name rushed to my lips, though I will never know what put it there. But it seemed a natural thing to know her, to call her by that name. It was as if I were no longer myself but some other being.

Stranger still, she spoke to me, in low tinkling tones. And the words were not English, though I understood them, I understood every word! "Hurry! Hurry, Arcases!" she was appealing. "Hurry. Now is our chance! Now--now, or we will be too late!"

"Come here! Here to me, Cassandany!" I urged, throwing out my arms to embrace her, and speaking in that language which was not English and yet seemed so familiar. "Only promise me first, in the name of our great god Ormazd--"

"No, by the light of Mithra, not yet! Not yet! First we must overthrow him!" came her reply, as nearly as I can translate it. And she danced away, ever a few feet ahead of me, while I followed, with the sense of some stupendous destiny to be fulfilled, and the thought of Cassandany drawing me on like a witch-fire.

And then, as I looked down at myself, I had the greatest surprise of all. Or rather, I saw the thing that surprises me most today--at the time, I took it, like all of this eerie adventure, almost as a matter of course. I was no longer wearing my soiled modern khaki outfit. Like the guards on the wall, I was clad in a long tunic, bound in front with a double girdle. My feet were covered with rude, outlandish shoes, each tied with a string that ran around the ankle. A short, straight, dagger-like sword hung from the right side of my girdle. A sort of felt cap was on my head. And my heavy black beard flowed down to my chest, though normally I am as clean-shaven as a barber's assistant.

## II

We reached the stairway, whose huge stones were bordered on each side by massive parapets, daintily colored, and decorated with paintings of scepter-wielding kings. Above us, on the city walls, the guards paced honoring us with an occasional deferential bow. But what was strangest of all was that, though I seemed to be acting of my own volition, somehow I was without volition; my power of free will had been suspended; I was as one who moves in a play, every scene of which has been rehearsed and pre-arranged, even though the actor doesn't know what his next word will be until the time for it has come.

The city was almost deserted, except for a few soldiers parading in their long-sleeved leather tunics that covered them from neck to knee; some of these, I noticed, carried oblong wickerwork shields, bows, battleaxes, and long flat-headed spears. Now and then a cavalryman, mounted on an armored horse, came cantering from around a corner of one of the great columned palaces. Or a two-wheeled, two-horse chariot would go rumbling past.

After a few minutes, we had climbed the stairway to the most magnificent palace of all. A hundred colossal pillars, arranged in ten rows of ten each, supported the tall gold-and-silver inlaid ceiling; the pillars themselves, tinted rose-red and sky-blue, were gold-banded around their sculptured peaks.

Yet, strangely, I was not swept with awe. It was a fiercer emotion that shot through me--a feeling savage, bitter, desirous, vengeful; a fury such as I had never known before in all my days.

Perhaps it was only the contagion of Cassandany's own emotion. She lifted the thick veil she had drawn about her face as we approached the palace; her sea-green eyes were blazing. Her pointed little face was aimed at me like a challenge. Her features became convulsed; became flaming red. She clasped her gloved hands together; she lifted them to me as if in prayer, but when I tried to embrace her she slipped from me like a shadow.

"Arcases! Arcases!" she pleaded, with suppressed passion, in that

foreign tongue which I so strangely understood. "Now is the time! Now, unless the demons of Ahriman prevent, you must hide yourself, you must prepare to strike! He will suspect nothing! Now, now, you must strike!"

At that repeated word, "Strike! Strike!", I reeled, and seemed about to sink to the floor. It was as if two personalities were struggling for possession of me: plain, matter-of-fact Frank Wylie, the American geologist; and some other man, obsessed with savage emotions, overwhelmed by a frantic love, and familiar with this fantastic palace-world. For a moment the two personalities fought; then Wylie faded like a dream-figure, faded into less than a dream-figure, and Arcases was once more in command.

In my mind--that is to say, in the mind of Arcases--I saw a hated being. He was garbed in a flowing ankle-long silk robe of gold-embroidered purple, with wide hanging sleeves; and was distinguished by a high stiff crown, surrounded by a blue and white fillet, and capped by a tiara of glistening gems. I saw his servants salaaming; I saw myself prostrated at his feet, as many times in the past; and I scarcely dared speak even when he bade me to, for one unguarded word might condemn any man to death by the most horrible tortures. For this was the Great King, this was the high lord Darius, undisputed master of the world.

"Now, now is the time," muttered Cassandany, her face still contorted with bitter emotion. Or did she speak only with her thoughts? She did not have to use words--I knew her meaning. I remembered her tear-stained features when she had come to me, fresh from an interview with the sovereign, her half-brother Darius. "He will not consent!" she had sobbed. "No, by the high Magus, he laughed a low laugh into his beard, and said that never would he let our royal blood be polluted by poison from the veins of swine!"

"Poison from the veins of swine!" I had growled. "Was not my father--Vemoses--of noble blood? Was he not the King's head general in the campaign against Ectobana?" So speaking, I swore a great oath--one that would have entitled me to be torn limb from limb had the Great King heard of it.

But it was Cassandany who uttered the real treason. I had not known that such volcanic passion could pour from one thin frail frame. "All my life he has treated me like a slave maiden!" she wept. "Why should I not wed whom I choose, Arcases? I know we women are supposed to have no rights. But if he were treated to a dagger through his breast--one good, swift dagger!--he would change his mind. Then I could be your consort, Arcases! You could be the Great King in his place, and I could sit beside you as your queen!"

At first the idea had stunned me. But passion and ambition warred against dread and horror; gradually, though a little doubtfully, I came to accept Cassandany's view. With a small band of fellow conspirators, I would enter the palace of the Great King, though I well knew that any unpermitted visitor might be slain on sight. We would lie in wait for the monarch; we would destroy him, and I would be proclaimed ruler in his place, with Cassandany for my bride and queen!

A mist of madness swirled through my head. For a moment it withdrew, and I was again Frank Wylie, the plain sober geologist, and everything now happening to me seemed part of a weird, frightful dream. Then Frank Wylie was swallowed up, and I was again Arcases--Arcases with a fierce hatred for Darius swelling in my breast, and my love for Cassandany moving me like a mania, and a frenzy of ambition to be myself hailed as king and ruler in his place.

A quick word passed between the girl and myself, though she still

held herself at arm's length. Then the veil dropped back over her face; she stole away around the red-and-yellow brick facade of a lion-sentried archway; and I, giving the password to a guard and co-conspirator, slipped among the great columns of the hall from which I might not emerge alive, or from which I might step forth with all the Great King's honor and acclaim.

### III

I lay behind one of the luxuriant embroidered couches in the throne-room. The other plotters, who had likewise entered thanks to the connivance of our henchmen among the guards, lay behind other sofas and divans. From my hiding-place on the multi-colored inlaid stone floor, I could see some of the high fluted columns, resplendent in gold and silver foil; but I could not observe the throne, which, all a blaze and glitter of gold beneath its tapestried canopy, rested on four lion-footed golden legs, and was fronted with a gleaming bull-footed stool.

Trying hard to utter no sound, I lay cramped in my corner. I clutched my dagger, resolved to sell my life dearly if need be. I heard the clanking of spears, heard the heavy striding steps of the guard; and their every motion sent a shudder through me. And yet, uncannily, I still seemed to be two personalities. Most of the time I was Arcases, but Frank Wylie would come flickering back; and I would say to myself, "Good Lord, man, you're crazy!" But, the next moment, I would forget that Wylie had ever existed; I would mutter an oath in that foreign language, "By Mithra, I will have his blood!" Yes, and Ormazd permitting, I will take her to wife!" And I would clutch my dagger more savagely than ever.

Suddenly a hush seemed to come across the palace. I heard mutterings of homage; by peering through a little peekhole that I had pre-arranged among the draperies of the couch, I could see a tall figure entering at a stately stride; could see the crowned, bearded face, with the heavy jewel-inlaid golden earrings, the golden chain about the neck, and the golden bracelets on the wrists. Behind him I caught glimpses of the royal parasol-carrier, the royal bow-bearer, several scribes, the chief eunuch, and other officials, all moving with a groveling obsequiousness. The sovereign passed out of sight, but I could see the attendants, prostrating themselves to the floor, and knew that the monarch, with the aid of the royal footstool-bearer, was ascending the throne.

Now was the chosen moment, Now, when most of the attendants were off guard and in awkward positions to strike back, my fellow conspirators and I would rush forth, overwhelm the guard, slay the king, take possession of the palace, and proclaim my name as that of the new ruler. I did not tremble; I did not hesitate; a ferocious joy was with me, as grasping my dagger, I sprang forth. "By the glory of Ormazd!" I bawled and threw myself at the potentate where he sat on his golden throne.

### IV

Now everything was a whirl and confusion, a blind fury of grasping and scuffling. Someone had seized me and hurled me back just as I was reaching the throne; I was aware of shouts and yells, stabbing flashes of light, fierce blows and pummellings. Hazily I could see knots of struggling men--and then, savagely struggling myself, I went down, with a weight as of mountains piled upon me, and all things turned black... When I came to myself, I was being wrenched to my feet by two pairs of powerful arms. Opposite me, half a dozen of my collaborators, ragged

and bleeding, were writhing in the hold of the guards. I did not at first see the red streaks on my own torn tunic; I did not know that some of my fellow plotters, at the last moment, had lost heart and deserted us. . . so that we had not been strong enough to overwhelm the guards. In terror and despair, I knew that our plot had failed.

Seated quietly on the throne, Darius tapped absently at the golden girdle that supported his gem-sheathed sword. He glared down at me out of the dark slits of his Oriental eyes, but seemed not even to see the other conspirators. His sure judgment had instantly picked the ringleader.

The ensuing silence may not have lasted more than a second or two but for me it was freighted with destiny--and doom. It seemed to me that the king was surveying me with the stare of a great cat contemplating a still-living but helpless prey.

"Arcases," he finally rumbled, each syllable an accusation, "you will live just long enough to curse the fiends of Ahriman that you did not die sooner. By Ormazd! have I not heaped honors upon you, that you should go mad and raise your dagger against me! You know the penalty for your crime. But I am not decided just what coin to pay you in. Crucifixion is no doubt a fit reward for most rebels, but for you it would be too soft and easy, it might be better to cut off your ears, tear out your tongue, and bury you alive. Or, again, I might order the punishment of 'the boat.' Yes, I might order the punishment of 'the boat.'"

I could not keep back a groan. The punishment of "the boat," was one of the most cruel ever devised--would involve a lingering death, drawn out possibly for as much as seventeen days, while I was stretched in an excruciating position between two boats.

