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NEOLITHIC 22

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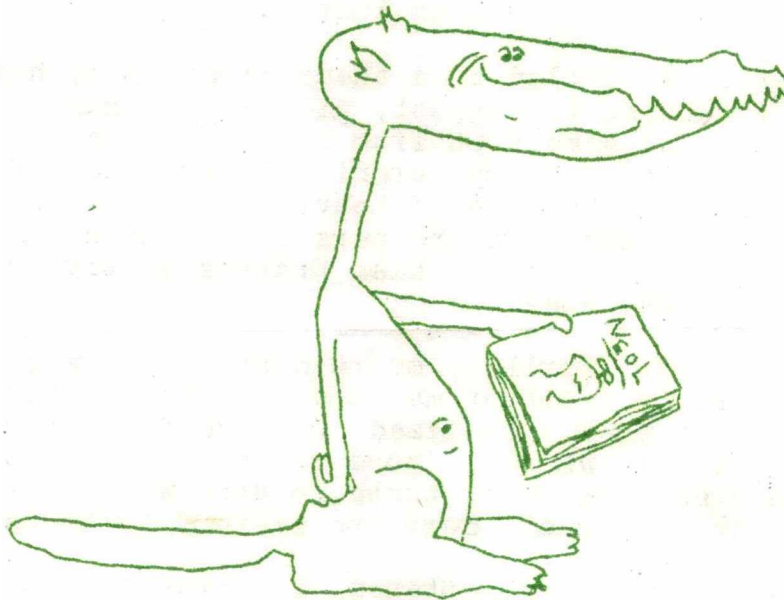
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with the pictorial aid of Gary Deindorfer and Arthur Thomson.



EDITROOLINGS

"Good afternoon," I said, "Welcome to 'The World in Fantasy.'"

It was this way: last summer I joined a sorority, Zeta Phi Eta, professional speech sorority. Since it is a non-social group, it does not have the infamous busy-body friendship of ~~many~~ sororities. It does have other faults, such as inability of theater majors to understand speech pathology majors and vice versa, and our chapter's being such a small group that nearly every member is an officer with dull papers to fill out.

For the past few years, the University of Minnesota has put on a Creative Arts Festival every spring. This spring, the chairman of the festival walked over to me as I sat sipping chocolate milk in the cafeteria, because I was the only Zeta she knew well, and said, "Wouldn't it be nice if Zeta Phi Eta did something for the Festival." I agreed that it would be nice, and suggested that the Interpretive Reading Contest might be held during the Festival. This contest is held every year—by the alumnae group.

I called the representative of the alumnae group, who agreed with me that this would be nice, especially since then I could help her (and wouldn't that be nice), but discovered that the Festival was being held too soon to get the contest ready. What a pity, said the chairman of the Festival. Suppose we arranged an interpretive reading program instead?

Very well. I settled on a theme close to my heart, made out a list of authors to suggest, picked some names from the Radio Guild and got some more from a speech teacher who teaches Interpretive Reading. To my surprise, I soon had an hour program with a pleasant balance of heavy and light, prose and poetry. I was even able to ~~persuade~~ persuade one person to read some of the poems of Leah Bodine Drake. I love Miss Drake's poetry, but I don't know anyone else who does.

So there I sat, April 3, my readers in a row beside me, a few dozen people in front of me, and I arose and began, "Good afternoon." Just then I realized that I'd forgotten the name of the first reader, who is a good friend of mine, couldn't remember the order the other three readers were to follow, and had a strong desire to sit down and pretend to be asleep.

As usual when I am frightened, I turned to pouring out prettily phrased, hasty generalizations. However, they were, at least, original, prettily phrased, hasty generalizations, so it may be that the audience enjoyed them: "This may be the best of all possible worlds, but an impossible world could be much nicer, "Nowadays, no one believes in ghoulies and gheasties,

or long leggedy beasties, let alone things that go boomp i' the night, so one would expect literature to be overwhelmingly realistic," "If literature holds a mirror up to life, fantasy holds a carnival mirror up to life."

