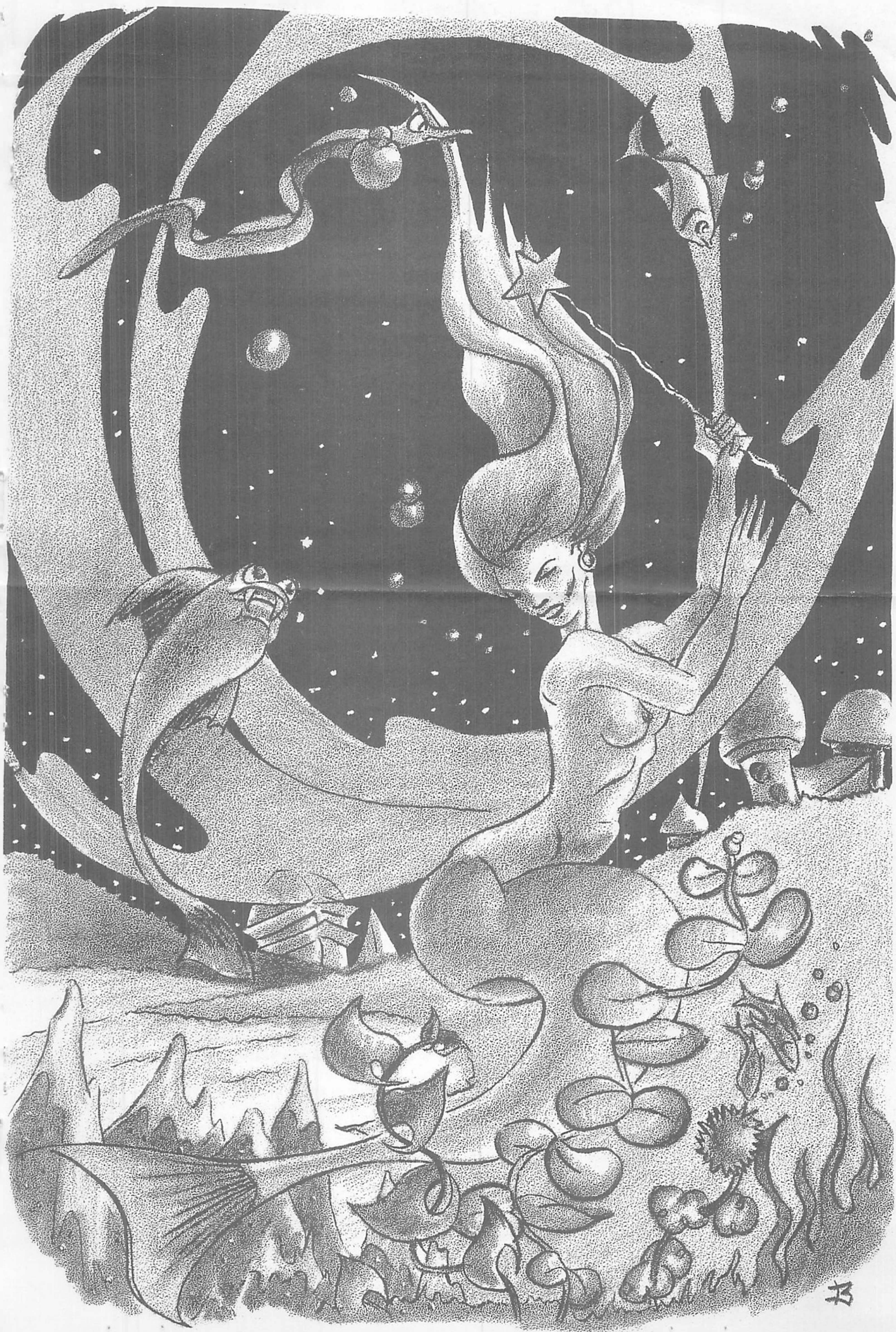


" WITH AN EYE ON FANDOM "





# SHRIEKING APPROACH

"Something tells me we should get in that manager's office," said Clarabelle Jenkins, her ghostiness playing havoc with the pert nose, titian curls and well-formed, but diminutive, outline. Like all poltergeists her lovely form was visible only to her Lord and Master, Harry Locke. "Things are happening--er about to start."

"What things?" asked Harry, an innate good nature crinkling his brown eyes. Similarly brown, in places, his hair had started to gray.

"Oh . . . Things..." said Clara, "It's merely a woman's intuition. --Wonder what's up."

A newsreel shot introspective pictures. On the screen a buxom blonde straddled a Baby Grand piano, one corner of it, and huskily meaned the blues while Truman accompanied her vocal attempts. The cinema threw shadows on Locke's retund body, and that of the slender, nebulous Clara, erstwhile vaudevillians, who pussy-footed up the darkened aisle. Locke nearly sprawled on a tiny leg that dangled over the thick carpet, but, like all ghosts, Clara passed through sundry objects.

They reached the lobby, skirted the marble drinking fountain and paused by the door marked: "Hebediah Pynn, Theatre Manager -- PRIVATE. KEEP OUT!"

An oak-stained portal swayed in the breeze from a fluttering window, while angry voices rumbled in the room. An afternoon sun made elephantine figures across the paneled walls. Pynn's tones became more rasping.

"Kupinski, I won't do it! My patrons like variety. If I dropped it--turned off my lights for a steady flicker grind, I wouldn't pull a grand a week. I couldn't pay my help."

"Put in double-feature," said Kup with a sneer. Prometheus, the parrot, cackled.

"You're using triple-features," was Pynn's hot retort. "Binge, free dishes; and what does it get you? . . . a damned headache!" His threatiness changed to a whine. "I've got to make it, Kup, my wife wants a new fur coat."

Locke could see the thin little manager through the partly opened door, and the bald head that gleamed with sweat. But a larger, darker and more sinister animal leaned toward Hebediah; its brows were creased with wrinkles. It lisped in sibilant undertones.

"Looks like Kupinski is trying to browbeat our friend Pynn," said Clara, her sweet face with its elfin chin now quite serious. Caspar Kupinski, the flicker manager!

"Oh, my dear God!" Locke whispered in turn. "Just when vaudeville's coming back, we have to put up with that crum." Harry patted his protruding stomach and straightened a gray tweed coat, his brown eyes signaling distress. "What a schmee!"

And, in the office, the voice became more insistent: "Pynn, I'm losing money. I can't pay my ushers, though my theatre's lit up like Garbo's--desire to hide. --Wish she'd quit hidin'. Resie Snetch, my best horror star, only pulls a half-house, and a baker's layout on matinees." His sharp face tightened.

"You've gotta cut the variety. Television is practically killin' me without vaudeville makin' it worse. Pynn, we've always had gentlemanly agreements."

"Gentlemanly, Hell!" Pynn stood up nervously, spilling cigar ashes on the mahogany desk. "You have power with that job on the City Council, but plenty. Was it honest to force the tent stock company out of town? They were good actors, every one of them. They did more nightly business than you take in a week."

"Lies, lies, just a packa lies. Keep that lip zippered, Hebediah Pynn, or I'll close your theatre . . . I'm the boy to do it!" Caspar's face was approaching a shade of rich lavender. Harry knocked.

Clara hiccupped, then faded to nothing. While Locke fixed his seagreen tie, splashed with black dolphins, Pynn opened the door.

"Come in," Pynn said, and his face broadened with a welcoming smile. "Caspar Kupinski, meet my star act, Harry Locke. You've never heard a voice like Locke's. It's astounding!" A frown disappeared from Kup's swarthy face and, replacing it--the frown, not the face--there was a crafty, thoughtful smirk.

"How do you do?" said Kupinski, the movie impressario. Rolls of marked loose living made a pastoral setting for eyes of piglike brown and black. Equally somber, the thick mustache did little for the raven hair and pendulous lips. Pause. "How do you do?" I said.

"Everyone I meet," replied Locke, eyeing his adversary and not enjoying the privilege. He loathed Kupinski and others like him: Designing, partly-illiterates who were widely aware of their opportunities in this land of plenty, and watching for every chance to cut the other man's throat. --But Kup was slightly nettled.

"I said," Kup hissed through moist lips, "How are you?"

"Usually broke!" Locke lit a lucky and, accidentally, flipped the match in Kup's direction. "You see, I like to eat, and we--" he sensed a warning nudge from Clara, "--I mean 'I' eat at the best restaurants."

Clarabelle hiccupped.

Pynn looked at Kupinski, while Kupinski did a double-take at Locke.

"Try Tums," Harry said to Kup, "They're swell for indigestion."

"Try 'em yourself," Kup replied. "They'd do well for that stomach."

"I like my stomach, and it likes me. In fact--" Locke gave a silly alugh "--I don't know what it would do without me."

"Probably ham it up and down the vaudeville circuits," said Kup, turning his back on Locke and viewing an alluring print of Mae West on the wall. Beige, orange and green, the parrot creaked from its cage that hung by the window.

"Take him out. Get him off. Grab the heck . . . Haw, what a low-life!" Parrot snickers shrilled in the low-vaulted room.

"That bird deserves the Purple Heart!" Clara declared. "Now I've an old trinket in our trunk that--" She ceased abruptly.



Kup whirled, scanning the office with suspicion.

"What in Hell goes on here?" Scarlet blotches smeared Kup's face. "Pynn, are you managing a theatre or an insane asylum?"

Pynn asserted gilt-edged contracts on his desk, his features showing a vapid expression. Kup's hair looked so black, to Harry, that one might suspect the use of Kolarbak, Dyanshine, or both.

"Twasn't me," Pynn said, meekly.