I opened my mouth; but dared not speak; a single word, uttered without the despot's express command, might doom me to still more dreadful tortures.

"Yes, as a proper rebuke to treason, I will order the punishment of 'the boat'!" ordained the king, in tones of thundering finality.

There was another strange flickering in my consciousness. I thought that I lay in bed, dreaming a horrible nightmare. But again, after a fraction of a second, that columned golden throne-room was real once more--the golden throne-room, with the struggling, bleeding wretches, the spear-wielding guards, and the spangled monarch glaring down at me from his glittering elevation.

As that vision rushed back, something stranger and even more unexpected burst upon my gaze. From beneath the brilliant hangings that marked the entrance to the hall, a slim figure came panting. She threw herself before the throne; prostrated herself there; dashed the veil from off her face; and burst into tearful entreaty.

"O Great King! O Lord! O brother! As we had one sire, listen to me! The same blood flows in our veins! Oh, do not wreck my life, my happiness! Spare Arcases! He was mad, he knew not what he did--"

I could see the King's nostrils widening with anger even as Cassandry flung her furious appeal.

"By my father Cyrus! What is this?" he demanded. "If it were any one but my blood-sister, I would have her brains beaten out for the desecration of entering and speaking uninvited. Even so, some of the guards will have to pay with their heads. Were they asleep, when they let you pass?"

"They were not asleep. They listened to my plea, O Great King. I was frantic--frantic for Arcases, when I heard the uproar and knew he had been caught--"

I struggled in the hands of my captors, straining toward Cassandany, for never had I loved her as now, when I seemed about to be parted from her forever.

"What is that you are saying, Cassandany?" stormed the monarch, leaning excitedly forward in his jeweled seat. "You heard the uproar, and knew Arcases had been caught? Then you knew he was in here? You knew his dagger was aching for my life?"

Cassandany's face, red the moment before, went white as she realized her unconscious self-betrayal.

It seemed to me that the king was about to leap from the throne. His voice was a shout as he continued. "Then it was you, Cassandany--you, my sister!--who was behind this plot! It was you who lusted for your own brother's blood! By the tombs of our ancestors! you are my sister no longer! You are a traitor, and will pay the traitor's price! You burned to share Arcases' life--therefore you may share his death! I condemn you to die along with him by the punishment of 'the boat!'"

She uttered a shriek, and before the guards could seize her, flung herself toward me. For one desperate half-second, I felt her palpitating form pressed against mine, while I strained against my captors and planted a kiss on her warm moist face. Then we were torn apart. There was a blur of waving spears, a crush of overwhelming forms, and a glitter of red and gold in my eyes. . . before all things suddenly went black.

.....

I opened my lids to see the faint sun-glow just beginning to diffuse itself above the spiky shoulders of a far-off ridge. The plateau was bare as a rock, unmarked by even the ruins of a city. I looked down and saw that I was wearing my usual dusty prospector's outfit. But the scenes about me, the clothes I was wearing, seemed less real than a canopied shining throne-room, the tunic-wearing, spear-wielding guards, and a grim crowned figure in a silken purple robe and golden bands and bracelets.

Subsequently, I was told that the city I had seen bore close resemblance to Persepolis, the ancient seat of the Persian kings. Yet it was far from the site of Persepolis. Was it some lost forgotten capital of the ancient world, which had once flourished at the spot of my adventure? Was it haunted even now by the shade of the conspirator Arcases, whose passion and tragedy I had re-lived? Or had I myself been Arcases? I fear that I shall never know. But my life has never since been quite the same. I am haunted as by some vague presence, the memory of some ancient sorrow; and time after time I see a pointed little pixie face, with flowing red locks and sea-green eyes, which drifts before me like the ghost of one long-lost and dearly loved.

#### THE END

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# JANIE

By

G. M. CARR



Everyone thought Janie "odd"—even her mother. This is a common reward for differing from the cultural "norm". We assure ourselves of mental stability by rationalizing this norm, which does not include ten-foot giants, people with twelve fingers, or others who can see things we can't. . . .



The air was heavy with the scent of flowers and the stuffy-afternoon-smell of many people closely packed. The organ filled the Chapel with its quivery music and pushed the angels in the stained glass windows into a sort of shivery dance. Janie looked more closely to see if they really moved their wings when the organ boomed like that.

"Sit still, Janie," hissed her mother.

Janie tried to sit still in spite of the excitement that made her insides feel like a balloon about to pop. She bowed her head in imitation of the others--peeping slyly from the sides of her eyes at the Great Aunts all dressed in black with big veils on their hats, sitting side by side in the back row and Grandpapa at the end. They were all dressed in black, everybody, that is, but Great-Aunt Vicky. She said she didn't believe in funerals, so she wore her ordinary dress-up clothes, just like any time she went to church.

Janie pondered over this and managed to sit still for ten whole minutes while she tried to puzzle something out. Great-Aunt Elmira and Great-Aunt Adelaide wore unaccustomed veils and black clothes that Janie had never seen before. They should look unfamiliar or strange, but they didn't. They look right, somehow, as though that's how Great-Aunts should look at a Great-Grandpapa's funeral; but Great-Aunt Vicky, who wore the clothes she always wore, she was the one who looked strange, as though she shouldn't be there.

Great-Aunt Vicky always looked out of place no matter where she was, except in her own little house, but then, the little house itself looked out of place between the two bare, white-painted ones on either side. It was covered with ivy and the big rosebush climbing over the front porch, so that it looked like an extra big bush growing at the back

of the garden. The houses of the other two Great-Aunts, one on either side, had neat square garden patches--flowers in front and vegetables in back, like all the other houses on the street; so bare and clean they made Great-Aunt Vicky's place look untidy in the midst of all those flowers.

"For goodness' sakes, Vicky! I don't see how you can stand all that ivy growing all over the house," Janie had heard Great-Aunt Elmira scold. "You know very well it isn't good for a house to have creepers smothering it--rots the wood. You ought to cut down all that stuff and that great big rosebush hanging all over the porch that way. I don't see how you can live under it. Don't you know it makes a house damp? You'll catch your death of rheumatism!" The other Great-Aunts were always after Vicky to tear down her flowers and look like everybody else.

"Well," she would smile and answer, "it saves me painting every other year. You've got somebody to do the work in painting your house, but I'd have to hire it done, and that means more money than a poor widow like me can afford. Of course, if somebody was to pay to have it done . . ." That would shut them up for a while, because even little Janie knew that the Great-Aunts didn't like to spend money, and they didn't like their husbands to spend too much time in Great Aunt Vicky's garden, either.

Janie liked Great-Aunt Vicky's garden. She often played there, hidden under the thick rows of hollyhocks and big white daisies. It was fun to crouch there by the fence and watch the people walk by on the sidewalk, so close, and yet not knowing she was there to see them. She almost giggled to remember the time Old Mrs. Peabody had come on her soliciting rounds for the Ladies' Aid. The Ladies' Aid never met at Great-Aunt Vicky's though they did regularly once a year at each of the other two Aunts. Old Mrs. Peabody had straightened her back and pressed her lips together so it made her jaw stick out when she reached Aunt Vicky's, but she had walked determinedly as though she intended to visit Great-Aunt Vicky this time or else!

"Stuff and nonsense!" Janie had heard her muttering as she fumbled at the gate. "Lot of superstitious claptrap. Spirits, huh! Just an excuse because they don't want to take the trouble. I know she won't cooperate, but nobody's going to scare me! I'll get something from her for the bazaar even if I don't get her to attending the meetings!"

Mrs. Peabody had tromped on the flowers growing between the stepping stones like she was a soldier marching to battle, but when she almost reached the porch and saw Great-Aunt Vicky sitting there, rocking in her comfortable rocking chair with her back to the street and talking and smiling, Mrs. Peabody stopped in her tracks, pulled back her shoulders and her mouth fell open for a moment. Then she turned and almost ran out of the garden so fast that she didn't even stop to close the gate. Mrs. Peabody had looked funny stopping so fast that the feather on her hat nodded. But Janie couldn't understand what had made her look so scared. Aunt Vicky was just talking to the rosebush, and Janie thought, but wasn't quite close enough to be sure, that the rosebush was answering back. Janie often talked to the flowers, too, and to the little people who lived in them. Sometimes it was very puzzling about them. Everybody pretended they weren't there and sometimes scolded her when she mentioned them. Just like they scolded her when she asked out loud to go to the--well, grownups were very funny about what you could talk about.

Great-Aunt Vicky understood things, though, and Janie trusted her with all her intimate problems ever since that Sunday School picnic when Great-Aunt Vicky had come upon that ring of finger-pointing tormentors

with Janie the target in the middle.  
"Janie is a liar! Janie is a liar!" they were sing-singing. "Yah, yah. Janie is a liar!"

"What's going on here!" Great-Aunt Vicky's usually soft and far away voice was sharp, and her words stung like little arrows. "What's the idea of teasing someone so much smaller than you! What's going on?"

"Janie says she saw a fairy," Elsie Berg spoke up. She was always the one to take the lead because her father was Deacon Berg and owned the Store. "But there aren't any fairies. My father says so!"

"Well, a lot of other people say there are, and how do you know what Janie saw? Did you see it?"

"Nooooooo. . ."

"Then if Janie saw something which in her opinion was a fairy, she's entitled to that opinion until somebody can prove what it really was that she saw! Now run along and stop this nonsense!"

The startled children had scattered, but this wholly unexpected and irrefutable help had been a great consolation to Janie, and gave her courage days later to consult Great-Aunt Vicky on a problem that bothered her very much.

"Great-Aunt Vicky, what can I do when people won't believe me?"

"How do you mean won't believe you?"

"Well, like at the Sunday School Picnic--I really, truly did see a fairy. She was all white and was sitting under a bush and she smiled at me and the leaves fell right through her when the wind blew!"

Great-Aunt Vicky had looked at her with a funny look, as though she were trying to look through Janie's eyes to the inside of her head. Janie felt uncomfortable.

"Janie, I can see you've got a problem on your hands." Great-Aunt Vicky slowly replied, looking off into a corner of the room as though, maybe, asking for help from somebody. "All I can suggest is that you just don't mention fairies nor any strange person you see, unless somebody else is with you and speaks to them first. You see, Janie, some people can see more than others, and maybe you are one of them. If you are, nothing you can say will ever make them believe you even though it is true. So it's better not to mention it!" Great-Aunt Vicky looked at her with a look like she wore when Janie had the measles and was obliged to stay in bed in a darkened room so long.