As I went on, I grew calmer. The four readers, who had also been nervous, though somewhat calmer than I had been, relaxed. There was one bad moment, which came as I introduced the second reader. "Miss Drake's first book.....Witches Hornbook [it is actually A Hornbook for Witches, but I did well to remember anything]...."

"Earlier yesterday, a poetry and prose reading session was held in the Union Women's Lounge, Ruth Berman, SL A sophomore [sic], introduced the readers and commented on fantasy.

"Selections included . . . fables by James Thurber, some poetry by Leah Bodine Drake, a selection from Ray Bradbury's 'The October Country,' and two poems about cats by T. S. Eliot," remarked the Daily the next day.

I'm afraid I'm going to try it again next year.

Note for Elinor Busby: if a group called The National Repertory Theater, playing Maxwell Anderson's Elizabeth the Queen with Eva Le Gallienne as Elizabeth, by all means see it!

Miss Le Gallienne, according to the papers, believes in the Desire of Theater-Goers to See Repertory Theater. At the moment, their mixture of plays is not very mixed: Elizabeth the Queen, and Schiller's Mary Stuart. I did not see the Schiller play, but I assure you, Elinor, that if you want to see Elizabeth in all her majesty, this group provides a moving facsimile of Queen, court, and Kingdom.

"Write if you do not receive this," as the saying goes. However, I mean it. There are review columns enough so that it is likely that you will know if NeOL is out or not. Most often, our kindly postman does not collect the eight cents dues as he should, but, even so, fans move so often that I have decided to place that DO NOT RETURN on every issue from now on.

"What are Cue and the Berman Brevele?" asks Tom Dilley. The Brevele is a family newsletter. Cue is the newsletter for the Radio and Television Guild. I amuse myself by justifying the margins on them, but that is the only merit they have. Well, they have (ah...usually) clarity. I've been reading back-issues of Cue from the 1940's, and find them very interesting. They include long articles, "humour," are almost entirely editor-written, and are very like apa one-shots. My Cues are clearer, but they had more fun.

TWO VARIATIONS ON THREE
by Eleanor Arnason

I

Professor Blackstone had been in Luna Penal Colony for seven years before he raised a demon, using his own translation of the Mare Imbrium inscriptions. It was a Lunar demon—Silicon base—squat, grey, and vaguely like fluid rock.

"I want three wishes for my soul," the professor said.

The demon gestured assent with one pseudopod.

"First, I want freedom..."

The grey walls of his cell dissolved. For a moment he saw a black, starry sky, slashed by sharp, sunlit peaks. Then he tried to breathe.

II

The last human being on earth, a provident Icelandic by the name of Grim Gislason, sat in a bomb shelter. There was a knock on the hatch.

"Come in," he said.

A demon came in, flowing through the hatch and reshaping itself to fit Grim's prejudices, down to the barbed tail, pitchfork, and faint smell of brimstone. In a small bomb shelter with a failing air system, a faint smell of brimstone does not seem faint.

The demon smiled, showing even, yellow fangs. "We're required by the opposition to caution you that you won't win; but go ahead, anyway."

"I want to sell my soul," Grim said.

"Naturally."

"For three wishes."

The demon sighed. "All right. It's not usual. But you are the last. And His Satanic Majesty is a completist. Start wishing."

"First, I want an alternate world—without the war."

"Done."

"Second, I want to be the most..." he paused for the right phrasing, "the most satisfied being in it."

"Smart, aren't you? Done."

"Third," said Grim smiling, "I want not to go to hell."

The demon laughed unpleasantly. "Clever. Clever. That means immortality. The opposition won't take you if you die. All right. Done. You're immortal."