Unmindful of the burn, Kupinski doubled a cigar in his horny paw. "Then what's that under your desk?"

"My feet." Pynn stared at the paneled ceiling.

"Damnation!" Kupinski yelled with pain, then flung the mangled cigar in a wastebasket. "What do you take me for, a moron?"

Clara chortled and wise-cracked: "Let's keep personalities out of this."

Single-take; double-take; then camera lens "full focus".

"Better change your brand," said Locke, offering gum to everyone. Ignored, he tried three pieces.

Kup strode to the desk and leaned forward, facing Pynn.

"Are you tryin' to make a monkey outta me?" he challenged. Pynn showed no emotion.

"It's already been done!" said Clara, breaking forth with loud giggles.

"Ahhhechh, the bum!" creaked the parrot. "Take him out. Get him off. What a low-life. Tarnation. does that picture stind! Haw, haw, haw. It's a waste of film."

Kupinski took stock of his situation. He stiffened.

"All right, you provider for hams," Kup said, "you asked for it . . . It's a war between us. I'll plaster the town with paper; spend plenty on advertising." He cleared his throat, and gagged. "If that doesn't work, I'll find some other way of driving you outta business. You'll see how it is to buck politics."

"It will do you no good," Pynn quietly replied. "The big-money day for pictures is thr--"

"Amen, Brother!" said Locke with reverence. "Amen!"

"Lies, lies! Wait till Bennet Myers gets outta that alcoholic insti--well, anyway---. He'll make some more super epics. Myers has directed for Riffenelli's and Cohen's GLORIOUS ART PRODUCTIONS ever since talkies were invented. He belched, accidentally, and brought in sound."

"Myers should have begged pardon from the Gods," said Clara, "but on bended knee." A wild expression on Kupinski's face boded a hurried call on the nearest psychiatrist.

"When Myers gets sober, I'll take you to the cleaners." Kup rambled on: "You and that screwy bunch of variety artistes! It's a wonder you don't feature the Girl Scouts."

"Not a bad idea!" Pynn smiled happily.

"Bennet Myers," Clara averred. "That drunken bum! He lacked a booking when I was of this world . . . He's the booby who taught the parrot his (ugh) vocabulary."

"Cut the mimicry," said Pynn to Locke. "Enough's enough."

"Haven't said a damn--" Locke started to explain, but Clara pinched him. Locke jumped, and with a sheepish smile, subsided in a chair. "Ants in my pants, I guess."

Through the thin wall, Harry could hear the screeching finale of the western picture. He ran to the door, peered around it and saw the silver sheet.

Two highschool drama graduates--reputed to be hill-children, slightly overpaid--were acting with heroic emotion; also histrionics. They kissed with subtlety, and made the gentle sound of a suction pump.

With a joyful exaltation the curtains swung together, and, to dispel unpleasant memories, thereby giving hurried and temporary fumigation, lights fireflied the orchestra pit.

"How stupid is the public?" asked the parrot.

A buzzer shrilled a happy warning while, sultry and to the beat, the orchestra gave with the "Beale Street Blues."

"Yours is the craziest place I've been in!" howled Kupinski, going toward the door. "Now I'm out for my pint of blood!"

"It's anaemic!" Clara declared. A blonde Nordic stood in the lobby.

"The parrot yelled at Kup: 'What are you trying to be . . . Human?'"

"Ventriloquist!" accused Kupinski, brushing past Locke. The Nordic advanced, staring at Kup,

"I've looked this town over," said the giant, his hair the hue of an overripened avocado. "Are you Caspar Kupinski? I'm Ivan Meletov, straight from Hollywood. I also wish to see Mr. Pynn--"

"I'm Kupinski!" cried Kupinski, his face changing colour like Neon. Harry decided that had Kupinski worn a zootsuit, with a drape shape, replete with chain, there might have been the tinny sound of an agitated but loosely constructed robot.

"I ain't hadda chanceta send ya that draft," said Kup, faintly upset, "and I'm sorry it couldn't be mere the las' time, but--"

The voices faded as Locke and Clara, highly amused, made tracks down the aisle. Sidling in back of the box seats, and passing through a stage-door, they entered their individual world while the movie apparatus--resembling so much trash--crawled into the left.

## II

Acrebats pranced out on the stage, and assumed poses of indifference. Clara made Harry jump, then complained of his rough trouser material. She tickled him on the ear, saying: "That hunk of blonde masculinity, now talking to Kup and Pynn, is up to no good."

"Who is he?" Locke eyed a brunette's curving assets, and wondered about the depreciation. "Not bad!"

Clara snorted and exclaimed: "What's the matter, aren't you satisfied?"

"Well--"

"You'd better be," she said, tersely, nipping him on the ear."

'Ala Sinatra', but mere presentable, a crooner passed into his dressingroom.

"Yippee!" Clara yelled. "Now that's something!"

Locke gave her a mental spanking. (With a poltergeist, mental kisses, slaps, etc., do quite as well as physical ones.)

"Ouch, you brute! I didn't say I was teaming up with the guy. But you'd better look out for that Blonde from Hollywood . . . I don't trust 'em from there; they always make me think something's queer in the wind. While he's laying down the law, right now, his vocal vibrations bother me."

"Meletov, is the director and president of Rifinell and Cohen's GLORIOUS ART PRODUCTIONS. Meletov's worried about the lousy business in his flicker houses. He's inducing Pynn to drop vaudeville, put allof these people out of work. Kupinski agrees with the arrangement, of course, but Pynn is between a sweat and--"

"Hush ye' mouth!" Locke ordered.







"I didn't say it!" said Clara. "As I can hear it, the three of them are going over to the GLITTERING SHELL as soon as our stagershow ends."

"We'll have to do something about it," Locke declared, thinking an embrace for Clara.

Clara tinkled: "Why, that first violinist has a family of twelve, and the viola players all have at least two dependents, and the leader supports his old parents... We should make a drive: 'Down With Mechanical Entertainment'. All of the men have families. Ah me, these musical gentlemen."

"I'm lucky to be able to sing along with my comedy," Locke smiled, then extinguished a cigarette when he saw a Fire Marshall approaching. The stagehands engaged in a crap game, kicking whiskey bottles to and fro, emulating their more highly paid brethren in Hollywood.

"That's what you think," was Clara's reply. "You'll do . . . Our GLITTERING SHELL, incidentally, is featuring the horror star, Resie Snotch, in "SHRIEKING APPROACH".

"Another smellie?" Locke gazed in Clara's fathomless green eyes.

"As bad as they come, meaning it steams on ice." Clara shook her titian curls. "It's the only business in the world that's a financial success and an artistic flop. Sometimes I wonder . . ."

Clara demured, then spoke suddenly: "I know a few shades who hang out at the GLITTERING SHELL--used to be called the ORPHEUM. One's the famous 'I don't mind' girl. We worked the same bill-- . . . that's an idea . . ."

"What are you up to?" asked Locke, his eyes mirroring deep concern.

"You," Clara purred, twining around him. "Do you like the impression I leave? Hmummm?"

Applause showered around the acrobats who did pinwheels and somersaults across the stage while brilliant spotlights followed them. They formed in line for the curtain that rose and fell, rose and fell, before them. With her jet hair flowing, clad in little else, a famous danseuse pirouetted into the spotlight glare.

"'Twas strange about Resie Snotch, the way she came up?" Clara whispered. "She came over with her seventeen brothers and sisters from Poland, and settled down in Chicago." "From what I hear, she lived a busy life with no mind on virtue. Around 30, she was utterly dissipated, and devoid of any beauty. Perhaps for that reason--I can't think of any other offhand--she joined the Waves--everyone was needed in that era. She had a tour of South Africa, I believe, and finally wedged herself into a position at the desk of a Dependent's Care Hospital.

"Through various means, mostly dubious, she was promoted to First Class Wave. I guess that life for the employees there became a veritable Hell. A more nasty disposition would be a quality for Resie; her's is a terror unimaginable."

"--But how did this get Resie to Hollywood," said Locke, with an eye on the whirling ballerina, "to make her the A-1 horror star?"

Playing "The Swan", the orchestra crescendoed for the dancer's "Piece de Resistance"; while the well-filled theatre was more silent than a whispered Hail Mary. Locke peered behind him to see if his gussets were straining.

"Held your delivery!" Clara scolded. "I didn't leave this world yesterday. One afternoon when Resie displayed her unspeakably vile disposition, a Hollywood agent, Ivan Moletov--the new-famous director you just saw--came into Dependent's Care to visit his aging aunt. He had never been there before, and waited patiently while he stared with growing amazement at Resie. She was a horror to look upon.

"Women were flocked around the admittance desk, fearfully asking questions; getting horrid glares and snorts from a hideous Wave, First Class Vintage. A mother-to-be, frail and trembling, asked for an appointment. She stated she wished to be admitted to the hospital in two weeks.

"It would have been her first child but Resie shrieked a Polish imprecation, and the mother fainted dead away . . . poor thing--she hasn't been well since.

"What a leathesome character!"

"Now you know how Resie got her horror rating. Moletov saw it all, and immediately signed Resie to a contract. It wasn't hard for her to get out of the Waves. --The staff was so happy they threw a party.

"I was helping out with registration that day--there was an unusually large group of careless pedestrians that day, and the heavenly recorder was out of order. After work they dropped me off over the Davis Hotel in New York. --And I found you in the room I lived in--when I lived, you understand."

"Sure do!" said Locke. "I saw your tinted picture and fell in love."

"And because you believed in me, I became visible to you. --I'm so glad you've loved me."

"Don't forget, I've got you to thank for making me a hit act with that 'ghost' voice of yours?"