"But why, Great-Aunt Vicky? Why?"

"Well, Janie, it's--ah-- Oh, come and have a cookie and a glass of milk!" And she bustled off and that was the end of that.

It was odd, reflected Janie, how almost every time she tried to talk to a grownup, the conversation ended in cookies and milk. Or pennies, if it were a man. You ask a question and they give you a cookie. But questions need answers. Cookies and pennies aren't answers! Janie sighed. Great-Grandpapa was the only one who really tried to answer her. If she asked him a question that was too hard, even for him, he didn't reach in his pocket and then tell her to run off and play. He just looked at her, right in the eyes, and said very solemnly, "Girl, I don't know!"

Janie ceased her private reverie as the sunshine struck another panel in the window and poured down a long, straight purple shaft. It landed in the middle of the aisle and all the dust in the air was purple. The preacher's waving hand was a little purple, too, and the flowers on the big box--the coffin, they called it--changed color.

Up in the pulpit, behind the coffin, Pastor Lund was preaching. Janie tried to follow what Pastor Lund was saying, but it didn't make sense. There were too many words she didn't know, and besides, it didn't sound like Great-Grandpapa that he was talking about.

"...But in the end, when the way grew dark and his footsteps feeble..." Jane wondered what he meant by that. "Feeble," was like old Mrs. Patterson who walked with a cane, all bent over and tottering like she'd fall down at every step. Great-Grandpapa's footsteps weren't like that. He always walked slow and steady and he used to put one big heavy shoe down after the other so quietly you couldn't hear him coming, but you could feel the floor thump when he went by. He always walked that way ever since Janie could remember, straight and sturdy with his head up and his big white Santa Claus beard spread out on his chest, never hurried, never fussed. Always with a big rumbling laugh when he saw Janie.

Janie stole a peep at the Great-Aunts again. They all sat there looking at the preacher as though he had just spilled a glass of milk on a clean table-cloth. All but Great-Aunt Vicky--she was looking over toward the head of the coffin with a funny look in her eyes. Janie craned her neck and peered toward the coffin, too.

"Why," thought Janie in surprise, "I thought Great-Grandpapa was sleeping in the box; but there he is now, standing up beside the flowers. He must have woke up when the organ made that extra loud rattle."

Janie smiled and tried to wave her hand.

"Janie, you sit still or I'll have to take you out!"

Her mother grabbed Janie's hand and shook it surreptitiously.

"You sit still or I'll take care of you!" That note in Mother's voice meant business, so Janie sank back in the seat. She peered around to see if anybody else had noticed, but they were all paying attention to Pastor Lund and not looking at Great-Grandpapa at all. Janie looked at the people. She knew most everybody there. Some of them, like Uncle Al and Aunt Marie, she hadn't seen before this morning, but she knew who they were from the Snapshot Box. Great-Grandpapa often used to take her on his lap and show her the pictures in the box where they were kept. He would tell her stories about the pictures, and that was very funny too. Because there would be a picture of Uncle Johnny standing barefoot holding up a fish, and Uncle Johnny wasn't any bigger than she was. But the next picture down was Uncle Johnny all grown up and dressed in his soldier's uniform. Janie sometimes wondered if the pictures ever talked to each other in the darkness when they were put away. She wondered what big Johnny would say to little Johnny, and how there could be so many Johnnys, all different and yet all the same one! It was very confusing. But she loved the stories anyway, and knew them every, single one.

She recognized the little old lady over in the shadowy corner, too, although she had never seen her at all before. That was Great-Grandmama, the one that had gone away to Heaven before Janie was born. Janie had seen her picture many times and remembered especially well because Great-Grandpapa said it was her name that he had given to Janie when she was born. That was his big "Little Janie," and she was his little "Little Janie" (but that was a secret nobody else knew--not even Mother!) Great-Grandpapa loved to tell stories about her, and he had more stories about Great-Grandmama than about anybody else. Janie often wished Great-Grandmama hadn't gone away so soon, but had stayed long enough so she could have told her stories too. Suddenly an awful thought struck Janie like a blow. Maybe Great-Grandmama wouldn't tell stories. Maybe she didn't like little girls and wouldn't want to be bothered with her--like Great-Aunt Adelaide who always gave her a cookie and told her, "Now run along outside and play, child, and don't spill any crumbs on my rug!"

Janie became so fascinated she got up on her knees and rested her chin on the back of the pew, peering intently. Maybe she could find Great-Grandmama after the funeral and ask her if she minded that Great-

Grandpapa had given away her name.

Great-Grandmama turned her head as she stood back there in the shadows and her eyes searched all the benches until they found Janie. She smiled at Janie and Janie felt comforted. She even gave a tiny wiggle of sheer joy. Yes, indeed, Great-Grandmama was the kind who liked little girls, all right, and especially when they were named Janie! She tried to wave her hand to Great-Grandmama, carefully, so Mama wouldn't see. But Mama was crying into her new black bordered handkerchief and probably wouldn't notice anyway, if she didn't wiggle too much. Everybody was crying, even the Great-Aunts had their black bordered handkerchiefs in use.

Janie turned around to peek at Great-Grandpapa again. He was stamping his foot at the preacher and shaking his fist. My, he was awful mad! Inside of her head Janie could hear him saying.

"Damn foolishness! Lies, all lies! I tell you it's nothing but a bunch of lies!"

"Great-Grandpapa, you mustn't swear! You're in Church!"

Janie's shocked response was silent and unuttered, but Great-Grandpapa heard it. He turned his head and glared with astonishment out over the bowed heads.

Janie's face brightened and she dared a tiny wave so he could find her in all that sea of heads and hats. And find her he did. His angry scowl faded away and his eyes sparkled with laughter as he called out to her.

"Ho! Ho! Ho! So it's you, girl! How's my little Janie with the pug nose?"

"Now shame to you, Eric, to tease the child about the nose that God has given her!"

"Janie!" Great-Grandpapa swung around in surprise and gazed into the shadows in the corner where Great-Grandmama was standing.

"Janie, you here?"

"Of course I'm here. Where did you think I would be? Naturally, I came to see what they could find good to say about you, you old heathen! Well, I see Pastor Lund got in the last word after all, for all the arguing you did!"

Great-Grandmama's voice was soft inside Janie's head and kind of warm and chuckly and full of love, like Mother's when she kissed her and tucked her in at night. She was surprised, but not very, to hear that Great-Grandmama spoke with an accent, just like old Mrs. Soderblum, kind of slurry and smooth like water slipping over the top of a stone, and now she teased Great-Grandpapa out of his anger like Mother teased Daddy sometimes.

"So you never got over trying to convince him you knew more than he did, eh, Eric? But still he got in the last word."

"Huh! Well, the only way he could do it is to take advantage of me when I can't talk back." Great-Grandpapa's voice rumbled and grumbled on. "It's a dirty trick to play on a man when he can't talk back--but it's just like that old-woman-in-pants to let on like he won me over!"

Great Grandpapa started up the aisle, his beard shaking silver sparks into the purple sunbeam as he walked through it, grumbling.

"Well, Eric," Great-Grandmama's soft voice soothed, "Let him talk all he wants, you'll have the last laugh yet. He's got a lot to learn for all he thinks he's so wise. And you'll still be ahead of Pastor Lund when he comes to finding out for himself what he's been talking about so big."

Great-Grandpapa snorted. He was alongside Janie by now, walking solidly and silently as ever. As he passed by, he paused and put his hand

on Janie's head.

"So you turned out to be one of the seeing ones, eh, Little Pug Nose? You and Vicky. So. Well, goodbye, girl." He rumbled her hair in the old way and went on up the aisle.

Janie watched as Great-Grandmama came out of the shadows to meet him. He put his arm around her awkwardly as they started for the big double-door of the church. Janie was a little surprised that he didn't kiss her. After all, she had come all the way from Heaven to attend his funeral. Uncle Al only lived in Jefferson County and everybody was kissing Uncle Al and shaking his hand because he had come from so far away. Surely Heaven must be farther away than Jefferson County!

Great-Grandmama turned her head and smiled at Janie again, and her warm voice with its little lilt stole into Janie's mind.

"There'll be plenty of time for kisses, little Janie, don't you fret. We have all eternity for all the kisses we want."

Janie watched them go. She didn't see them open the door, but suddenly they were gone, so she sat down and looked around. She glanced over at Great-Aunt Vicky, her eyes wide with surprise that everyone was still crying and nobody had paid any attention to Great-Grandpapa's departure. Great-Aunt Vicky turned her head and caught Janie's perplexity. A deep understanding came into her face as she smiled at Janie and shook her head ever so slightly with her finger to her lips.

Suddenly it seemed as though a great light burst on Janie. The reason nobody else looked around was because nobody else saw Great-Grandpapa and Great-Grandmama but herself and Great-Aunt Vicky! That was why nobody believed her. They couldn't believe her when they couldn't see.

All that funny excited feeling was gone and Janie was content to sit back on the bench. Somehow she knew with a warm, strong feeling of security that it wouldn't ever matter to her again that she couldn't make people believe her stories. She knew she wouldn't even try.

The organ played softly and everybody stood up. The beam of light from the stained glass window quivered into pale violet. There was some sort of commotion up front. Janie couldn't see what. She plucked at her mother's sleeve. The violet light trembled in little waves all around her.

"Mama, what are they doing up there? Why are they walking around the box?"

"They are going up to pay their last respects to Great-Grandpapa in his coffin. You're too young to go, Janie. You stay here."

Janie watched as the people walked slowly past the coffin, deep purple figures in the misty violet glow. They would stop for a moment, and some would burst into tears. Janie began to feel a little sorry for them, because they cried over an empty box and didn't know any better. She knew Great-Grandpapa wasn't in that box--he and Great-Grandmama must be half-way to Heaven by now. Because she was sure of this, Janie could see that maybe there were advantages to being "different" like Great-Aunt Vicky...once you got used to it. In fact, it was even kind of nice!

The violet wavelets in the air quivered ever so slightly, and rosy warmth stole from the stained glass windows. The angels there were rosy, too, and seemed to smile...even as Janie smiled...in a friendly, half-secret sort of way.

THE END

## DIANETICS: a critical appraisal

●

During the past two or three decades the lay public has become increasingly conscious of a number of new sciences endeavoring to explain the function and dysfunctions of the human mind. The more important of these appear under the familiar designations of psychology, psychoanalysis, and psychiatry. And now along comes a novel and dramatic theory of the psyche called dianetics, threatening to displace and supercede all former concepts of mental therapy.