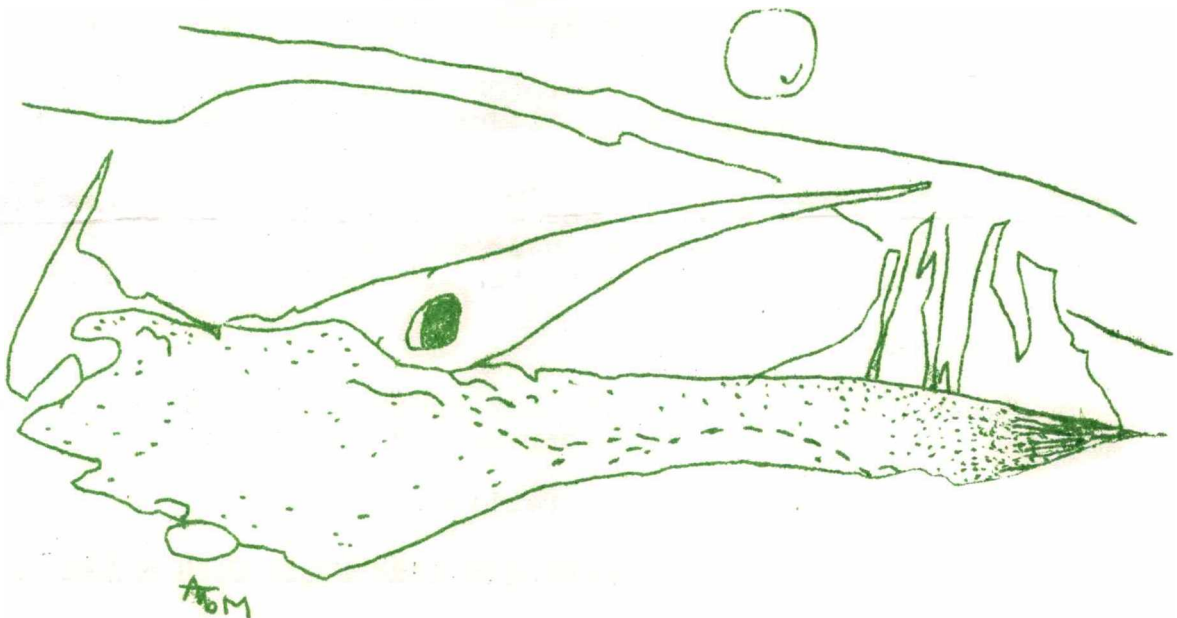
The demon vanished in green fire.

The shelter melted. Grim's three wishes had been fulfilled.

He was in an alternate world where there had been no war, for a very simple reason: Earth had never formed; it was still part of the sun.

He immortal nerves worked extremely well in the unbearable, tormenting heat, and he wasn't at all satisfied. But he was the only being in this world, so, of course, he was the most satisfied being.

His last wish kept him from ever going to hell, but it didn't in the least keep hell from coming to him.



DEINDORFER REVIEWS MANKIND

"I Take Fride in This"—"Not everybody can thread a needle the first time, every time they try it," said my aunt. "I can, though."

I had torn my shirt slightly, and my aunt was patching it. "Watch this," she said, as she drew her sewing basket down from its shelf. "Watch how I can thread this needle the first time."

She held between the forefinger and thumb of one hand a sewing needle, and between the forefinger and thumb of the other the tip of a length of thread. With one smooth, sure motion she placed the thread through the eye of the needle. Then she smiled broadly and told me again how she could do this the first time, every time. After she finished patching my shirt she demonstrated this by threading and rethreading the needle, and always getting it on the first try.

"I never miss," she said beaming. "First time, every time."

"I take pride in this," she added.

A few days later I was sitting on the paved walk surrounding the swimming pool my aunt and uncle are members of. My uncle was splashing about in the water, doing all sorts of wonderfully extrovertish water-fun things like holding his daughter's head under water for prolonged periods of time, or throwing heaps of pool at me and the book I was trying to read. He finally decided he had had enough of this swimming, so he climbed out of the pool and stood over me, dripping happily on me and my book.

"Hey," he said to me, gaining my attention by sharply prodding me between the shoulder blades, "I want you to see something."

He dipped his foot in the pool and then very carefully pressed out three footprints on the poolside paving. "Look at that," he said, pointing at the imprints. "Look at that foot."