"Don't mention it!" Clara chuckled happily.

"Shall we take in "SHRIEKING APPROACH"?" Locke asked. "I'd like to see the hag."

"Yes! Let's do! We'll do our turn, catch the supper show at the GLITTERING SHELL, do our evening performance, then eat before we hit the ma. There's just enough time to see "SHRIEKING APPROACH", and . . . and I have a plan in mind."

o o o o o

Clara and Harry-- he in person, stomach and voice, and she with only a piping soprano--took two encores, five bows, then refused to take any more. In mournful protest, the curtains swung together, and with a stupid mechanical precision, the vitaphone box was lowered to the stage. Like something unclean, evil and cheap, a blackness settled around them.

"Come on, let's go!" Clara demanded, tugging at Harry's coat-tail. "We must get out of here before the crowd starts blocking the exits."

They ducked off stage, stumbled over whiskey bottles, and hurried by the box seats. Crowds of variety fans hastily left their seats and, like children afraid of the crude and ugly, swarmed around the exits--purposefully turning their back to the picture that, when the houselights darkened, made a visual mess of the curtain.

Sadly the travellers parted, and glaring black letters lit the screen:

Our Feature Presentation

"TWELVE O'CLOCK HIGH"

with

Clara shuddered and gazed at the mob who squirmed and shoved, anxious for home, supper, and their television. Locke knew Clara's opinion of this mighty epic. He visualized a flock of planes, unlearned actors and a vague plot that would appeal only to youngsters under twelve and elders with personalities of the type considered Hebeephrenic.

They managed, with much invisible nipping from Clara, to get through the crowd and squeeze their way to the manager's office where they saw Pynn, along with Kup and Moletov, taking his leave.



"There's a little surprise in store for you, Pynn. One that--" Kupinski's words floated across the lobby while Harry kept a reasonable distance between himself and the theatrical peer.

When the moguls deserted the lobby, Clara declaimed: "Wait! It may not work, but here's part of my plan."

She disappeared and then returned before Harry could take the wrapper from a stick of gum.

"Ain't he beautiful?" she exclaimed, gazing from the opened door.

"These lousy bums!" called the parrot, with a violent hopping and flapping of wings, "they want to crib the act." Thereupon, he bit Harry's trouser-leg, and edged himself up on his shoulder.

"Pynn will give me more than the bird if he sees me with this one," said Harry.

"Aw, can it and send it to L.A." Clara gazed at a compact, carefully rouging her lips. "Rifinelli would rent it out in his new gangster film, which will be, as usual, subtle, but 'Super Epic'.

A lone figure staggered over to Harry, whom he greeted with the delightful effluvium of gin. With blue saucer eyes, the florid face looked askance.

"Wash shomebody talkin' to you?" queried the inebriate. "I don'shee h'anybody. Who wash it?"

"My shiritual shelf!" Harry replied, then opened a door. He then walked jauntily down the street, while Clara calmly walked through the wall, and commenced to accompany him, on the way to 'le cinema'.

The perspiring drunk reeled, and gasped. . . "The d---d shtuff! I'm changing to 'Tidewater Schpeshul'."

Locke overheard the honest remarks exchanged between a stout lady--also perspiring, but scanted with "Beauteous Elli Mae--and her more anaemic but equally female friend.

"Twelve O'clock High? What a joke to force upon discriminating people! Why, I never--"

Daylight petered out, and the early Spring night was about to make merry.

An enormous pink and scarlet lobster towering into the starlit sky reached possessive claws into the street in varied positions: Horizontal, vertical, and leaning precariously over the thoroughfare, dazzling marquees lit the lobster shell, also the street for many blocks. Separately operated, whirling beacon lights lured customers to pay their fifty-cent piece at the box-office window.

Day or night, there were incredibly few stragglers along this thoroughfare.

Clara gasped and said: "There's the surprise that Kup spoke of! She pointed upward.

THE GLITTERING SHELL  
presents  
HORROR! HORROR! HORROR!

Rosie Snotch

in

"SHRIEKING APPROACH"

Roan Boreford

in

"Frankenstein's Aunt"

and

"Swamp Girl"

with that warbling starlet

IMA CHANTEUSE TOO

ALSO AMATEUR NIGHT, BINGO, FREE DISHES, and Rosie Snotch, IN PERSON

Of a magnanimous nature Locke gave the cashier a dollar, yet he felt strangely cheated with the change. Harry hadn't time for entertainment, 'with quantity'.

Glossy pictures of Rosie Snotch adorned the lobby, bending backward to the peasant age for their worshipful effect. One shot showed her, a clear-out character, rising from a mouldy casket in a lepreux graveyard. There was an eddearing cast to her Slavic features, green, scabrous: the long face that boasted sharp, leving fangs. Tremendously chic, her grayling locks were plastered around her bony head in the epitome of Grecian style; while, equally ingenue, Rosie's brilliantly blue eyes-- with gorgeous crow's feet at the corners climaxed this delightful, if startling, ensemble.

An odour from the bier permeated the lobby and reminded patrons, reluctant, hesitating, to purchase lilies for those 'dear departed'. The 'smellies' had arrived, but, obvious to many, this wasn't the means by which they had achieved their reputation.

Named from mythology, by Clara, Prometheus gave a sudden, dismayed squawk. He ruffled his gaily coloured plumage, looked more closely at Rosie's photograph, then hopped to the marble floor and ran around the lobby, crying:

"With the grace of all that's Holy, why let it live?"

"We wouldn't work Oshkesh with that routine," Locke declared, stuffing Prometheus beneath his coat.

"Not for a natinee!" Clara shivered, giving a backward glance at Rosie.

Hearing a scream, vengeful, frustrated, Harry opened an obscure side door.

A young, most attractive male confronted an annoyed movie star: A most definite female star who, apparently, was dressed either for a beauty nap or the private boudoir. Black polish glittered from her eaglet nails.

"Miss Snotch, I--" the lad stammered, backing away from the stalking figure, his face livid with apparent confusion, "--I'm married! . . . Mr. Kupinski--please excuse my causing this disturbance. --In the midst of this, Caspar Kupinski had bustled into the room.

"I'm sorry if he's annoyed you, Miss Snotch," said Kupinski. "Just what is the matter?"

"Matter! He says he's married--" Snotch threw the line away: "As if that makes any difference. I've had my way in pictures--" Her voice trailed to a revenish croak. Beneath the elaborate make-up her face etched deep lines, paling to a snail's attractive shade.

"I put on fresh makeup," Rosie affirmed, "set up my hair." She tapped her right foot, shaking strangely. "I sprinkled 'New Life' across my ear-lobes, my hair, my--oh, everywhere! I slipped on this appealing black-net neglige, and fixed the scotch and soda. I fired my maid . . . All in my dressingroom. I rang for this--Your assistant manager, Mr. Smithson, here. He came. I was prepared. I opened my arms . . . and the (CENSORED) wouldn't ruin me."

"Now that--" stated Clara "--is a gross impossibility!"

"Who said that?" Rosie screamed, and broke into a Polish imprecation.

"It's a pig!" yelled Prometheus.

"It's the picture!" Moletoev declared. "A political newsreel is on."

"What an insult, Miss Snotch," said Kup. "You're fired, Smithson."



La Snetch staggered down an aisle, giving low wolverine whistles, eyeing prospective males on the way to her dressingroom.

"I have a family!" said Smithson, a moistness brightening his eyes.

"To Hell with your family!" Kupinski declared. "They're Episcopalians, anyway."

Pynn walked over to the lad. "Come to see me, Smithson. We'll talk business."

"Thanks, Mr. Pynn. I'd rather work for you. He left, and Pynn did also, as quietly and as suddenly as he had entered.

Locke escaped down the aisle as he heard the parting shot of Kup:

"What's the matter with that guy Smithson? I would've taken care of Snetch--er, I mean 'Snetch'. She wouldn't have missed her Hollywood crowd with me around."

### III

Clara and Harry sat in a widely deserted section, six rows from the stage. Truman smiled from the screen replete in bathing trunks, while, to some movie-goers, the vast panorama of a Florida beach brought haunting memories.

A newsreel sped on, followed by advertisements of Rambowski's Fish Market, Becaccio's Bizarre Bedtime Stories, Tremenski's Jewelry Mart, Spilldorf's Tissues and other tidbits of tremendous entertainment. Clara yawned, and Harry started to doze. Visions of three-year tours were drifting in his thoughts when he awakened . . . Clara talked to someone he couldn't see.

"Yeh, Resie Snetch--she follows the picture. Wish it were my 'I don't mind' routine." Then Harry saw the wraith with carrot-red, flowing hair, tall stature and a devilish grin. Except for the abundance of figure, she reminded him of Clara.

"He can see me," remarked the red-head, exposing a shapely leg.

"Cut it!" growled Clara, pinching the redhead, who emitted a piercing howl. (This was blamed upon the unusual demands exerted on the talkie's sound-track.) Clara introduced the redhead as Inez Evans "Meet my partner, Harry Locke."

"Any friend of Clara's is also mine," said Inez giggling and waving a gossamer-shred of handkerchief.

"Keep it platenic!" Clara demanded.

"I have little to offer," said Inez, wiggling her hips, "but I'll consider any propositions." She eyed him speculatively. "We semi-banshees are lucky, yet there's hardly enough of a crowd to take notice . . . Damn it!"

Without warning, both Inez and Clara melted in the stale atmosphere.

Giving no hint of the shock forthcoming, 'SHRIEKING APPROACH' burst upon the screen. Thirty-seven fear-primed patrons leaped from their chairs and ran hastily to the nearest exit. In sobbing gasps, a tender baby shrilled hysterics, while a large-colored woman became violently ill and called upon Old Massa to bury her.