There are several possibilities which present themselves with the advent of every new and seemingly miraculous discovery: first, that it may be a hoax of considerable magnitude; second, an unintended deception due to inordinate enthusiasm and insufficient data; and, third, that it is the actual truth. Why is it necessary that dianetics be promptly identified under one of these categories? Because, if it be truth, it concerns you and me, not just our neurotic and psychotic neighbors. Regardless of your present status in society, whether or not you consider yourself intelligent, successful, and happy, the author of Dianetics considers you to be more or less aberrated in your behavior pattern, mentally inefficient, and incapable of utilizing your full potentiality. This, then, becomes a serious matter to all of us.

Any discussion of dianetics must be undertaken with considerable caution, since the author has taken some pains to put any future criticism immediately on the defensive. This is one of the less appealing aspects of the book itself, and one which can only serve to provoke antagonism. We are told there can be no recourse to "Authority", by which presumably is meant the work of such men as Meyer, Strecker, Noyes, and a host of brilliant doctors who have devoted their lives to the study of psychiatry. We are confronted with the fact that while we are all undoubtedly aberrated, we are merely emphasizing this fact if we do not accept dianetics at face value. We are damned if we do and doubly damned if we don't. This is an extremely untenable position for a critic, since any censure of dianetics will be equivalent to an admission of aberration.

You will possibly ask why we should attempt at this time any evaluation of a theory which must ultimately prove itself true or false. The answer is obvious. If you have a thousand or so hours of leisure time ahead of you, you may be able to discover for yourself if you can become a "clear." Don't waste any more of your precious time on this article, but devote yourself immediately to chasing down your time track in search of engrams. We are told that a well-trained auditor never takes more than eight hundred hours with the worst of cases. Since you are not exactly well trained as yet and you will undoubtedly pick a

"difficult" case, you had better start early.

Perhaps you are beginning to see how well guarded are the precepts of this new science. The flanks are well nigh impervious, and a frontal attack may mean months of wasted time. Yet most of us would like to believe in its truth, and none could desire to remain behind in a society of "clears" with their vastly superior intelligence and incredible efficiency. And so we stand unhappily on a threshold of uncertainty and indecision.

There is a practical course of action which will be discussed later. For the present, let us examine this subject of dianetics more closely, ignoring the oft repeated superlatives and the extravagantly worded metaphors with which it is introduced. Just how much of this science is really new?

Let us take a few concrete examples, unimportant in themselves, but adequate for the purpose of demonstrating that dianetics is composed of "something old" and "something borrowed" as well as "something new." For a beginner, consider how many of us probably thought the word engram was coined by the author, L. Ron Hubbard. It has long been used in psychiatry and may be defined as a "mnemonic hypothesis," or an inherited pattern of thinking in any racial group. This is not, of course, exactly the same definition provided by Mr. Hubbard.

Of more consequence, perhaps, is Mr. Hubbard's discovery of the dynamics of survival; only psychiatry prefers to call them instincts or organic urges. Aristotle preferred the name "hormé," a term signifying drive or urge; Freud called the dynamic principle of existence by the term "libido." Modern psychiatry defines dynamic energy as "that aspect of biological energy which continues the race pattern and motivates the psychobiological drives of the individual."<sup>1</sup>

Well, you may ask, what about Hubbard's concept of the analytical, somatic, and reactive minds? What, indeed? Over thirty years ago Jung evolved the theory which divided the unconscious into two levels, one lying closer to awareness and containing the latent memories of all the experiences through which the individual has passed since birth, while more remote lies the racial or collective unconscious representing the deposit or product of experience of the race.<sup>2</sup> The analogy is there if you care to work it out.

There is, of course, much that is new in Hubbard's conception of the psyche. The foundation of the whole thing is based upon the hypothesis of pre-natal cell recordings, or, if you like, engrams. It is difficult for anyone with a sound basic training in embryology, anatomy, and physiology to deduce how these recordings are made, especially the sonic recordings, in an early incomplete embryo lacking both ears and auditory nerves. Certainly we will grant this is a new idea.

The second new concept, and the more important since it diametrically opposes all previous beliefs, is that all mental aberrations are due to engrams implanted in the reactive (subconscious) mind during moments of "unconsciousness." By comparison, present day psychiatry believes that the environment (of the conscious mind) plays an important role in the production of neuroses and psychoses, often because of the sharp clashing that results from an intensification of instinctual demands in adolescence, for example, when a simultaneous repression of these demands is encountered. Dianetics teaches that these instinctual demands are engrams which should be erased or "refiled"; psychiatry believes they are the inherited instincts contained within the racial unconscious and their repression will result in poor adaptation to environment.

The issue is now squarely before us. We have referred to "Authority"

in the cases above merely for comparative purposes. This paper is not intended as an attack on dianetics, which is apparently impregnable at this time. It is merely an attempt to evaluate the possibilities of this new theory stripped of its sensationalism and exuberance. Medical men are prone to view with suspicion any new and miraculous discovery, including those announced in their own journals. They are especially wary of hundred per cent cures. This is an attitude which has served them in good stead, else the graveyards would be filled with unsuccessful experiments. Cancer cases are spoken of as five year cures, ten year cures, etc., even while the malignant tissue may have been cut away as cleanly as any engram may be erased. Yet Mr. Hubbard has one hundred per cent unqualified cures with a technique barely in use for eleven years.

Although we have no intention of dwelling on them, there are discrepancies in Mr. Hubbard's book which can be mentioned. It may be noted that the concept of dianetics would necessarily imply an increase in the number of neurotic and psychotic individuals in society as time passes, since there has been increasing use of general anesthesia as well as an increasing frequency of operations. Statisticians have shown, however, that mental disorders are not on the increase. The growing number of admissions to mental hospitals in recent years is due largely to the fact that an increase in hospital facilities has promoted a more liberal admission policy. In similar fashion we should expect a more rapid post-operative convalescence in a patient operated under spinal, caudal, or some other local anesthesia, since their analytical mind remains fully active throughout the procedure. The actual facts do not bear out this supposition, and the reverse is often true.

Apparently stemming from a well of unbounded enthusiasm appears the statement that "some say" as high as seventy per cent of man's listed ailments are psychosomatic. The figure more generally quoted is nearer fifty per cent.<sup>3</sup> From another point of view, it is quite possible that even more illness is caused by organic disease. Frequently cases of headache or physical exhaustion previously diagnosed as neurotic are later found to be suffering from intestinal amebiasis or similar overlooked pathology. We must not lose sight of the fact that it is possible to "cure" a minor illness by convincing the patient that it does not exist, by means of hypnosis, auto-suggestion, or possibly dianetics, while the undiscovered and unsuspected pathology continues its insidious destructive process. We have cured the symptom, not the disease. The "psychosomatic" coronary patients of Mr. Hubbard may remain cured until they eventually die--with a thrombus in their anterior coronary artery.

We find allergy in general classified as a psychosomatic disease. What engrams, then, are responsible for the anaphylactic shock which can be produced in rabbits and human beings alike by sensitization of the tissues? Conjunctivitis of the mild chronic type is frequently found on routine ocular examination, unsuspected by the patient. Should he become aware of its presence it would be a simple matter to convince him it does not exist. This does not mean the germs are not there; they are, and can be demonstrated microscopically. While Mr. Hubbard may prove an exceptional philosopher, he has taken unprecedented liberties in a field about which he knows very little. These points are made merely to demonstrate that certain unfounded statements have been made, and while they are of relative unimportance, per se, they are representative of the overall tenor of the book. They may be interpreted as warnings, for sensationalism has no place in an "exact" science.

Although most of us have reached the conclusion that all this is not

a deliberate hoax, it has become apparent that there may have been, as is often the case, a prejudiced and over-enthusiastic interpretation of the data. It is even possible to propose an alternative explanation of the workings of the new science, one you can easily test yourself. Try to put someone into a dianetic reverie. Unless he has read the book and wants very much to believe in it, you are going to have a tough time. And if he does believe in it, you now have a nice case of auto-hypnosis, with a little help from you, of course. Actually it is a lot easier to hypnotize a person (without the aid of drugs) than it is to locate him on his theoretical time track.

Mr. Hubbard stresses the difference between reverie and hypnosis, but in practice that difference is slight. At the commencement of reverie the pre-clear is told that he will know everything that goes on and be able to remember everything that happens. But, after coming out of a session, the pre-clear is unable to remember any so-called engrams. There's a reason, of course. (In dianetics there is an explanation for everything.) The engrams are now filed in the "standard memory bank" and can be found again "only with great difficulty."

Although it is obviously impossible for any critic at this time to prove or disprove the truth of the dianetic concept, it is hoped that a measure of caution will be temporarily adopted by the public. This book is well on the way to the top of the best seller list; it may be there by now. There are many "normal" people like you and me who are apt to find themselves in mental turmoil, people with too little time to spare as it is, people who will feel that every day they spend as pre-clear is taking its unjust toll. Under these circumstances such a book, true or otherwise, might conceivably do more harm than good.

Some paragraphs back a practical approach was mentioned. Unless you have a great deal of leisure time at your command, it is probably the best plan to adopt, having worked successfully under many similar circumstances.

Don't worry about being a pre-clear. It will take quite a few hours to clear a hundred million people or so, including Einstein and a few other supposedly intelligent individuals.

Don't think that dianetics can cure everything it claims in the strict sense of the word. There have been too many brilliant minds working for too many years for all the answers to have escaped them. You can convince a myopic (nearsighted) person that he can see without his glasses, but this is not the same thing as seeing. His refractive error stays the same, and so will his glasses if they were correct the first time. This is governed by a science more infallible than dianetics, and has to do with the principles of optics.

Don't expect dianetics to escape the attention of the men who are practicing psychiatry daily in our hospitals and mental institutions; and don't expect these men to disregard it or try to laugh it out of existence. It's not a laughing matter. Dianetics will be put to the actual test by these men and tested thoroughly. The proof of the existence of dianetics as a science can be reduced to the recovery of pre-natal engrams in patients who are unacquainted with the fact that these engrams are supposed to exist. Herein lies the bone of contention, the foundation of the entire theory. If these engrams can be recovered by qualified psychiatrists and their recovery proven to be independent of auto-suggestion or auto-hypnosis, then and then only need we accept the arrival of a new and extremely beneficial science.