I looked for a while.

"What strikes you about that foot?" he asked, confusing the map and the territory, and meaning the imprints.

"I can't really say," I replied.

"Well, tell me this: have you ever seen such a high arch in your life?"

I mumbled that I hadn't.

"Well, as you can see there," he said, "I probably have the highest damned arches of anybody in the whole world. I mean that's obvious."

He wet his foot again and clomped on the paving, making more imprints.

"Yes, I have very high arches to my feet," he said beaming.

"I take pride in this," he added.

I wasn't paying a hell of a lot of attention to my uncle, but when he said that, I was reminded of my aunt who a few days earlier had said the same thing about her ability to thread a needle the first time, every time.

Since that day at the pool, which was a couple of years ago, I have noticed other people using the same phrase in the same context. For instance, I was sitting in my neighbor's living room recently. My neighbor is a milkman, and he has a trick he does every time somebody is visiting him.

We were talking on things sundry, and finally my neighbor said, "Hey, I want you to see something." He walked out into the kitchen and started clattering around, his wife making strained neighborly conversation while he was gone.

Finally he came back into the living room. On each of his fingers and on both of his thumbs was sticking an empty bottle of milk. "Not very many people can do this," he said, beaming. "Not even many milkmen."

"I take pride in this," he added.

Then there is my grandmother. The door to her apartment is very hard to unlock because there is a very tricky motion necessary in turning the key in it. I can never get the door open without twisting and pushing and shoving the key in the lock for fifteen minutes.

But grandmother can always insert the key, give it a single deft twirl, and unlock the door. "I can open it this easily, but nobody else can," she say, upon having unlocked the door.

"I take pride in this," she can be heard to add.

There are dozens of other people I could name here, to exemplify this. And you could each probably name dozens more. The point about these people seems to be that whatever they take pride in is the only thing they can claim as being a testament to their individuality. My aunt, without her ability to thread a needle the first time, every time, would be a total nonentity.

-3-

So would my uncle, without his high arches. And my neighbor, without his trick. And my grandmother, without her ability with her key.

There are hoards of people like this walking around.

To me that's very sad, and sort of frightening.

The Pubescent Adolescent—I was sitting on the bus recently. It began as quite a ho-hum sort of trip, meaning average looking people got on and off, traffic lights changed one way or the other, people rustled their tabloids or cleared their noses loudly, and the driver whistled a nondescript song in his nondescript manner.

But then an unbelievable creature boarded the bus. My attention was instantly riveted upon her, and I could only gaze at her in silent amazement, for this being was a fleshly epitomization. She was the archtype Female Adolescent.

She sat down in the seat directly in front of mine. Before she turned her head forward, I had ample time to study her incredible face. It was fantastic in its inclusion of all the essences of mid-twentieth century American female adolescence. It was the most overtly teen-age face I ever saw.

Her face was puffy and slightly erotic, and was dominated by a pair of weird rose-bud, Sal Mineo lips, covered with a layer of lipstick deep enough to have contained fossils from the Pleistocene Epoch. Her eyes were outlined with pounds of mascara. Her cheeks were covered with a gummy spreading of acne cream. In all, she must have been carrying more than twenty pounds of stuff around on her face.

She wore an expression that can only be called Contemporary American Teen-age—a sort of watery defiance, which said, "Pity me; I am an incredibly sensitive teen-ager." In her hand was a copy of True Sex-Love Erotic Teen-Age Romances. And she was obviously spinning rock and roll records in her head.

She sat there reading her sexy loves magazine. The name of her high school blared out at me in gigantic white block letters plastered across the back of her black leather, dandruff flaked jacket. Occasionally she blew puffs of cigarette smoke between noisy, popping chews of her gum.

I sat there, boring my eyes into the back of her head (covered with a snaky mat of black and greasy hairs of an impressive diameter). I was bursting inside. I had thousands of things to ask her. I wanted to know all about her. I wanted to ask her, "How did you come to look like that?" I wanted to say, "Is your life's occupation going to be the job of being the epitome of a contemporary teen-ager?"