Bedlam knew no precedent since Biblical times when the devils were chased from myriad afflicted.

And there was Rosie, on the screen, giving everything for her ART: Grabbing her dental plates, horrendous but store-bought, shaking excess grave-mould, she slavered and groveled, and finally, managed her terrific entrance from the coffin. Her gaze wandered to a Midnight Picnic, and her startling blue orbs were moon-struck.

(Midnight Picnics are quite the rage in Transylvania, a short hop from Poland--or, with considerable finesse, the movies like to inform us--and the younger set, including every cinema male, attend en masse.)

Came the tinkling of bottles backstage.

Ululating a wolvering purr, reminding the bewildered and scattered patrons of an odd woman who reeled down the aisle, Rosie opened her mouth--Slavic, enormous--and gave voice to a cheerful wolf summons.

She dug feverishly at the ground...

"How natural," murmured several slinkily dressed ladies, of a dubious profession.

Resie fascinated the Midnight Picnickers; that is, the male animal. (Of course this charm was compulsory for the actors, or they wouldn't receive their seventy dollars each week during the three-week's production.

Then Harry nearly leaped off the seat. Two ex-vaudevillians huddled on the right of the stage, attired as witches, around a boiling cauldron. A parrot cackled eerily from one of the hags' shoulders. A dim light from the burning faggots threw shadows on the screen--slightly remindful of the nether world, and a misty forest surrounded the spirits. Harry recognized the hags as Clara and Inez, with added character makeup, who giggled and made faces at Resie's attempts at acting. Until seeing the Parrot, he hadn't noticed the absence.

Again came the clinking of bottles.

With gleeful presence the witches sang:

"Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn and cauldron bubble."

While, on the screen, Rosie glided to the merry-making villagers. She chose a younger male and led him to her coffin. In sevens, eights, and sometimes nines, patrons remembered their dinner appointments--thereby abandoning the film.

Along with the clinking of glass, heard from backstage, the witches chorused:

"Scale of dragon, teeth of wolf,  
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf  
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,  
Root of Hemlock, digged in dark,  
Liver of blaspheming Pele,  
Gall of goat, and slips of oil  
Silvered in the moon's eclipse  
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,  
Finger of birth-strangled babe  
Frelicking about the wave  
Add thereto a tiger's chauldron,  
For the contents of our cauldron!"



"He can see me..."



Breaking into a rapid trot, the witches paused and added:

"With apologies to Bill Shakespeare!"

Then faded away.

Appallingly sincere--reminding patrons of Junior's gift at their last birthday, 'SHRIEKING APPROACH' neared its demise, while victims made the one-way trip to Resie's casket. Myriad bodies were piled high, when extra-watt Mazdas broke into flame, silken curtains protected the screen, and the brilliant light drove sanity into the theatre.

"Here she is--" shrilled the recording, Kupinski met affording a Master of Ceremonies"--the Queen of Horrible Films: Resie Snotch."

Sensing Clara beside him, Locke knew that no one but Kupinski made the mistaken, and grievous, Snotch introduction. Then too, there were vague sibilant undertones that reminded him of foreign extraction. He heard Inez' giggle.

"Now see what happens!" said Clara.

In a French creation of dank-gray and black, with faint but grotesque splotches of green, Resie made her personal appearance. And the pink spotlight followed her slinking figure.

"No, not 'slinking'," Clara whispered, reading his thought, "just 'reeling'". She's as drunk as a starlet with a four-year contract." And in truth--with daring revelation of well-powdered flesh--Resie was slightly below all standard weather conditions. Nevertheless, she hadn't forgotten her Dear Public; she greeted them with a 'Hail Fellow, Well Met' attitude as she bounced by the footlights. Weeping gray hair brushed stray dandruff from her shoulders.

Again tinkled the reminiscent giggle and--Harry never remembered just how it happened, but, suddenly, Inez appeared behind Resie--and just as suddenly, she gave a vicious jerk near one of Resie's middle vertebrae. With a vicious, ripping thud--redundant, two objects bounced upon the floor. Resie gasped--and stupidly reached down to pick up her falsies. She was too inebriated for complete coordination, however, and finally--gave it up as a bad try.

"Aha," gleated Clara, "Inez, I told you her brassiere wouldn't hold up in an emergency!"

"Emergency, heck," cried Inez, becoming visible beside Clara. "That, dear friend, is what is commonly defined as 'sabotage'!" --She kissed the startled Harry soundly, and disappeared.

Resie, in spite of the audience's inclination to approaching hysteria, due to her own recent disaster, greeted them pleasantly.

"You bunch of deadbeats, the show's rotten . . . (hic) Why don't you go home!"

Kupinski broke into a hysteria beyond redemption, and screamed:

"Drop the curtain!"

"You're fired!" Melotov insisted gently, gazing at Resie with eyes amazed. Go back to your mission, incredibly ancient: Original entertainment!"

Woman-like, disregarding her state of dress--or rather undress--Resie chanted a Polish imprecation.

Regal, polished, her mannered speech was interrupted when a dark material, marked "ASBESTOS", shrouded a naive view.

Pulling great handfuls of jet-black hair, Kupinski ranted on a rising level:

"Marie Dressler, George Arliss, Garbo, Barrymore, Mae West, Will Rogers, Theda Bara--where are they? Where ARE they? WHERE ARE--"

Kupinski's scalp looked sorely treated, showing great bald patches; and his speech dribbled to childish tones while he crawled along the floor, disregarding the rapidly exiting audience. Smithson walked quietly down the aisle, wide-eyed, staring at Kup and Pynn.

"And you're through, too," Melotov declared, referring to Kup who tried to climb the wall. I'm sorry for the psycho who gets you. Smithson call the institution . . . and then come back. You're the new manager."

When the wagon--along with eight white-coated attendants--took Kupinski out through the door, Melotov turned to the men.

"Pynn," he said, turning abstractedly in the lobby that made a definite claim to diversion-empty popcorn boxes littered it, "you don't need my help, and you'll get no more pictures. Throw that house of yours into a straight vaudeville policy."

"Thanks," said Pynn, "I shall!"

"And you, Smithson . . . I'm certainly glad to have you around. I want this theatre closed for a month for improvements."

With his cheap, crack-pot tactics Kupinski was no good . . . Yeah, Smithson, come to think of it, we'd better use vaudeville with the picture. Contact an agent."

"That's wonderful!" said Smithson. "I needed the job."

"S'nothing." Melotov grinned wryly. "Pynn, here, with his vaudeville, has shown me the proverbial handwriting. I'm not adverse to saving my bankroll. Pictures have done much better in the past. Now it's vaudeville's turn."

Locke edged quietly from the GLITTERING SHELL, to be re-renamed 'THE ORPHEUM'; and, teasing Prometheus, Clara followed him.

"Say there, Harry Locke," called Melotov. "What's the chance of your playing this house on the return East?"

"Sorry," Locke smiled. "Ask again, sometime. I'm on in twenty minutes."

And they were onstage, with but two minutes to wait.

"Boy, that creener's good!" said Clara, eyeing 'ala Sinatra', her ghostly form fading in and out like the vapors on a Liverpool deck. "He's good looking, too."

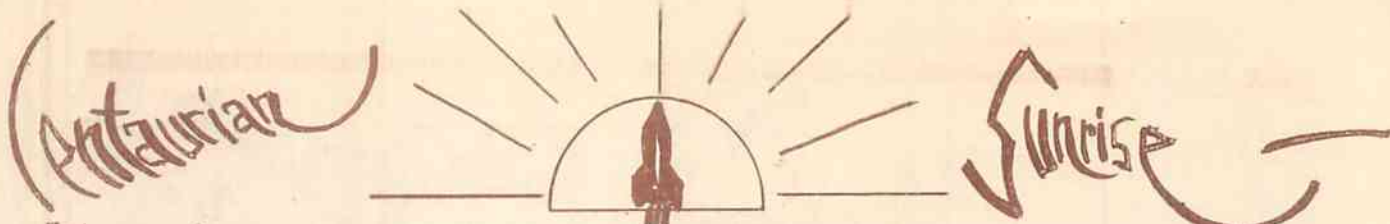
"Seems like I'll have to marry you--" Harry exclaimed, giving her a mental kiss"--to stop this quibbling." The tenor made his last bow to a tremendous clapping.

"Sounds great!" said Clara, as they stepped into the spotlight glare. "But do you think it's possible?"

"Could be!" creaked Prometheus from offstage.

THE END





We had an awful lot of trouble building the ship--old Johnson next door complained about the noise several times, and when the two policemen came, we thought it was all up. Rockets were forbidden, and anything any act which might be construed as having to do with them was cause for arrest. But they didn't search the place, so we got away with it (for the time being!). Will, my brother, and I, had built the thing from scrap and parts we were able to steal from the foundries where we worked--we had to do everything with the greatest secrecy, because the scare given us by the inhabitants of Beta Centaurus IV was not yet forgotten; anything that remotely resembled a rocket had been pressed into service for the expected war between Alpha and Beta Centaurus. As I said, rockets were forbidden to civilians for this reason.

Our reason for building the ship? We had no wish to be caught in the cataclysm which was surely coming. We were not traitors or cowards--we simply could see no sense to the impending struggle; a Beta Centaurian diplomat fancied himself insulted at an Alphan party, therefore, war was in process of being declared. Now, is that a sensible reason for a war? ...!

Anyway, we got the ship built, fueled and provisioned--we were taking off at the next dawn. The ship would make a speed faster than light--theoretically. I say theoretically, because it had never been tested; when we were free of the planet, the space-drive, designed by my brother, would be cut in.