For most of us it is better to wait and see. The answer will not be long in coming. It is inevitable that we be reminded of a somewhat smaller volume entitled "The Practice of Auto-Suggestion," published

in 1922, which promised to cure everything from asthma to varicose veins.<sup>4</sup> This book created quite a sensation in its heyday, but is completely forgotten now. We can hope for a more promising future for dianetics, but time alone can tell.

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THE END

#### THE DIVA'S DILEMMA



JACK SANDERS

"Suppose he *does* find that there is a Professional Auditor in the house — how do you know it's an engram bothering you? Maybe you're just neurotic!"

## SPACEMAN'S SONG

Let me go home. . . I'm tired of Space and stars;  
The silent air is cold upon my face.  
I hate these crimson-lighted skies of Mars.

Let me go home. I'm tired of stars and Space;  
I'm tired of the eternal ebb and flow,  
As 'round my ship the stellar surges race.

The hills of Earth are greening in the snow. . . .  
The Moon, a silver penny in the sky,  
Kisses the forest with its argent glow;

And Mars is something very far and high. . . .  
And in the tender dawn no space-winds blow. . . .  
But I (out here in Space) can only sigh. . . .

Let me go back through space-clouds and star-foam;  
I'm tired of Space and stars; let me go home.

—Marion Zimmer Bradley

## FUTURE MAN

He has left his trike on the steps again;  
His skates are there on the walk;  
Upon the moonlit porch  
He has scrawled his name  
With a stick of purloined chalk.  
Curly-headed moppet,  
Gazing up at a sky full of stars;  
Tell me, will you be the first to reach  
The red-gold sands of Mars?

—F. Anton Reeds

## MEDALLION IN QUICKSILVER

*2nd prizewinning poem reprinted from QUICKSILVER*

If lightning could illuminate our cities,  
If shooting stars could give us all our bearings,  
If waterspouts could work our power-stations,

Then would our acts be answers to our questions:  
We would be so acquainted with the curious  
That we would conquer. Thunder would applaud us.

And one I knew who did research in lightning  
Lived on a roof and kept his cameras open  
At night: they caught the quick communication

Whose river flows (leaving its rich alluvium  
Of silver salts) across the prostrate paper,  
And crashes down in cataracts through the cranium.

—Terence Heywood

## WAITING FOR THE CALL

Don't seem right, star rovers wind up  
Waiting silent, chair to chair,  
With a lifetime's glorious vistas  
Swapped for fenced lawn stretched out there.  
Too damn quiet in these Rest Homes. . . .  
No one bragging. . . not one scrap. . . .  
Guess each old, discarded Spacerat  
Knows he'll never beat *this* rap.

Keep remembering every jailhouse  
From the stinking, slime-wrapt bars  
In miasma swamps on Venus. . . .  
To cold fortress-peaks of Mars. . . .  
Then, I always knew, the Skipper  
Couldn't leave without good men,  
And I'd be working out my fine  
When the ship picked up again. . . .

Now, we know, on some tomorrow  
Comes the call for our last flight,  
With a somber-hooded Pilot  
Sired by Darkness. . . wombed by Night.  
This to be a secret mission. . . .  
Frightening Port to head 'er on. . . !  
And this time, the cargo papers  
Must be signed by Old Charon.

Lord, does bird of freedom passage  
Long for swamp when strength is gone?  
Must each flashing star but vanish  
Into light, grown pale and wan. . . ?  
No! . . To eagle there's the high crag,  
To sun-star, bright Nova fires. . . .  
Surely, Lord, You send for spaceman  
Proud ship that his heart desires?

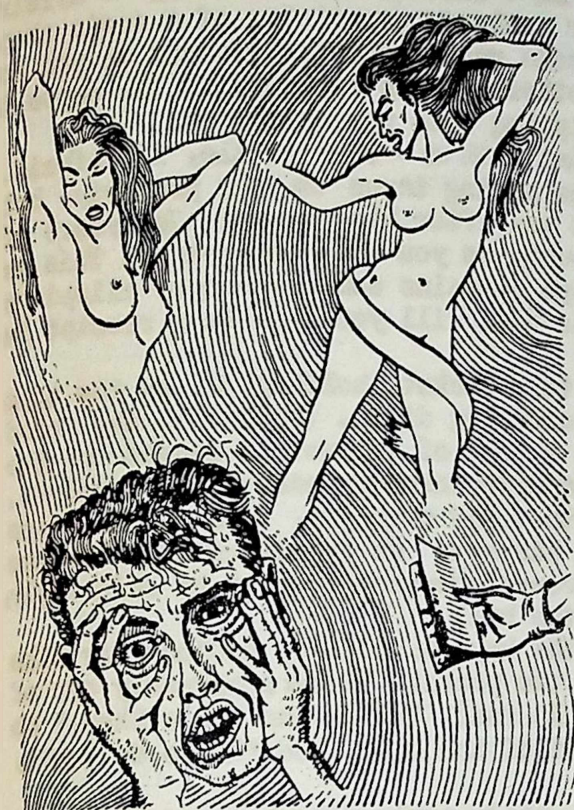
Spare us cavernous, gloomy river  
With swift fordings in the dark;  
Can't You string bright meteor ribbons,  
Endless voyages to mark?  
Don't You know, a spaceman's Heaven  
Is that tearing plunge through Space. . . .  
And his Hell lies where he's grounded,  
Never more to lift and race?

— Olive Morgan

## MOON SECRETS

The Moon has secret things to tell  
To those who know her speech—  
The legends that the planets know  
And whisper each to each,  
And stories that the stars relate  
On some sidereal beach.

—Andrew Duane



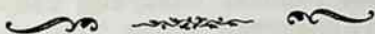
ILLUSTRATED BY LIN CARTER



## The Hungarian Music Shop

C. D. BETANCOURT

There was something unusual about the legacy that should have been warning enough—yet, Fortune can easily be odd indeed in some of its guises, but be—or seem—entirely on the level...until the awakening....



"De Csoma?" asked the little man with the briefcase. "Alexander de Csoma?"

"Yes," answered the other, nervously rubbing an unshaved chin and peering doubtfully into the dirty hallway. Then, as if in memory of a code of manners long rusty from disuse, "Come in. Come in a moment, please."

The stranger stepped gingerly into the room as though afraid of treading too hard on the cracked and stained linoleum. He swept the scanty furnishings with one quick and scornful glance, carefully set down his briefcase on an up-ended orange crate, and perched like a bird ready to take flight on the edge of the only chair.

"Lucky for you, Mr. de Csoma, that your name isn't Jones," he observed, offering a business card. "We had a hard enough time finding you as it is. Been here long?"

"This place? No, Two or three months--about--I guess. The New Palace, they call it. Funny what names they give these places in this part of town, isn't it?"

He laughed uneasily, fingering the lapels of his shabby dressing gown, and began to apologize for the condition of the room. His health, the employment situation...hard to find anything in his line these days.

The stranger nodded politely, and cut into his explanation.

"This visit," he said, "has to do with the death of your uncle, Koros de Csoma. You heard of his passing away - no? Well, our firm held in trust the contents of a safe deposit box placed in our care when the

deceased was remanded to the - ah - institution after the - affair. As you are undoubtedly aware, your uncle was proprietor of a music shop in the West Fifties. This, his sole real property, reverts to you as his nearest living relative, together with the contents of the deposit box. Not very much," he added, dipping into the briefcase.

"Here is the balance of his account with us - very little, I'm afraid. His instructions were to continue paying taxes on the property, but to leave the door padlocked as it was after his removal. Ten years of taxes have almost closed the account, as you will understand. This is the key to the shop. The envelope contains some newspaper clippings which complete the contents of the box. Will you sign this receipt in duplicate, if you please?"

The stranger handed over the little packet, holding it by the tips of his fingers, as though it were something dirty. The man in the faded dressing gown wondered if it were a look of disgust he caught in the visitor's face. With an unsteady hand, he inked his name on the receipts.

"Thank you, Mr. de Csoma," breathed the stranger, tucking the slips into his case, and the case under his arm. He turned briefly at the door. "We hope you will find the property in good order," he said wryly, and he was gone soundlessly down the hall.

De Csoma sat down and looked at the key: an ordinary padlock key like ten thousand others. He picked up the packet. It was apparently one of his uncle's business envelopes. He read, "Hungarian Music Shop," an address in a not-too-reputable part of the city, and "Koros de Csoma, Prop."

He had seen little of his uncle. All he could remember was a man with huge, corded hands, strangely bright eyes and a sharp, sarcastic smile. He opened the envelope and read the clippings slowly.

They were from various papers, carrying dispatches of a date ten years earlier. As he read, it occurred to him that the affair had taken place - yes! Ten years ago this very night! It seemed that one Koros de Csoma, proprietor of a music shop, had been "apprehended, and placed under observation," and that the police "charged the suspect with the murder of two young women, one of whom, a Miss Lottie Bellman, had apparently been lured to the premises under promise of obtaining employment."

There was much more, of the type of speculation usually indulged in by sensational newspapers, but, surprisingly enough, no details. Here and there glimmered darkly a hint of such matters as even a daily paper cares to mention only obliquely. Final disposition of the case was not indicated.

One clipping carried a blurred photograph, out of which glared the face of a man of middle age, with large, hooked nose, beady eyes, flaring nostrils and the high cheek bones of his Magyar ancestors. It was the mouth which held attention. Half-open, in a peculiar, lop-sided grin, it exposed a double row of very large, white teeth set well apart from each other.

Alexander de Csoma whistled softly. Uncle Koros was quite a character! He leafed through the few bills which the visitor had called 'the balance of the account.' Not much, but enough for some meals, a haircut, a few night's lodging. Night's lodging! He was a fool to spend anything for that when he had a place of his own to sleep.

Ha! The tenth anniversary of Uncle Koros' dubious achievements! What a perfect time to christen his new property! A smile twisted the corners of his thin lips. He got up and began to shave. Several times he grinned in the cracked mirror in imitation of the man in the newspaper photo.

.....

The place had not been hard to find, although it certainly didn't look like the best possible location for a music shop. Sandwiched between a doll factory and a brewery, both now closed for the night, it was evidently a hangover from the days when the street had been a brownstone residential district.

The building, a squat, one-storied block of dark stone, crouched like a toad at the rear of a narrow cul-de-sac formed by the walls of the adjoining structures. A narrow, barred window, shrouded with heavy curtains, flanked each side of a padlocked door. The man on the pavement squinted into the shadows - yes, there it was. In the evening light the sign, cut in the shape of a violin, creaked drily on its hangings: Hungarian Music Shop.