I think I really might have started to subject her to mad questions, but she tanked the stop cord and got off the bus. I was not too surprised when this fantastic archetype of her kind met and walked off with the epitomization of the Male Adolescent, a tall and bony being with billowing piles of hair, tight, faded chinos, and all sorts of switchblades, zip-guns, and bludgeons hanging on the myriad zippers of his black leather jacket.

—Gary Deindorfer

GLANCES OVER THE POND
by Felice Rolfe

I'd like to concentrate on one story, this time: Rupert Clinton's "The Golden Age," a two-part serial run in New Worlds nos. 112 and 113. This novel is perhaps typical of what is so frustrating about magazine sf these days. Everyone else, including the authors, seems to be complaining about it these days; I might as well get into the act.

The story is set in the kingdom of Rathvane, which is a culture well into its Age of Steam, analogous to our period of around 1750-1850. Our hero is Larrabee, a noble, who is in love (you were expecting maybe hate?) with Fay Graybrook, likewise an aristocrat. Both are archaeologists. Larry, like most nobles, is also a soldier, poet, and gentleman.

Larry and Fay—with company—are excavating in the Demming Desert when they uncover a metallic wall with a circular door. While they're fooling around with the various controls on its face, the door opens; Fay and two others jump in, snap! goes the door, and the heroine disappears—on page 14. Larry doesn't realize that she is still alive until about seven-eighths of the way through the story. That's hard on him, but, on the other hand, it leaves him free for other things. He can't very well take off on a rescue mission because he can't get the blasted door open again.

Shortly afterward, Larry is called back to duty in Rathvane. On the way back, his dirigible-type airship is shot down by the Gurone, the other intelligent, but nonhuman, race of the planet. Their weapons are rifles. This is as new to the Rathvanians as it was the the Amerinds.

Larry is rescued, and when he reaches Rathvane he finds that a friend of his, Professor Higham, has discovered electricity.

The scientist-nobles of Rathvane stew over the problem of the new Gurone weapon for awhile, unable to reason out the propelling method, and then, being soldiers, decide to raid the foundry

where the rifles are made. They do so. It's a grand fight, but quite useless from an Intelligence standpoint.

After this failure, Larry heads back to the dig, where Hingham tackles the mysterious door with his new-found toy. Sure enough, he gets it open, just as the Conclave attacks. The Conclave is the Rathvanian equivalent of the Church in Galileo's time. Larry and four others jump or stumble through the door. It proves to be a transportation tube which carries them down to a hidden valley and city, left over from two million years ago. There they find Fay's lost group, a robot population, and a vast weapons museum. While they're being conducted back to the surface, Larry swipes a nuclear pistol, and with it routes a Gurone attack which is in progress when they come back through that damn door.

The new weapon runs out of charge almost immediately, but the Rathvanians figure that the news of it among the Gurone will give them a breathing space. In the meantime, some gunpowder has been captured and its use realized. The Conclave has lost a lot of influence, although it's not yet dead. Obviously, things are looking up. The End.

Now what's my gripe? First, I don't think I've given you much of an idea of the plot complexity. It reads as if Clinton selected ideas from his file at random, threw them in the air and wrote them into the story in the order in which they fell. Some of the best aren't developed. The social system of Rathvane, for instance, sounds good. The nobles take their turns at service to the State: a month's manual labor, a month's office work, a month's tour as a servant, etc (what are the commoners good for?). Other ideas used are irrelevant. The mysterious door and underground valley, with the least believability, play a major role, but why? The city doesn't provide Rathvane with a decent weapon for eliminating the Gurone. The gunpowder is obtained independently of the valley. About all it serves for is to stash Fay out of harm's way, and for that she could have stayed home with Daddy.

The story is not lacking in ideas, or originality, or capable writing. It has rather a surplus of ideas, and the style is good in spots, at least. What it lacks is care and organization. Just a little care, a little organization. It's a sin and a shame, and besides that it's frustrating as hell to the reader.