Well, the night before the takeoff, we surreptitiously said goodbye to our few friends, returned home, and spent the remainder of the night making final preparations. We climbed into our slim, bullet-like ship just as the first rays from Alpha Centaurus began to pierce the translucent plastic of the shop windows. We took off gently, set the acceleration-robot, and strapped ourselves into our bunks--the next few hours were going to be rugged as the acceleration built up to eighty-five percent light-speed. When we awakened, the ship would be moving at 99% light-speed; then we would cut in the drive, and so--supposedly--move faster than light.

It all happened as I have described, only--after the drive was cut in, we began to experience strange sensations: objects within the cabin became distorted, not only to sight but to touch as well. With a slight shock, I noticed Will seemed to be fading from sight. Then there was a wrench as if every atom of my body were being turned inside out. Before I lost consciousness, I had a chilling thought: the Ultimate Speed and its proposed results! They matched the phenomena I had been observing! Then a wave of darkness.

I awakened to a dead, still silence; unstrapping myself from my bunk, I staggered to the visiplat. --For a moment my mind rejected what it saw there, then sadly and frightenedly, accepted it as truth. What I saw was the familiar outlines of the inside of our shop, instead of the expected void. A short distance away was a silver, bullet-like object, the duplicate of our ship--into the port were climbing two figures, who were strangely, horribly familiar! As I felt my mind shattering, dissolving, there came to my mind a little poem I once read in an amateur publication concerning "a young lady named Bright, whose speed was much faster than light--"

The first morning rays of Alpha Centaurus struck the translucent plastic in the roof --

H<sub>2</sub>K- "Roberto" H<sub>2</sub>K-

They were all there: every important scientist from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, France, Sweden, and many other important countries from all parts of the globe. Their eyes were focused on one thing; a slightly elevated platform, on which was seated in a big, steel chair, a robot. He was every bit of eight feet tall, his huge arms six inches in diameter. For his mouth, a loud speaker, for his eyes, photocells, for his ears, microphones attached to tape recorders.

Their attention was diverted from the robot as a small man walked from a door to the platform. He glanced around nervously, and finally began to speak.

"For the benefit of strangers," he began, "my name is Thomas Thackery. I have, with the help of other fellow scientists, perfected this completely self-sufficient, moving, electronic calculator, whom I affectionately named Roberto. It is my belief that he can solve many of the modern scientific problems of today; among them, that of the Hydrogen Bomb."

There was a gasp throughout the large hall, followed by an ill-concealed murmur of criticism.

"I know that to you it seems impossible," he went on. "Why, even I, his inventor, find it hard to believe. --But he has already solved the problem of the atom bomb, Einstein's theory of the universe, and many other problems. It took Einstein years to attempt to prove his theory; it took Roberto only two hours.

I won't explain his mechanisms, for they are too long to go into detail. The way he gets his knowledge, though, is simple. His 'ears' are really tape recorders. When I turn them on and speak into them, naturally my words are recorded. From previous information he obtains the essentials. My voice merely directs him on his task. When he has solved a problem, he puts the formula down on wire, while also broadcasting it out loud.

"I will tell you more of this while he is working at the problem. Right now," he pressed a button on Roberto's chest, and the recorder started. "Roberto, I want you to solve the problem of the Hydrogen Bomb -- Repeat."

"Roberto," came Dr. Thackery's voice from the loud speaker, "Roberto, I want you to solve the problem of the Hydrogen Bomb. Repeat."

"And now, gentlemen," said Dr. Thackery, "I have calculated that it shall take five hours for Roberto to solve the problem. Shall we adjourn to another room until then?"

The group silently left the room.

The five hours passed slowly for Dr. Thackery, even though he was busy explaining his marvelous invention. --But when they were over, he rather dreaded the outcome.

Finally the group was once more assembled. He stepped up on the platform and stared at Roberto. Would his ten years of work finally pay off? Would Roberto finally solve the problem of the Hydrogen Bomb?

Roberto's eyes flashed out a green light. "Here it comes," said Thackery. "Here it comes!"

Roberto's loud speaker was humming. He was going to speak. He was going to reveal to the world the secret of the Hydrogen Bomb!

"H," it began, "Hll, K--"

There was a loud report and smoke filled the room. When it finally cleared, the crowd beheld the robot. --It was intact, save for its head.

"Poor Roberto," said one to another. "He just couldn't solve it. Not quite."





To start things off cheerfully this time, let's talk about money. Well, not so cheerfully then. But if you remember the first installment of "Chips", we mentioned the number of prozines coming onto the stands these days. The number is still growing, with about 20 appearing now and a half dozen more coming, not to mention the British mags. Here's where the money comes in. If you buy many of them, it sure costs you something. Especially if from the newsstands. Figure it out for yourselves; but roughly, it'll be between \$25.00 to \$30.00 if a completist bought every single issue! Naturally, it is a rare occurrence to find somebody buying all of them, but you must get about half of them to get most of the best, according to any taste.

MONEY still lingering tenaciously in my mind, let's take up another phase of the fan-pocketbook. Let's consider the even more amazing fact of fanzine prices. Not the prices themselves so much, but the aggregate amount paid per year by any fan who gets most all of the zines by subscription. Since the things are so unstable except in a few cases, there isn't any easily available list of fanzines to check off and tabulate for cost-per-year-per-subscriber. But when a lot of these photo-lith jobs need sub-renewing, at a buck per zine per four or five issues, it ain't funny. Especially when not too much later, you shell out a few quarters and half-dollars to renew some mimeographed zines at three to five or seven issues, depending on the size of the zine, regularity of appearance, etc. This goes on and on, a dime here and there, another half-buck, according to the number of zines you get. If you happen to be a completist.....you must be rich.

Naturally, if you publish a zine of your own, that helps, to put it mildly (although it does cost money to publish, it doesn't add up to quite as much). And if you are a VIP (Very Important Phan), that usually gets you free copies. The NFFF-member rates help N3F members get zines at reduced rates now, not all but a good number, so that helps somewhat. This added expense of the average fan doesn't affect the average sfiction reader, merely the fans. No wonder Sam Merwin can't understand why fans put so much work, time and money into fanzines. And then buy tons of others. You'd be surprised at the stacks of paper a few years of fanzines, all of them, will make.

Have you noticed that the Popular Publications prozines are now (have been for a while) selling books from the fantasy publishers? They had been but seem to have switched to "mundane" literature recently. Either the idea was a flop or the not-stf books sell even better. Speaking (or writing, if you must be technical) of Popular Publications, have you noticed also that this company is issuing the greatest number of reprint zines now? Its old standby, FFM, with the revived FN and the new A. Meritt zine make three, with the Max Brand Western a fourth. This seems to be a catching fad. For a long time, there has been a digest-size "Zane Gray" mag. The Max Brand zine features a Faust novel (or novelette) in each issue. There is yet another and a Western again. The Walt Cobourn (wonder if that's spelled right?) Western. Maybe others. But back to fantasy.

BEST OF THE MONTH DEPT: In which we start a new department wherein an old story or two is dredged up from the past and given a bit of a boost. In our opinion these stories are anthology material (to judge by some stories which have appeared in anthologies at least) or simply darned good reading. This time it is a series of stories. And, from ASF at that. It is, we think, Hubbard's best series and it has been called the Kilkenny Cats series, written in the early forties under his Kurt von Rachen name. Unfortunately, it is also unfinished as yet. Steve Gailbraith is the central character in a continuous plot involving fast action with highly interesting overtones of future political squabbling among humans and aliens. Which, by the way, can't start to impress you if you haven't read the stories. Stories in the series are "The Idealist" (Jly 40), "The Kilkenny Cats" (Sept. 40), "The Traitor" (Jan 41), "The Mutineers" (Aprl 41) and "The Rebels" (Feb 42). These stories, -blended together (as the "Kim Rendall" trilogy wasn't in THE LAST SPACESHIP) with two or more completion stories would make a very worthy two-volume set. For those who may want to try to obtain those stories, mag dates are given above. Before dropping this dept., we would strongly recommend the original Schneeman illustrations to accompany the stories into book publication in the faintly possible event. You who have read the stories, agree?

SHAVINGS: Remember when Popular Publications was once the most brass-bound to be found against reprints? We've noticed that some fen actually counted among the total number of rebound monthlies Ziff-Davis issues in its quarterlies. Gha. \*\* Anybody notice how often ex-sfiction writer Paul Ernst has been hitting the slicks (SEpest frinstance) this year? \*\* Some time ago, that demon-columnist Redd Boggs irked our friend Sam'l Merwin with his (Redd's) attacks on the Merlin Press Books. While not in complete agreement with Redd's statements, we do consider some of those choices in "My Best Science Fiction Story" pretty poor. Smells fish to us. Look at vanVegt's for instance. Truth of the matter probably is that their best has mostly already appeared in anthologies. \*\* Speaking of anthologies, have you ever really given the stories in prozines a stiff rating? Try it by asking yourself, "Will this rate future hard-cover publication?" If you are pretty strict, judge them by existing good anthologies, and are slightly jaded, there won't be too many that survive. One that did that we'll mention, in our preference, is J. D. MacDonald's "THE FIRST ONE" which appeared in the Jan50SS. Anybody agree? \*\* Looks like Alfred Coppel has taken over the lead spot in PS. But remember his predecessors? Erik Fennel, Emmett McDowell, Gardner Fox, etc? Tell the truth, do you still wish for those adventurous epics you jaded ASFen? Hah!