"Looks more like a mausoleum," he muttered, hesitating a moment, then pushed open the iron gate and went up the flagstone walk. The padlock protested against the intrusion of the key, and a few flakes of rust sifted out of the lock as the hasp parted. He kicked the door open, and it swung in with a grating of unoiled hinges.

He stood in a small vestibule. Before him was another door - a French door of small glass panels, backed with more of the heavy grey material that filled the windows. A key projected from the lock. He turned it and entered.

The interior was close with the deadness of air peculiar to long-sealed places. It was dark. He struck a match, and experimentally flipped the electric wall switch. To his surprise, the place was immediately bathed in a soft indirect light.

"Well, what a layout! Who would've believed it?" He placed on a small table the paper bag containing his breakfast for the following morning - a dozen doughnuts and a bottle of milk. Straining against the obstinate sash, he raised the two windows to let in air, and turned to survey his new residence.

He stood in a large, square room walled with glass cases. Stacks of sheet music and a number of violin cases filled the shelves from ceiling to tiled floor, a checkerboard of immense black and white squares. In the center stood a grand piano, next to it a vase of flowers. He ran his fingers over the keys. No dust.

"The place looks all ready for a concert," he said. He walked past the sofa at the back of the room, trying it for spring with his hand. A place to sleep. Behind the sofa, an elaborate Oriental folding screen hid two tall doors of black wood, each of which held an intricate cabalistic design in white inlay. He tried the door on the left.

"I'll be . . . no sleeping on a sofa for me!" he exclaimed. "What a mattress! Uncle must have wanted plenty of . . ." His voice trailed off as he stared open-mouthed at the posts rising from the corners of the divan: dark, finely polished shafts of some fragrant Eastern wood, carefully wrought in a shape more common to certain obscure temples of the Orient than to a city music shop. Attached to the base of each of them gleamed a slender silver chain.

At one end of the room, the rays passing through the open door from the salon were caught and tossed dully from point to point of an elephantine figure of black glass, which raised six arms in an attitude half of vague threat, half of blessing on some unholy rite. Into the pedestal of this figure was built a cabinet with a heavy metal door curiously worked in a bas-relief of animals and men. He unsuccessfully tried to pry it open, and straightened up. At the opposite wall...

Something moved in the shadows! He shrank back, fumbling for the switch, and added a rosy glow of concealed light to the stream from the doorway. His breath came whistling out in a gasp of relief. Mopping his

forehead, he grinned foolishly into the heavy, rose-tinted mirror that formed the entire wall.

Seen in this mirror, the room seemed to stretch away eternally behind him, a path of rose-tinted ambiguity that terminated after endless distances of floor at the base of the black idol. The play of light gave an illusion of greater depth to his face; the cheekbones and nose appeared to advance, the eyes to recede beneath the brows.

"Alexander de Csoma," he informed himself, "you're still not such a bad-looking devil." He grinned into the mirror, bowing from the waist. A light, insistent knocking at the outer door interrupted the game.

The young woman who looked up at him as he opened the door had deep brown eyes, widely placed in a round, mature, and strikingly beautiful face. Only her lips, as they parted over strong white teeth to smile at him, appeared childishly full, quivering tremulously at the corners.

"I couldn't help it," she breathed in a low, throaty voice. "I know you didn't expect me tonight, but I had to come - I had to."

He stepped back from the door puzzled, as she patted his cheek affectionately and walked into the room, removing her hat to send a shower of rich auburn hair curling about her shoulders.

"Oh, were you playing?" she asked, seating herself at the open piano, and striking a few random chords.

"No," he answered. She selected a piece from the music on the rack and began to play. De Csoma leaned on the corner of the piano, staring at her face, the throat's whiteness, the full globes pressing at the fabric of her dress. She wore no jewelry but a pair of black onyx earrings, traced in a silver filigree that duplicated the strange designs on the inner doors. He followed the movement of her long, supple fingers over the keys; there were red marks girdling her wrists.

"Oh, I'm so glad you don't mind my coming again so soon! It is all right, isn't it?" She swung around on the piano stool, one hand on his arm, waiting expectantly.

"Yes, yes. It's all right. It's fine," he answered.

She jumped up, picked her hat from the corner of the sofa, and slipped through the left-hand door.

"Fifteen minutes," she called back. De Csoma stood by the piano and scratched his head. There was something strange, something odd about the cut of her clothes. Still, what right had he to complain? The fellow with the briefcase had said nothing about this going with the propriety.

His gaze rested on the Oriental screen, and he thought of the door to the right. Fifteen minutes...he might as well see what was in there. The door opened easily, and an automatic light illuminated a small library.

Some of the books, bound in ancient leather, were in languages strange to him. Others were fitted with clasps and locks. He glanced at the titles: Willard's "Black Magic;" Corepoole's "Encyclopedia of the Occult;" Liverwright's "Customs of the Priesthood of Bast." One heavy volume lay open on the small reading table: Marquis de Sade, *Memoirs*. In her calling from the other room, "Are you coming?"

He closed the door behind him. She stood before the mirror, bathed in rose-light, drinking from a slender vial. With a flick of her bare arm she shattered it against the mirror and turned, eyes glowing, hair flying wild about her head. Starred redly against the whiteness of her skin, broad, clear stripes like the petals of some sinister flower spread from the high nipples. De Csoma looked at her ankles. They bore red circlets similar to those at the wrists. A thick, pungent haze of

smoke drifted from a pair of carved bowls beside the idol. The cabinet at its base was open. . .

Alexander de Csoma slept a troubled sleep. Drowned in a bottomless pool of rose-tinted smoke, he tossed on a burning couch in a room of numberless mirrors from each of which grinned a she-devil whose hair flamed like the fires of Hell. And with her in the misty, eddying depths of each equivocal glass, he saw himself lying, standing, sitting, contorted, crouched like an animal while unspoken dramas unrolled with the aid of certain nameless apparatus from that Satan's cabinet.

The fires of the night burned themselves slowly to ashes, and a cold wind scattered the dying embers of his dreams. The endless mirrors darkened, and somewhere in their black and pregnant depths a small, white hand raised a hammer and drove silver nails into the lid of an ebony coffin.

Tap - tap - tap! He woke startled. The soft lights were still on, and the bowls before the idol added a fitful glow. Beside him rested a tousled head of auburn hair, one smooth arm crooked beneath a pillow. His mind struggled with oily fragments that slipped away and eluded him.

Tap - tap - tap! Someone - something - was tapping persistently at the inner door, the door of the room. He shivered, wrapped himself in a sheet which had fallen to the floor, and walked slowly over, putting his hand on the knob.

"Who is it?" he quavered. There was no answer.

"Who is it?" he repeated uncertainly. Bah! It was probably nothing but an overstimulated imagination! He threw the door open, and took a quick step backward, releasing his grip on the knob.

A gloved hand, the small and delicate hand of a woman, held out to him a folded piece of note-paper. With the low light at his back, he could not make out her features. She seemed to be wearing a dark evening cloak of some velvety cloth.

"Well?" he asked impatiently. The cloaked woman said nothing, but continued to offer the folded paper. A faint, musty odor exhaled from either the paper or the hand. De Csoma took it with shaky fingers, holding the few penned words to the light. . .

They found him at dawn. The officer on the beat heard him screaming, in the old ruin that had burned out ten years before, over by the Brewery, and called the Squad Car. And there, beyond the blackened walls --in the cold, charred cinders of what once had been the Hungarian Music Shop--Alexander de Csoma stood, naked and shivering in the sharp wind that whistled in off the River; and he screamed at them, beat them with his fists, still screaming, "I killed two women! I tell you, I killed two women!" They took it as part of his madness. But what the police could not explain were the strange cabalistic burn marks on his body. Or the scrap of yellowed paper clutched in his hand. Dated ten years before, the note read:

#### HUNGARIAN MUSIC SHOP

Miss Lottie Bellman:

Could you please call this evening regarding employment in the shop, as advertised.

De Csoma

THE END

MANLY BANISTER

## You Who Have Slain Me - -

The Great Man fidgeted.

"The people," he said, "are what count. They have the voice. We must do as the people desire."

The Lesser Man half veiled his eyes, concealing the sardonic mirth that stirred slowly inside him like a Ralph Rayburn Phillips monster still an uncongealed horror within its ink bottle. For here was Satan, in the guise of man-flesh.

"The people are the mind and the voice of the nation," he murmured. "You. . . are its hands!"

The Great Man stirred again, restlessly. His troubled glance sought the veiled stare of the Lesser Man, faltered away to the bright beacon of the window, framing a mist-hung city, cold, gray, prescient of the tomb.

"I must be convinced!" The emotional strain of the decision he had to make burred his words, splintered the syllables into bright, lance-like slivers of speech.

"Duty is to act as the people command," urged the Lesser Man. "Be convinced? Let the voice of the people convince you!"

He took up a small book, a book of poems. Its dust jacket was bright and new. It shone a pale glow in the cold, gray light that poured in through the window. Slowly, in tones befitting the mood expressed, he read a verse aloud, paused dramatically, and passed the book to the Great Man. That one took it, paged it thoughtfully through.

"Every verse," pressed the Lesser Man, "sings from the heart of the people. Each is dedicated to the decision you must make—anticipating it—foretelling the act with a savage gloom that glorifies it!"

The Great Man shook his head. "A croaking of crows—not the nightingale's song! Poets are a race apart, often mean more—or less—than they say."

The Lesser Man grimaced. "Very well, then—a book of fiction!"

He passed it over. The Great Man read the brief synopsis on its dust jacket.

"It is only one book," he said, at last.

The Lesser Man drew a bulk of papers from his pocket. "Hundreds of titles," he stated succinctly.

"Here—scan them at your leisure."

The Great Man looked down the list of titles, and his face turned gray.

"Hacks!" he cried. "Hacks who have a living to earn and space to fill with whatever vagrant thoughts clutter their minds! Such are neither the will nor the voice of the people."

"Newspapers!" barked the Lesser Man, the Prince of Liars, and the Demon inside him glowed savagely in his eyes. "Magazines! Radio! These are The Press—these are the media of the writers—of the poets, the authors, the editors, the reporters, the columnists, the analysts, the purveyors of speech, of ideas, of the written word! These are the vocal cords, the lips, the tongue, the teeth of the people. They speak *to* the people; they speak *for* the people. Hour after hour, day after day, week after week, the presses' rolling thunder not once relinquishes the theme; never the subject grows stale before the enemy's sneers and insults. Their pages, their columns and stories and articles—all preach and have preached the inevitability of what must be done. Can you be heedless of this? Can the hands deny the command of the mind?"