CLAY TABLETS

from HARRY WARNER, March 20, 1962
423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland

I continue to feel untold quantities of awe for the thoroughness with which Redd Boggs is documenting Minnesota's fandom. The only details that he appears to be skipping are those involving himself. I can't help wondering how long a history of fandom I will write if I find myself treating topics with similar thoroughness. Apparently Redd will have given at least 30 to 40 single-spaced pages to Minnesota's fandom when his task is complete, and this is just one of 50 states, with more fan activity than some states, but without the feuds and extremely active fans of other states. So I could look forward to 4,000 double-spaced manuscript pages on the history of fandom in the United States alone, making allowance for the fact that I won't cover quite such a long span.

Your theatrical projects sound most interesting but for the next ten days I am quite soured on the stage. Hagerstown has a little theater with four productions each year and a concert series with five events in a season. So with about 200 nights in which these things can be scheduled, the dress rehearsal for the next play is on the same night as the ballet, and the opening night for that play is simultaneous with a symphony orchestra concert. I'm supposed to cover both musical events and review the play as well. The situation is complicated by the fact that the dress rehearsal may begin at any hour from 7 to 10 p.m., because the set is never quite finished on that night, and the first act is not started until the last nail has been hammered.

I wonder if any of our trend-detectors can figure out the reason for the upsurge of interest in children's fantasies? In years past, fanzines rarely mentioned anything except the Oz and Alice books. Marion's article in this issue is symptomatic of the change. As far as I know, nobody has ever even started the enormous task of creating a checklist of children's fantasy that is well enough written to be worthy of collecting and reading by adults. [There are some, such as From Peter Parley to Perrod, or Realms of Gold, but I don't believe anyone has tried a list of "children's books for adults"; it's all lists of collector's items and recommended books for children—RB]

Unfortunately, I was the most stodgy-minded kid in three states when I was very small. I refused to have anything to do with reading or listening to stories that contained any element of fantasy or strangeness. I remember receiving as a Christmas gift from an aunt in California a very lovely book entitled "Way Out West," and refusing to go beyond the first page because it involved a part of the nation that I had never visited. What

ever possessed me to take an interest in that issue of Wonder Stories one evening when I was ten years old is a mystery that won't be solved until I can hire a few psychiatrists.

It's odd that two old, tired fans like Grennell and me should finally get around to The Once and Future King at just about the same time. I found it surprisingly effective in its final chapters. But working just from memory, I missed some of the episodes, particularly one in which Arthur found a night club in operation in Morgan le Fay's castle. Besides, there are places where the seams and scissors have left obvious marks, including repetition that was needed when the works appeared as separate books but should have been deleted from the one-volume form. However, I'll probably try to see Camelot if I get to New York this summer, just to be a white completist; I liked his original books well enough to forgive their gradual dilution first into one-volume form and then onto the musical stage.

I wonder if anyone will think of nominating Camelot for a Hugo? Without seeing it or reading the script, I don't know how much of the fantasy element reached the dramatic version. But it would be silly to give yet another Hugo to Rod Serling on a *faute de mieux* basis. [Judging by the song, "Follow Me," which Nimue sings to Merlin, there's a fair amount of fantasy left in, but judging by the record and the reviews, the play is not worthy of a Hugo. Mind you, the record has some beautiful songs which must be very moving on-stage, but they try to capture too much of the books in too short a space—RB]

from THOMAS DILLEY, March 29, 1962
Box 3042, University Station, Gainesville, Florida

Working in any sort of production is among the most pleasant activities imaginable, and especially a radio production, as it is possible to do much more with limited equipment and personnel. Nearly the most fun I ever had was working in a few very small stage productions here and there, beginning with script and going through production, direction, effects, a bit of acting, and general cueing (very limited personnel). You shouldn't really have that much trouble with being limited to one voice; with a bit of work, it's possible to switch back and forth among seven or eight different voices, including some with additional touches as fake French, British, and German accents. Of course, all of my rather limited experience has been with comedy; so things as the accents weren't good, but they were funny.

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