FLOODS of stf no on the market is already beginning to show how quality is liable to drop with the increase in quantity. Not in existing towers of strength like ASF, TWS and SS, but in the newer items. PS and SSS have gotten to the top in their fields with Mof and OW zooming upwards. But AS and FA are still not anything to rave about (but hope is held for the semi-slick AS to come) but Z-D plans on another to make it a trio. Then MARVEL is coming out. Will it turn out to be another yunk-heap as did Avon's rag?

Hope is held for Gnome Press' coming mag with Phil Klass as editor. And Ken Crossen's semi-ASF type mag should do well. Maybe Horace L. Gold's two magazines will be good. But seeing them will tell. Competition will tighten, quality will be harder to buy, especially when the top mags have already gotten there first. But then, the mags should sell to the graduating comic-book class. From Blackhawk to OUT OF THIS WORLD ADVENTURES. Take a look at any comic-book rack and notice how many have stfnel stuff in them. They've been having it for years, but the deluge has come. Even ANDY PANDA got it. What is this world coming to? With droves of magazines and books, tons of it in the comics, even movies and television, not to mention radio programs which come right out and say "Science Fiction" (see NBC's)? These crack-pots are running rampart! Let's go back to our SIRI and hope there isn't a "Destination Moon" plug in it.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE series of stories? Could it be the famous "Foundation" series in aSF? Or maybe it could be the "Captain Future" series? Or the fabulous Highbens? Perhaps the "Artur Blord" series by E. Mayne Hull? How's about you readers writing in to us and letting us know? Maybe we can get up a list of the things. Come now, you don't expect us to slave over this typer and think up all the ideas as we go along do you? (You do??) Next time, we'll have a list of all the series we can remember, find and think of from others' comments. Drop a line with yr favorites, too. This does it for now. Any ideas, comments, etc., will gladly be accepted. Except ticking packages of course. *E.L. Miller*



# B I Z A R R E !

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The first wacky tale of Harry Looka, and his poltergeist friend,  
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MR. OLIPHANT'S PINK ELEPHANT . . . . . Charles L. Hames

With his bottle, Hector conjured a friend. --And he wouldn't  
let it go!

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REVIEW OF FANTASY AND S-F PUBLICATIONS . . . . . Y'r Navy Editor  
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MIDNIGHT LUNCH . . . . . Jack Cuthbert  
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ARACHNIDA (Short-Short) . . . . . H. S. King  
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DEATH DEALER (Short Story) . . . . . Charles L. Hames  
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MEMO TO THE READER (Book Review) . . . . . August Derleth  
IMMORTALITY (Verse) . . . . . Ronald Bourgea

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Peggy La Deaux started it all...deep in the horrible swamp!  
COVER ILLUSTRATION. . . . . Bill Benulis

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"Like a man...cept for the face ... It -- it looked like  
A Death's Head, wearing a big, floppy, black hat!

ALSO

THE TERRIBLE HOBBYIST (Short-Short) . . . . . John Robbins McCommas  
Horror unto horror ...! Is there any limit?

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Andrew Macura, Publisher  
230 PRINCE STREET  
BRIDGEPORT 8, CONN.

EXECUTIVE STAFF  
PUBLISHER  
ANDREW MACURA  
EDITOR  
H. S. Weatherby, HM1  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR  
Herman S. King  
ARTICLE EDITOR  
Edward Ludwig  
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SHIVERS expresses its appreciation for the help of the NFFT and the Fantasy Artisans' MS Bureaus



I saw a bat last night --  
But long before his flight  
I heard his swift advance  
Across the world's expanse.

I saw a bat last night --  
But long before his sight  
I felt his dreaded clutch:  
My mind composed the touch.

I saw a bat last night --  
But long before his fright  
Could seize upon my mind  
I told myself, "He's blind."

I saw a bat last night --  
But long before this mite  
Could stir a breath of air  
I prayed, yet not aware!

--Ronald Bourgea

#### THE WIND

Ahh! Listen, the wind.  
Sighing gently through the trees,  
Whispering secrets  
That Man shall never know.  
Or howling in demonic fury in the night  
Of a hidden blasphemy.

The wind.....  
Seeing all and knowing all;  
Watcher of Man through the eons,  
And of others than Man.  
Seeing civilizations rise and  
Fall in mortal combat and catastrophe.  
Remembering, perhaps, alien visitors  
And things of which Man has not dreamed  
And would not dare to dream.  
Seeing all, but revealing nothing.

But hinting?  
Moaning gently in the evening  
Of a lover thousands of years ago;  
Of things before Man.  
How do we know and if we could,  
Would it be.....safe?

--Calvin Marsdon

#### ANTARCTICA

What slumbering fires lie hid beneath  
Your continents? The glacial ice  
Folds you in its chilly sheath,  
Mocking with subtlety man's frail device.  
What angry gods wrought desolation here?  
What furious forces bade you sleep forever?  
Your eerie loneliness fills men with fear;  
Your hidden treasures spur them to endeavor.  
You do not answer; men may seek in vain  
To know your mysteries; you will reveal  
None of your dark enigmas. Your disdain  
Is deep and deadly; under that blue steel,  
That men call ice, you hide a fiery core--  
A heart that dreams of days that are no more.

--Emili A. Thompson

#### THE SEASONS

Time has ebb'd its way.  
Tarry not for Spring;  
She is haggard and drawn.  
In the year is...  
The summer and the winter,  
The fall and the spring.  
Now, the year holds only winter.  
There can be no spring.....  
Our Earth is gone.

--Sandy Charnoff



# Silencio

Silencio, silencio;  
So spoke the myriad signs.  
You lay so calmly there  
Quiet as the stately pines.

None can do anything  
To solace my aching heart.  
You are gone forever,  
And we are ever apart.

--Sandy Charnoff





# One Fan's Opinion

After going to school for sixteen of my twenty-one years on earth, I have a natural interest in education. I guess you have to.

Have you ever wondered just where this education business would stop? Let me explain exactly what I mean. At one time a person was able to get along in this world with no formal education at all. After many years we find that this same person, without the benefit of formal education, is put aside in man's eternal struggle for better living. At this time, those that were really "educated" were those lucky people that went through our equivalent of grammar school . . . they knew how to read, write, and figure. These were the leaders of one period.

Then came another stage. Now our same ol' John Doe had to have a BA or a BS to get anywhere in the more advanced circles. The "Joe College" was our little bond salesman of the twenties. He was the ultra sophisticate . . . but not for long. More and more of his buddies got the doctor's degrees and JC was out in the cold. He was forced to spend a little more time in school and get the next higher degree.

If you will look back, you will easily see that more and more time was being spent in learning what everyone thought were the "basic essentials" that one needed to get anywhere. The obvious question comes to mind: "What happens when all your life must be spent in school?" This is impossible . . . that is, it is impossible with our school system as it is.

It is my belief, and remember, it's only one fan's opinion, that sooner or later, the educational system that the world knows today must undertake a radical change. Since we cannot spend all our lives learning the "facts," we must first create a more centralized reference system . . . to give it to you with a little more color; a better indexed storehouse of human knowledge . . . then, teach our future generations the complex art of 'thinking'. We must teach these future students how to apply facts (easily obtained from the reference system and not committed to memory) to the problem at hand.

When this centralized reference system is set up and the students are taught how to use a basic system of logic, our problem is solved. No more learning facts . . . no more committing complicated theorems and tables to memory . . . and more time to be spent in teaching the future generation how to enjoy itself.



You know, this publicity for the new s-f motion picture, "DESTINATION MOON," is beginning to get under my skin. I wish they wouldn't release all this tantalizing stuff so soon. I hear that the picture is slated to appear in Washington D. C. and New York at the same time and the date set is the first of August. I sure hope this picture lives up to its publicity. I hear through the grape-vine that Heinlein absolutely refused to let Hollywood "ham" the picture up. No false comedy or over-played love interest. I hope the rumors are true. After waiting so long, I'd hate to see them louse it up.



I'm very happy to see that the NORWESCON committee is finally functioning. The first official report was swell. I had my doubts that things were going along smoothly after getting that so-called first report as quoted from EFFIGY. I see that they have mailed out to nearly 1500 people interested in fantasy. I didn't know that there were so many people interested in fantasy . . . much less having a complete file of names and addresses! If this first report is any indication of the method that the entire NORWESCON program will be handled, they are assured of a huge success.

By the way, if you are one of the very few that haven't received the NORWESCON report, all you have to do is write to "NORWESCON, Box 8517, Portland 7, Oregon" and request a copy. They will send it to you free. Get yours now!



Again it's time "to fold my tents and silently steal away." I enjoyed talking to you . . . I hope you forgot other more important matters for a little while. I'll be seeing you in this same spot in the next issue of ORB. Will you be around?

The  
End

## MARTIAN WINDS

In the still of the Martian twilight,  
When the mad moons race on high,  
The red sands walk in the silence ...  
And a dead race sounds its cry.

The cry comes strong from the low hills,  
In a wall that tears and rends;  
And this cry from the throats of the long dead  
Dumb Earthmen term: "The winds ..."

Men sit in their pressured cabins  
And in air suits, go on tours --  
Not heeding this cry, this warning:  
"Our fate will soon be yours ..."

So listen, you foolish Earthmen --  
Give ear to this wind of death  
And leave this poisoned planet ...  
Ere you gasp your last long breath.

By Bill  
Warren



AS  
Others See II/14  
Dear Bob:

BILL WARREN -- Letter Editor

ORB 4 to hand. Ve-ry nice. Ralph's cov-pic excellent. Justifying has improved the appearance of the pages 100%. Don't you give your authors a credit? Or do you withhold their names to keep other fan editors from purloining them--or is blank space a pseudonym for Bob Johnson?