"If they had not done this," whispered the Great Man, "the end would not be yet. Need they have spoken? Need they have prophesied, muttering their sullen presentiments of doom? Could I but tell you this, sir, that the voice of the people had *not* been raised in this fashion, that the mind of the nation were at peace and its voice only a murmur; then should these be idle hands, that the voice might remain stilled, that the mind of the nation might remain at peace!"

"But so?" pressed the Lesser Man, sensing the triumph of his lying discourse. "What have you to say in view of all this?"

The Great Man bowed his head.

"I yield to the will and the voice of the people, contrary to my own will and the voice of my own conscience. You may carry my command to the Generals.

*"Let the Atomic War begin. . . ."*

THE END



ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN DUNN

## POETIC VENDETTA

By JOHN E. BLYLER

There is little of the lilting bard in this grim drama of a fierce and secret vendetta, but the outcome is poetic enough in its tragedy of savage justice.

She, your cat, descends slowly from the second floor for the hundredth time since you let her in this morning. Slowly, a step at a time she comes, not sedately or stately as was her usual manner of descent, but disconsolately, lacking spirit. You are just about to ascend but you pause at the foot of the stairs to watch her. She, Mother of many, looks up at you, her great tail raises to just a bit above the horizontal and twitches spasmodically, nervously.

Many times in the past you have referred to her as 'the cat with a personality' and you see it now as she holds her wide eyed gaze on your face, a question in her fathomless soul. You recognize her intelligence as she miaows inquiringly, inquiringly.

Receiving no answer she drops her head and tail and bounds down the two remaining steps. You follow her with your eyes as she pads slowly over the soft nap of the living room rug and into the kitchen over the linoleum past the saucer of milk untouched since noon when it was placed

there by your wife. She glances at its scummed over surface but moves on. She miaows briefly once at the kitchen door and you remember to let her out for the night.

As you re-lock the door you wonder--wasn't that a look of suspicion in her eyes? Or was it sad accusation? You are still wondering as you climb the stairs to bed where your wife with your small ten months' old son has gone before you.

You peer from your bedroom window over the small courtyard below and to the rear of your house. You see her stalking across the flagstones as they gleam dully in the dim light of the full moon. You hear as she cries softly one time as she approaches the rustic well at the edge of the flagstone paving. She leaps lightly to the top of the circular stone enclosure. She cries once inquiringly, once again briefly, then longingly, despairingly, almost humanly.

You see her then as she leaps from the well stones to run lithely across the lawn back of the well and toward the hedge that borders the rear of your lot. She pauses just before reaching the hedge and alertly turns her head this way and that at some fancied scent. Then with a plaintive cry sounding curiously like a sob of disappointment, the great-bodied cat leaps through and beyond the hedge and is gone.

You turn from the window with an unpleasant feeling not quite sorrow--not quite apprehension--and lay your tired body on the bed. Through the open window comes the sounds of the suburban night. Crickets chirp noisily on the grassy hillside that slopes down from a distant wood to your backyard on one side, and in a long, gentle, convex slope to the creek a few hundred feet from the south side of your house.

The banks of the creek on the closer side are lined with willows which get denser down stream before they merge with the trees of the forest on the far slopes. On the opposite bank is thick, heavy forest choked with underbrush, extending downstream for five hundred yards where it thins out and the underbrush is replaced with swamp grass and Cat-o-nine-tails. From the trees come the sounds of the night birds and the stirring of the leaves and the whisper of the slight breeze that is slowly blowing dark-bellied clouds over the face of the moon. In the morass downstream young frogs chirp in unison. Above all the sounds of the night keens the lonely wailing call of the cat. Over and over she calls, anxiously ever anxiously. You hear her on the curving path leading to the stream, then on the bank of the creek. She moves downstream, and her despairing voice fades gradually away, blending with the night but not with the sounds of the night, fading away from hearing but not from the mind.

You go to sleep, feeling oddly ill at ease. You dream and live again in the past. What in reality was commonplace to you, arousing no emotion is shown to you in its native horror in the dream. Suddenly you awake, sitting up in the bed, damp with wretched sweat. A lingering, terrible fear of the unknown mingles with a sickness of dread that is decidedly physical. You rise to get a drink of water, wondering vaguely why you should feel so strongly a dreadful influence from such a simple dream. The feeling goes away as you drink the cold water so you return to your bed to lie quietly for a moment before falling into a dreamless peace.

In the morning as you leave the house on your way to work the cat is there at the door. She trots in without looking up as you leave the house.

In the afternoon of that same day horror begins for you. Rather early in the afternoon you are called home by the police. Your son is missing. They say possibly he has been kidnaped and that your wife is pros-

trate, hysterical. You rush home full of consternation and worry. A search is being made in the nearest forest, and the State Police have been alerted and are on the lookout for a small coupe automobile containing two men and a woman and possibly now a small child. Such had been seen in the vicinity of the crime. All cars in the immediate vicinity, going to and from the town were stopped. A troop of Scouts came to assist in the search.

Your wife recovers sufficiently to give a coherent account of the afternoon. She had been planning to bake a cake that afternoon in preparation for the evening meal and had visited a next door neighbor to obtain a particular recipe she knew the neighbor had. While there she had left your small son playing with the huge cat on the lawn at the rear of the house. He was trying to catch the cat while it continually evaded him by leaping just out of his reach.

Your wife heard him crying oddly just once while she was speaking with the neighboring housewife, but before she could more than think of running to investigate, he quieted down and all was still outside. She gave the matter no further attention.

After about an hour she returned to her house. No thought of the baby entered her mind immediately as she passed over the lawn and into the kitchen. Then a few minutes later with dawning concern she began to realize that the crowing delight of the child was strangely missing. She looked through the large kitchen windows and noted his absence on the lawn. Running out at once she began a frantic search in which she was soon joined by her friend the neighbor lady who had heard her calling. Their frantic search was to no avail and your wife soon burst into hysterical sobbing, passing thence into a faint. The neighbor lady supplied the rest of the information, that she had phoned for the doctor to minister to your wife and had called the police, who in turn had called the place where you worked.

You stay with your wife the remainder of the evening and pass a sleepless night at her side. Next morning after several cups of coffee you go with the searchers, hoping to find, yet not hoping to find what they seek. For this morning they are going to search the creek banks first --then they will drag the creek bottom with grappling hooks.

You are with a group of men when about a quarter of a mile down stream you come upon a wooden trestle which supports the small local rail company's line from a near by town. At the wooden abutment near the center you see a familiar bulk, an old burlap sack tied tightly closed and held against the timbers by the pressure of the down flowing stream. You recognize it, but give it no attention. After climbing down the bank of cinders at one end of the bridge to the raised road bed, you see another horrifying sight--notice it a bit more, perhaps, but still pay no particular heed to what you see. But you remember it later--the body of a huge cat, cut in halves by the wheels of the local engine. Near you are the hind quarters, and a bloody three yard's distant, on the opposite side of the rail, is the fore part.

At last the search party turns back, having found no sign of your son along the banks nor in the shallows at the wide places in the creek. You return with the others to start dragging the long, narrow and deep hold near your house.

As you approach your home, you see a cluster of searchers near the south corner of the hedge at the rear of the lot. They are talking quietly, waiting. As you draw closer one of the group sees you, speaks discreetly to the others, and they fall silent, heads bowed. They are standing in a circle facing the center you notice. You ask of one what they have found, but receive no answer. There is indecision among them

and much shuffling of feet. They appear ill at ease. A growing feeling of alarm quickens your breath into small, shallow gasps. Apprehension strikes at your middle. And you suddenly push your way by them.

As you stare, then, down into the tall grasses by the hedge you are shocked to the core, numbed into immobility at the horror you see there. For an endless period of time you stand, knowing nothing. Gradually you grow aware of condolences and murmured sympathy as friendly arms about your shoulders attempt to lead you away and into your house. You shrug them off, numbly asking to be left alone for a while.

As you stand there, in an abstract way things are made clear to you. You live again for the third time the events in the dream of the night before. You vaguely accept the fact that the strange horror in the dream was born of prescience. You see again the heavy filthy burlap as it bobs to the surface because you forgot to put a stone into the bag. You see it glistening horribly, darkly, as a small portion of it stands above the surface of the black moonlit water. You see the almost imperceptible struggling movements of it as it floats slowly on the deep stream. From your memory you recall having performed the same deed twice before. You remember the antics of the cat on that last night. You know the meaning of finding her dead bisected body on the rails near the sack at the bridge. You understand everything as you gaze down on the face of your small son where strong talons had torn and held at the eyes while even stronger hind claws had raked and kicked the life from the soft young throat.

You had drowned her babies once too often.

THE END

#### 10,000,000 MONKEYS (Continued from Page 5)

sell or not sell, any more than you can put a precise finger on why you did or did not like a particular story in a magazine.

You don't sell stories to a hypothetical "market"--you sell them to individuals. Editor Anthrax buys stories he likes. Who knows what Editor Anthrax likes? Nobody, not even Editor Anthrax. But he does know, that when he likes a story, a large number of his readership is going to like it, too! That's how he keeps his job. If Editor Anthrax turns your story down, you still have just as good a chance (supposing that it is a saleable yarn) of selling it to Joe Microbe, editor of Infinitesimal Stories. (Or of not selling it.)

You don't need to be a mind-reader. . . it won't help you. What will help you is to study the market. Read Editor Anthrax's magazine. See what kind of stories he bought three to six months ago. Then by a hyperinduced process of ratiocination, try to figure out what he will buy today for publication three to six months from now.

And now, lest it seem that we have gone back upon our word and become pontifical, disregard the foregoing and write as you damn please and send the junk any place that occurs to you. Writers have sold stories in that fashion, too. . . the geniuses, that is. This practice will provide you with a quick answer to whether or not you are a genius.

THE END

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ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES WHITE

## *His Majesty at Midnight*

*By Thomas H. Carter*

He sits in the disenchanted dark:  
One sleeping hand holds fast his sword,  
And grim his mouth that knew no laughter,  
Before or now: so fierce a man  
That none can face him unafraid.  
But in the dark he hears too clearly  
The mutter of his arteries  
To the unrepentant bone, and the  
Dreadful communion of the currents  
Of his brain: saying he is old and lost.  
But he is chief among them yet,  
With none so mighty that can take  
His throne. But he remembers his youth.  
When the strongest rule: to be a king,  
You must kill a king. His urgent  
Mad blood can dampen your hand to glory.  
Or once he thought, not knowing the  
Whispering dark tongues of the night.  
But Midnight has told him all that  
It knows, and he must answer. He sold  
His heart for his body's honor.  
And now he waits in utter terror—  
Lest some fool, bold with blood, try to  
Unflesh him from his solitary crown.



