

TWILIGHT ZINE 34



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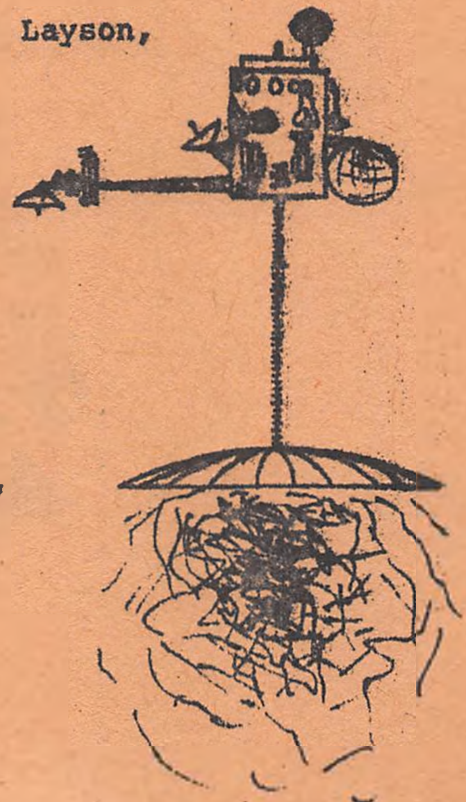
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YET ANOTHER EDITORIAL

by L. Shawn Gramates

Why am I doing this? Oh God! Don't ever let them talk into processing the fanzines. A couple of months and you're saying, "Even I can do better than this!"

I have fears of some poor soul finding this years from now and saying, "Even I..."

I would flame further here, but I've already flamed far enough farther on. So, I'll just ask some questions that have been bothering me.

Why hasn't anyone tried to pass a law requiring equal time for evolution in the pulpit?

Why hasn't Octavia Butler been nominated for a Hugo or a Nebula? Or have a major following in the feminist community?

How do porcupines mate?

Anyway, this is Twilight Zine 34. Enjoy. Please. TZ 35 will be out Real Soon Now.



LETTERS

4 July 1980

Jourcom
Editor TZ

Another fine issue. I saw ST the Movie a few months ago. Found myself saying, "Is that it? Was that all?" Somehow I felt cheated.-- Now "The Empire Strikes Back" is in town. The reviews are good--the local paper gives it 4 1/2 out of a possible 5 (checks). But as I remember, they didn't rate STTM all that bad.

The two pieces of fan parody were fine. On par with what I would have expected to find in some of the old humor fanzines of yore (ie Zombie or Chanticleer perhaps)--Doc Salvage and Scavenger indeed.

yhos
David D. McGirr

((And my typist was just asking who reads that trash.))

6495 Broadway
Riverdale, NY
10471

March 1, 1980

Dear Jourcomm,

I received TZ 33 and have a few comments. First I'm pleased to see that although I'm gone, I'm not forgotten as shown by my mention in the minutes.

It is gone to see the works of Irwin T. Lapeer back in print (It's been a long time for me.) For that matter, in addition to Charley Tool, will there be sequels to Tom Swift and the Electric Yo.Yo?

I read the illustrious Jourcomm 2 LOC and he reminded me that I have waiting to see his definitive history of the society since 1971. I know that it's coming REAL SOON NOW but I'm not getting any younger.

I think that congratulations are in order to Jourcomm for his ambitious publishing schedule, but I can't be sure. After all, I checked my records and TZ 32 doesn't exist. If you have proof to the contrary, please send me the evidence. I even included 50¢ for postage. I still believe that my record of 4 issues in 2 yrs still holds as the record of the Decade. In addition I am drooling to see the third bound volume of TZ, something I wasn't sure would ever come to be. I am also enclosing \$1.50 for your offer for the best of TZ (My collection only goes back to my days of TZ 24.) (After all, I'm told that there is one born every minute.)

Forever yours,

The Alpert, M.D.

P.S. You forgot to check why I was blessed with the delivery of a copy of TZ 33.

P.P.S. As for We Laughed, We Cried, We Kissed 3 Bucks Goodbye; it was \$4.50 in NY.