We will land a contact rocket on the moon in 1955. First man-carrying rocket: 1960. You will buy a rocket-excursion ticket in 1963 for a junket around the moon and back. In 1975 you can, for a price, buy a round trip to Mars or Venus.

Cui Bono?

Manly Bannister  
1905 Spruce Ave.  
Kansas City 1, Mo.

/ First the by-line beef. A curt comment from Bob advises that the name of the authors which are withheld are done so because the scribes are "just rather shy." I'll admit that this seems to be a flimsy excuse. Fan authors that I have heard tell of -- and there are a few -- are magnificently successful in suppressing any hint of shyness. This applies to me, too, as anyone who has read me will testify. You are very definite in your predictions concerning man's first attempts to conquer space. How do you arrive at your conclusions? 7

Dear Bob,

To ORB the IVth. I'm undecided about the cover. I don't particularly care for it, although it is one of his better efforts. I guess the large size saved it.

And, again, I still don't go along with your idea of not having the by-line with the stories. You certainly have space enough and I doubt if it would take but a second to fit them in.

I didn't like the lead story so well. Nothing particularly wrong with it. Its "plot" wasn't especially outstanding and the style was rather listless. All in all, it didn't appeal enough to make me want more by her. More later, about the kind of story I'd like to see.

Hmm, so Lee Quinn's OFO has wound up in ORB. His style is sorta hesitant and I'm not sure whether I like it or not. Concerning his first subject, see Lester Del Rey's story in the 1st OUT OF THIS WORLD. Just as possible as any other theory I think.

Now "One Minute After Midnight" is more like it, in the fiction department. Not being especially enthusiastic for weirdish stories, compared to my love of s-f, I do like good ones. Or, to amend that, I do appreciate the ones that appeal to me . . .

"The Space Whispers" I did not like. Just another rehash of one of fandom's favorite (ugh!) gimmicks found in many a fanzine: Something's always luring men to some horrible outre doom, and by foo, it's gonna get you....you poor doomed reader hahahahahahahahah, etc. If Lee D. Quinn does get his fanzine for fan-editors going, I'll move that fan-editors abolish this story. Unless, perchance, a really outstanding item along that line appears. Anyhow, David English has done better than this. See Vlnl SIRIUS for instance.

"Tail-Tag Puzzle" clever. Who dunnit? You?

Poetry page not impressive, to me that is, this time. Art Rapp's humorous poem deserved the reprinting.

I did like the Untitled: III by Picard though. And the accompanying illustration.

Ah, the Wizard of Oz brings back memories. Nice to have those stills to help. And that picture has been re-released you know. I hope to see it again.

Your "Here's Looking at You" column was interesting. Sort of a combo-editorial column isn't it?

Letters interesting. Sometimes the comments inserted in them aren't so hot. It would be better if the comments were placed after the letters.

That sort of covers the fourth issue . . . Luck and all with ORB . . . What's with #7?

Yours,

Ed Cox  
4 Spring St.  
Lubec, Maine



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/ Firstly, about naming the authors. The idea the editor has in mind is to make the readers judge the stories on merit alone, with opinion uncolored by the name of the author. This idea has merit, don't you think? You, not we, are stating that the author of OFO is Lee Quinn. We say no more, but the name on the master copy that we get isn't the same. The "Tail-Tag Puzzle" was done by Sandy Charnoff, and apologies are herewith tendered for omitting her name. Glad you liked the "Oz" stills. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time such a feature has been run by a fanzine. Lastly, you will notice that I am taking your advice regarding placement of comment. 7

Dear Bob,

Received ORB two days ago. I thought I'd read it over six or eight times so as not to go off half cocked.

I liked the following things:

The cover, although, unfortunately, it got wet.

A Minute After Midnight

The Space Whispers

Witch Dance

Untitled Three

As Others See It

The rest was simply /not so hot/. I really mean it. It was awful!!! Even Rapp's poem was bad.

"The Awakening" seems to be the wistful yearnings of a female adolescent set down in chronical (Sneary, here we come) form. I'd call it a "filler for Revolting Love Stories." See Orb vlnl.

One Fan's Opinion sounded like Russell Harold Woodman's Opinion. And how did you decide on what order the paragraph's should go in? Pull them out of a hat? Wha' happen to Gyp in the Malestrom? That was good.

Tail-Tag Puzzle was all right, but whottenhell's the idea of printing the answers down below it?? Trying to make a cheater out of me, eh?

Charnoff's poems were---welllll, she sounds like a fugitive from a Shiras yarn. The latest one, I think.

The Wizard of Oz pictures appeared about ten years too late. When are you planning a sequence from "The Shiek"?

Here's Looking at You was about as coherent as one of Ray Palmer's articles on The Flying Saucers. Was it composed on the stencil?

I see you cut out all mention of Athiesm. Koward!! Koward!!!

Am sorry for the above. It's good I didn't write directly after reading it. (The Mag.) Glad you hung one on Friedman, tho.

Good luck with the Orb colors. The last scheme didn't go so well..... wasn't your fault, though.

Bye the bye, the margins on both sides of the multied section looked great . . .

Alan M. Grant

129 Edgemere

Fayetteville, N.Y.

/ So wonderful to learn all these good things about ORB and her writers. I trust you will back up your evident admiration with a subscription renewal? Your complaint about the "Oz" photos being ten years too late isn't valid. Very few such pictures have been made, and, not counting the yet-to-be-released stf movies, all these fantasy epics are old. Bob did quite well with the selection he had, and blew considerable long green in the process. As for Here's looking at You, Bob advises me it was carefully edited, but that it got away from him. The question of religion and all its variations, we decided should be thrashed out elsewhere. It actually has no connection with fantasy and stf, or so is our conviction. There are those, doubtless, that disagree. 7

Dear Bob,

It has been quite some time since I wrote to you ... much water has gone beneath the bridge. But the arrival of Orb 4 yesterday took me from my slovenly mood, and, here I am.

I cannot exactly understand Mr. Ackerman's last paragraph in his letter, but if my interpretations are correct, I thank him for all the charity: Irregardless, don't mistake me for meaning that I am above criticism, or above studying someone else's work, for, after all, this whole world of human beings is set up on a comparative value, and I am neither the one to think myself above them nor am I too prideful to submit myself to the natural thing. On the other hand, I have to really thank him for choosing my poem with and equal to Untitled: two, which I think of as highly meritorious.

Yet this...This...THIS...is incompetent. By what criterion does your reader judge "good or "bad" or in the middle" or "as good, but just below," etc.? It is by personal taste? Or is it by prejudice? Or is it by inherent or acquired critical powers? It is all well and good to say "I think that is good." But saying that, you have only said half.



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You must give a reason. Following the pattern, I think you will find many of your readers will not be so prone to "Taste-bud" criticism, as "justifiable criticism", which is in all events, "real criticism". A poem is not only a mass of words. Not only a well expressed conviction. Not only a mass of meter and rhyme. Not only a simile or metaphor, or personification, or illiteration, or hyperboly. It is a combination of these and an authentic and deep-felt emotional passage, whether comic or serious.

I think that your past issue was much superior to the previous one, as for looks, at any rate. The red of the previous was too contrasting, and it gave a blurry illusion for the eyes. Yet, still, on the subject of color, the one in blue was the clearest and most legible.

"The Purple Perch" was quite amusing in content, with a nice twist-ending--and technically sound.

Awaiting the next issue of Orb, I am,

Sincerely

Ronald Bourgea, HM2

Managing Editor

NNMC NEWS

Bethesda, Maryland

Dear Bob,

I'm moving again! By the time your June-July issue comes out, I shall be back in Brooklyn. I'll send you my college address sometime in September.

There's nothing wrong with the magenta; I object to the green paper in the mimeo section, though. White is much easier on my poor eyes . . .

I didn't like The Awakening. The only thing I can think of to complain about, however, is that it is childish (pretty clumsy).

One Fan serves no constructive purpose, unless you had a page to fill. Atomic energy, as it stands now, has been discussed thoroughly (most recently in three articles in New Republic). The bit about Sturgeon just doesn't make sense. It appears that you wrote down your thoughts as you thought them, without organizing them (clumsy, again).

I liked 12:01 .

" " The Space Whispers.

I'm against putting answers to puzzles in the same issue . . . It's too easy to cheat.....

Gornoff gets a little too ambitious in her abstractions. She leaves reality behind her, and I'm too lazy to search for it.

Witch Dance and the Purple Perch (was the color an accident?) are suitable fantasy-poetry, only I don't like poetry. Hence the complaint, why did you waste a whole page on Untitled: Three?

The Wizard of Oz was a good idea. Too bad I saw the picture 10 years ago (I think). I had some trouble remembering the story.

No comments on the rest. I refuse to strain my 100:100 eyes to read it again.

Marshall Freimer

392 E. 4th St.

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Perhaps Atomic Energy has been discussed enough. Current headlines still consider it hot stuff, and Collier's has started a series of articles pertaining to it. I wonder if fandom considers the atom old stuff. Somehow, I can't believe it. Too bad you don't care for poetry. ORB is basically a fiction and poetry mag, at least that was the idea at its inception. Glad you liked the "Oz" feature. 7

Dear Bob,

Comment on Orb #4

The cover is interesting but seems to be smeared. Anyway, how did you know which color I dislike most? Telepathy?

Who did the illo for "The Awakening? After all, the artist did a good job and don't you think he ought to get the credit for it?

Lee Quinn's column was very interesting. Particularly his thought that an atomic war and international control of atomic energy would have the same end result.