S. R. SHEEDY

# LAPTOUMI ARAPTOUMI



Take almost any Greek word, add -mancy to it, and you will have a recognized method of divination. Clement Wood's rhyming dictionary lists an even fifty, from alectryomancy (divination by cocks) to tephramancy (divination by ashes), and doubtless there are many more not suited for poetical use.

Probably all of the fifty are still practiced somewhere even now, but it is a sad commentary on our civilization, and on the low estate to which magic has fallen, that those today who wish information or solace about the future spend by far the greatest part of their time and money on astrology, palmistry, or card-reading. These wretched callings with their shoddy props and gimmicks have captured the bulk of the business, while other forms of the art, equally old, equally reliable, and a lot more colorful, languish in comparative neglect, whether from lack of taste among the public or lack of enterprise among diviners.

It was not always so. When the Gnostics were flourishing in early Christian times, divination attained extraordinary heights, and must have been an arduous but rewarding profession, much like the law, tax accountancy, or nuclear physics today. For a fine specimen of the elaborate and rather exacting methods then fashionable, consider the instructions for producing oracular visions contained in a fourth-century manuscript in the British Museum.

"Take of the inner leaves of the laurel," it tells us, "and of virgin earth and wormwood seeds, . . . and of the herb cynocephalum. And I have heard from a certain man of Heracleiopolis that he takes of the leaves of an olive tree newly sprouted." This mixture is carried to the chosen location "by a virgin boy ground up with the materials aforesaid," whatever that may mean, and the white of an ibis egg is mixed with the whole compound. "There must also be an image of Hermes clad in the chlamys, and the moon must be rising in the sign of Aries or Leo or Sagittarius." And the Heracleiopolite, a stickler for detail, recommends that a goose's windpipe be inserted into the figure of Hermes, apparently for the god to speak through.

When these conditions have all been met, the diviner is instructed to place the Hermes in a shrine of limewood. "Now let Hermes hold the herald's wand, and do thou write the spell on hieratic paper, . . . and having cut a hair from your head, wrap it up in the paper and tie it with a Phoenician knot, and put it at the feet of the caduceus, or some say, place it upon it."

The spell which is to be inscribed on the hieratic paper is a small work of art in itself, and possesses a haunting beauty of line as well as a fittingly sonorous cadence.

"Huesemigadon, Ortho Baubo, noe odere soire soire

Kanthara, Ereshchigal, sankiste, dodekakiste...." etc. Like most such spells, the individual words often have little or no recognizable meaning. Huesemigadon is an epithet of Pluto; Ortho Baubo, "the true Baubo," refers to a deity of the Eleusinian Mysteries often confused with Persephone; Ereshchigal, or Eres-ki-gal, is a Sumerian expression meaning Lady of the Great (i.e. nether) World, or Allat, the Babylonian goddess of hell. And dodekakiste, which means twelfth, evidently stems from the numerological tastes of the Babylonians, who used to assign serial-numbers to their divinities.

Getting back to our oracle, the directions continue: "make invocation --offering frankincense on an altar and some earth from a place where there is growing corn, and one lump of sal ammoniac. Let this be placed at your head and lie down to sleep after first saying this, but giving no answer to anyone who may address you:

Hermes, lord of the world, inner circle of the moon....

Persuading to justice, wearer of the chlamys, with winged sandals

Rolling an ethereal course under the lower parts of the earth,

Guide of spirits, Greatest eye of the sun,

Author of all manner of speech....

Thou art called the foreknower of destinies, and the divine vision

Sending oracles both by day and by night....

Come hither, blessed one, greatest son of perfect memory,

Appear propitious in thy own shape, and send a propitious form,

That by the excellence of thy divining art I, a hallowed man, may receive what I need.

This adjuration is to be made at the risings of sun and moon, and, if there has been no slip in the preparations a true oracle will be, promptly, forthcoming.

Surely proceedings of this sort are more dignified, more elevating, more calculated to inspire confidence, than any amount of messing with sodden tea-leaves or dealing out greasy playing cards. And yet I doubt if the method is much used today. The problem of obtaining materials should not be insuperable, for any large drug store would be apt to have them all in stock except perhaps the ibis egg and the virgin boy. It is, rather, a case of our modern impatience with the old-fashioned, painstaking, time-consuming methods, and our willingness to settle for a hurried and slipshod substitute.

As a matter of fact, many divinations were less complicated than this. A letter from a certain Nephotes to King Psammetichos of Egypt, which has survived in a third-century manuscript, gives a comparatively simple method for producing oracular apparitions in a bowl containing liquid. The details of the preparation are given but sketchily, and indeed even the nature of the liquid is not specified. (I have tried it myself, and find that Scotch whisky works as well as any other, and better than most.) The secret, in this case, lies in the incantation to be said over the vessel, which begins "Amoun auantau laimoutau riptou mantau imantaulantou laptoumi anchomacharaptoumi. Hither, such-and-such a god! Be visible to me this very day and do not appall my eyes. Hither to me, such-and-such a god!...."

And here follows a hundred-letter palindromic name, formidable enough to summon the most potent of demons and to shake the very bowels out of a modern linotype. It is, evidently, the name of some underworld god, and it illustrates the belief shared by magicians ancient and modern, that the "true names" of the various dark powers are deeply hidden secrets which, once learned, give infallible power over them.

The untranslatable phrase that opens the incantation is also characteristic of the best magical practice. In it, the occasional shreds

and patches of old Sumerian words are recognizable to the expert, and the theory is that once it was a meaningful sentence in that morose and agglutinative tongue. But in course of time it became first encrusted with spluttery Egyptian consonants and then larded with mellifluous Hellenic vowels, until only the faintest traces of the original were left. It is likely that Nephotes himself had not the least idea what it meant, just as your Aunt Clara is unaware that her "dear me suz" invokes her Creator.

That the Ancients had Secret Wisdom has always been an axiom to the magic-minded, and the old diviners set particular store by spells and formulas of Egyptian origin, especially those which the Egyptians had borrowed from the Babylonians and understood but imperfectly themselves. And Babylon, in like fashion, borrowed from Sumeria. Where the Sumerians went for their spells is lost in the mists of antiquity, but no doubt they got them ultimately from Adam, who got them from the serpent.

Since magic leans so heavily on the past, it ought by rights to be in its fullest flowering today, when we have so much more past to lean on. But curiously enough, it is in a decline, and the best--the very best--one can find now is astrology with its ridiculously childish charts, its cabalistic bathrobes and pointed hats, its dog-eared nautical almanacs. This cannot conceivably be due to a falling-off in human credulity, which flourisheth as the green bay-tree. It must, therefore, stem from the laziness of a mechanized age. Well, you may buy your horoscope magazines if you wish, but as soon as the moon rises, a hallowed man I shall go out in the garden and do my geomancy.

THE END



"Huesemigadon, Ortho Baubo. . . oh, nuts!"

## INQUEST IN KANSAS

*(A Modern American Ballad)*

1

CORONER: It was not a deer you saw, you say,  
That beckoned beyond the corn?

FIELD HANDS: The creature she followed that fearful day  
Was a Thing with a single horn.

2

CORONER: She never mentioned she knew his kind—  
A Thing with a single horn—  
Yet she left without casting a glance behind  
At the fields where you mowed the corn?

3

FIELD HANDS: She had been known as a faithful wife,  
Yet she bounded through the corn  
As though she had waited all her life  
For the Thing with the single horn.

4

CORONER: Could a mother who loved beyond compare  
The children she had borne  
Orphan them in charity's care  
For a Thing with a single horn?

5

FIELD HANDS: It was not love that lured her away  
From the fields that were yellow with corn,  
To leave her children, her husband slay,  
But a Thing with a single horn!

6

CORONER: Why did you not move and prevent her escape  
When you saw there was blood on the corn?

FIELD HANDS: Made helpless as scarecrows, we scarcely could gape  
For fear of the Thing with the horn!

7

CORONER: But did she intend to hit his head  
When she threw her fork in the corn?  
Did she know her husband was lying dead  
When she followed the Thing with the horn?

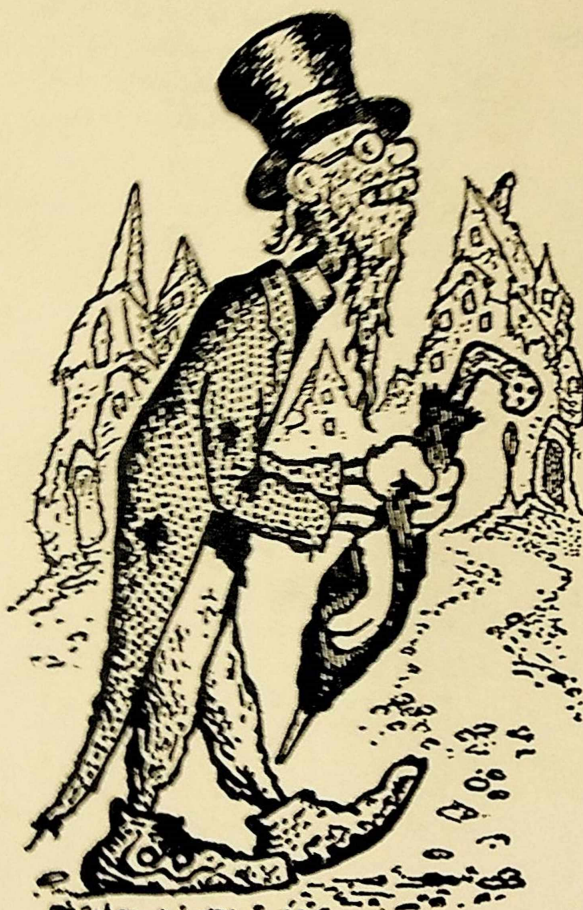
8

FIELD HANDS: We saw the Thing hand her a fork,  
Which she brandished at us in scorn,  
With a strength that she never had for work;  
Then she followed the Thing with the horn!

—HYACINTHE HILL

# LOVECRAFT ISMS

BY  
RALPH  
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PHILLIPS



REV. WARD PHILLIPS AUTHOR OF THE  
THAUMATURGICAL PRODIGES IN THE  
NEW ENGLISH CANAAN