Tail-Tag Puzzle--you didn't by any chance get this out of thin air did you?

Just what does that thing on page 6 illustrate? (I refuse to dignify it with the term illustration.)

In light green your drawing for Charlotte's poem would have been nice. In the magenta, the effect is somewhat nauseous.

The section on "The Wizard of Oz" was different. Could you do the same for "Rocketship Galileo"? --or maybe "Frau im Mond"? . . .

I don't know how long it takes anybody else to solve Kriss-Krosses, but in mags like "Popular Crossword Puzzles," I can do one in about 15 minutes.

Dear Bob,



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'Bye,  
Sandy Charnoff  
2234 Ocean Ave.  
Brooklyn 29, N.Y.

Dear Bob,

Now to the business of commenting on ORB..... The Phillips cover is typical RRP. Vaguely reminds me of THE SHADOW OUT OF TIME, for some reason. Ralph has sent me several excellent drawings for MEZRAB. The stories were mainly excellent, but the poetry is without exception terrible. (Except TALE OF THE PURPLE PERCH) Fantastic amateur poetry is almost always god-awful unless it is funny; a serious attention to horror in poetry is nearly always pathetic. There are a few exceptions; R. Flavia Carson, Stanley Mullen, possibly (occasionally) Lin Carter. But these girls you have doing your poetry, these sub-adolescents who are engrossed by their own emotions.....I have a remedy for them. Let them write a good, long, romantic, sentimental novel or play with NO HOLDS BARRED, to get it all out of their systems; then tear the d--n thing up and throw it in the fire and start WRITING... not just emotionalizing on paper:

Yours,  
Marion Z. Bradley  
Box 431  
Tahoka, 'Texas'

All for this time. Don't forget your letters, and we'll be seeing you.

BILL WARREN

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*Well, shaking it!*

Howdee Doodie...

Not too much to say this issue, but, once again, the ink. I'll admit that this issue isn't too hot in regard to color combo, but much has happened. --A brief record of my trials and tribulations begins thusly: After last issue's (he) violet, I decided that a unique method of ink-picking might be a lot of fun. If I remembered rightly -- there were over 400 colors in the offset inks. I therefore guessed a number between 1 and 400 and hoped for the worst. (The number was 168.) Unfortunately, the worst was exactly what happened, and the company sent me a "maroon", which was in reality about three shades redder than cocoa brown. I gasped unhappily, and decided to make the best of my misfortunes, and use the stuff anyway, with liberal additions of pages in other colors. This I did, and behold, an evil concoction of what might best be termed an abstraction of a man treating his black eye with beefsteak.

However, to soothe my non-conformist attitude, I shall continue picking a number, and fainting dead away at the results. --Eventually, as with the million monkeys and the million typewriters, I shall hit upon a strikingly beautiful color. I'm now hunting a shade of deep lime green, but by hit and miss, it will take a while or three.

In SLM's "Chip in the Maelstrom", he mentions the general low quality of AS and FA. Pardon me a bit please, but I disagree.

I will admit that for tops in everyday s-f, you naturally look to aSF. That's completely natural, for aSF's science-fiction is unbeatable for the pure science that is mixed into its stories, plus the good characterization. Also tops in general fields are OTHER WORLDS and THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & S-F. Also, I will mention FFM, which for a long time has been the only worthwhile reprint line. AMF is gaining headway, however.

Now, let us digress a bit, and go down deep into the true "pulp." This is an entirely different matter. Look at SS & TWS, the "thrilling" twins. They have consistently good (in relation to most of the other lines) fiction. So what? --That's all it is. What does it mean? --Simply that it is easily read, with a fairly good plot, easy to understand, and easily forgotten. That doesn't mean all of it! Some of it has been superb entertainment...but not in relation with the amount of fiction printed. Look, for instance, at "The Lonely Planet", a really great story. One of the very best. There are others, like "Paradox" and Kaleidoscope." --These I enjoyed immensely. Now in relation to each one of these classic bits, look at the absolutely astounding amount of examy fiction which is in these two. Not all of it, but the ratio of good to mediocre is a little lopsided....

Then, take a look at Planet....it's one which the critics have never quite agreed over. At times it is over-simplified....that's natural! It was intended to sell to the not-quite sfian, due to the Western-Leanings of Fiction House. --Yet, it sells equally well to the fan. I'll admit that it is space-opera, but it contains often as much sound psychology, and often more real emotion as anything aSF ever even thought of buying.

Now, leaping a few mags which aren't worth the effort of mentioning, or are still in the process of proving themselves (sometimes takes a long time), we get to AS and FA. First, FA... It is highly irregular, but seldom reaches any great heights. When it does, it really gets dillies, but they are few and far between. (Its main drawing card is the madcap "Toffee" and Theodore Sturgeon.) This is a line its nice to buy, but you may as well get the quarterlies and save some dough.

AS: and an entirely different matter altogether. At one time, this mag was the absolute ultimate, and according to its new editor, it is once again rising to its old post. For a while there, mismanagement, plus a bit of over-enthusiastic editing caused a lamented fall in quality. This is slowly being remedied. --But still, if you could overlook (ugh) Shaver, you would always find a couple likeable stories in each issue. This couldn't always be said of another. Also it was AS that published "The Four-Sided Triangle", "The Brain", and "Unthinkable." All once-in-a-whiletime greatness! These are stories that never grow old. They (AS' Classics) still appear sparsely, but with new format and pay rates, this mag will regain its lost stature as King of the Stiffness.

A word on SSS: as yet, skyrocketing -- It might go places since its rebirth. --I just mean, by all this tirade, that I want some super-duper shorts and some long sf and fantasy novels, like "Needle" and "Portrait of Jennie" --or s-f may hit one of the biggest slumps in years.



limited field. So far, its greatest gift to fandom has been Dolgov, who, I predict, will eclipse Calle, Finley, and Artyzybasheff.

On the subject of Artyzybasheff, have any of you people ever read a book of four poems illustrated by Boris? Its name is "THE FAIRY SHOEMAKER." It is one of the most beautiful books I have ever seen. --Especially lovely is the group of illustrations for the poem, "The Forsaken Nerman." By all means, if you haven't seen this tome, and are a connoisseur of beautiful books, be sure and look this up in your library. It was printed in '37, so you may have a bit of trouble locating it.

Have you pipples been reading Cliff Baracett's very well-put-out fanzine, CATALYST? --I have always enjoyed it, although it occasionally seems rather deluded about some of the phases of the Democratic System -- and just as often, startling down to the heart of a matter. This fanzine often has excellent filler and poetry, but the articles run toward tedium. (I've never been able to read one through completely. I always find some pretext to skip lightly through parts of it.) One thing at first annoyed me. That was the definitely socialistic trend exhibited by the publisher and his staff. --I now feel slightly differently toward him. --In fact, I feel a great deal of respect. Instead of going around raising his voice in much ado about nothing, concerning socialism, its benefits, etc., he calmly states what he believes in, and then retires from the stage. --I gather that a group of his associates are going to Alaska to settle down in a little co-op community, and be happy socialists. --

Personally, I don't approve of socialism in most of its many forms. I do, however, approve of these people who set themselves a goal, go away to some section of the country to work toward that goal, and never go about bothering others who are not interested in the others' philosophy. These people are not soap-box orators, and they are not attempting to influence others who possess different ideals. This is all to the good. This, no matter what their purpose is, is America. Everybody minding his own business, and letting the next fellow think things out for himself. For them, despite their (to me) futile and needless ideal, I salute them.

From now on, ye eddie is deep in the mysteries of being editor of the N3F letterzine, POSTWARP, which was relinquished by r-t Rapp. --It's ruining my correspondence, but I'll soon be writing those who I've forgotten. Miss me? (---Ungrateful wretches!!!!)

I was pleased beyond words to have so many of you mention me in the N3F "Best" Ballots. It made me very happy. (sob.)

I now have an assistant--not quite even a passifem, but very interested in amateur publishing. Her name is Ella Lee. --She will be taking part of the load, so I can again act human (?) during the 20 day period of publication. Here's hoping her interest in publication can be turned to fandom in general. She's 20, single, blonde hair, blue eyes (she says gray), and believe it or not,  $\frac{1}{2}$  Indian....and she still insists they're gray. Oh well.....

Fanfoto gallery held over an issue. --I need about 3 more fotos. Common, don't be shy!

Next issue: HAACKERMANN's poem, "THE LAUGHING SATYR," \* Bill Warren's short story, "THE VISITORS," also a cover....by me. Don't be discouraged though. --At last you'll meet 'Dragon', the original johnsormonster. --Not just his head, but most all of him! Also, maybe the first in our series, "Impossible Animals." --Y'all can get in on this, too. Just send in an impossible animal's name, with an unusual (very!) trait that he might have, and we'll draw him up, and write a poem about him.

Bye now,  
Bab

WE APOLOGIZE!

Cover, last issue: .....RALPH RAY BURN PHILLIPS

Illustration on page 1: .....BILL BENULIS

Abstraction on page 6: .....SANDRA OSTERLUND



Volume 1, No. 2  
June-July  
1950  
Published Bi-Monthly



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1 issue.....15¢  
3 issues.....40¢  
6 issues (1 yr.)..75¢

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ORB is a bi-monthly amateur publication dedicated to fantastic literature and poetry, published at 811 - 9th St., in Greeley, Colorado. No payment given on material less than 5,000 words in length, or poetry shorter than 35 lines. Above that minimum, a free fantasy book is awarded within 2 months of acceptance. All contributors naturally receive a free copy, (or two if they wish it) of the copy of ORB which contains their material.

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