Bernard L. Morris
825 N. Muhlenberg St.
Allentown, PA 18104
November 19, 1980

Dear MITSFSers,

Thanks for sending me "Twenty Years in the Twilight Zine". It is hard to believe that it is 20 years, more like only 18 or so. Somewhere in the many, many moves between Cambridge and Allentown I managed to misplace my back issues of TZ, and this Brings to mind the Good (??) Old Days.

I must admit to being a sort of lapsed fan; although I still read That Stuff, I have lost touch with any organized fanac and/or MITSFS alumni. So it goes.

My current career, as it is, is designing and manufacturing Silicon Integrated Circuits (SICs for short, really) for Bell Labs in Allentown, Pa. Yes, old Ma Bell, that one. We are constantly trying to make our IC chips smaller and smaller. We start with 10Kg of sand (SiO_2) and end up with a few grams of SIC which has enough information storage capacity to engulf the entire Engineering Library, bit by bit. (This reminds of an old sf story where all of the world's knowledge was condensed onto a small piece of material, not unlike an IC. It was then lost between the floorboards and civilization disintegrated). Don't ask, by the way, what happened to the other 99.99 Kg of sand. This is known as yield loss.

I enclose a couple of articles from the Journal of Irreproducible Results. By some obvious oversight this fine scientific Journal cannot be found in the MIT library system, at least not many years ago it couldn't, and I thought that you might be interested.

Regards to all, especially to ARLewis, Dave Vanderwerf wherever he may be, and Doug Hoylman bhoym humorist extraordinaire.

yhos,
Bernie

PS: Regards, too, from my wife Dooley aka Anne Morris (nee Rafkind), and my two adorable and brilliant offspring who hope to be little MITSFSers one day (not if I have anything to say about it!).

423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown, MD 21740
July, 5 1980

Jourcomm,
MIT Science Fiction Society
Room W20-421
84 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Warren or whoever:

The 33rd Twilightzine was pleasant to read but hard to comment

upon. The easiest way for a fanzine to inspire lots of locs is by publishing statements that lots of readers feel an irresistible urge to refute or dispute, or by running nostalgia material which gives every fan over the age of 14 a chance to type to type at great length how things were when they were young, or by publishing a statement, it doesn't matter what, about Harlan Ellison, or by running a long report on a worldcon in which the writer accidentally claims he ate breakfast with this or that fan who was really having breakfast with four other fans. For reasons I can't quite figure out, the last-mentioned sort of material is the best of all to inspire people to write long locs in which three or four paragraphs will be devoted to correcting the mistaken identity.

However, even though there's not too much in this issue that possesses the orthodox ability to inspire locs, I'm already off to a good start and besides your address up there occupies so many lines that a two-page loc doesn't require too many words. Then there's the front cover, which certainly merits compliments and a repetition of my frequent plaint that I don't understand how new fine fanzine artists keep turning up every time I open a new fanzine and there ought to be at least a dozen nominations for fan artist Hugo each year to provide egoboo for more of them.

I haven't seen a Manor book yet but I'll take Guy Consolmagno's word for the faults in their physical appearance. However, I'm afraid that another decade may cause most paperbacks to look like today's Manor books and the appearance of the cheaper lines of the future is something I don't want to think about. The art of printing has been degenerating at an alarming rate with the transition to cold type production methods, computer terminal setting of copy, the ability to graduate from college without knowing the rudiments of grammar and spelling, together with an assortment of other problems. Six-point type is much smaller than it used to be and almost impossible to read with the naked eye, but I'm keeping an open mind on this last form of degeneration, since it's just possible that my vision isn't what it used to be. I don't see anything so bad about the long the long sentence quoted in the antepenultimate paragraph: it doesn't follow the writing party line descended from Chandler but it wouldn't seem wrong in a page written in a different tradition of using the language.

I haven't seen Star Trek: The Motion Picture (in fact I almost never go to the movies, because of my conviction that any film after True Grit is an anti-climax) but I'm not surprised at Diana Worthy's reaction. It seems a shame that Hollywood seems to be putting so much faith into special effects and huge budgets as the way to create profitable science fiction movies. For one-third of the budget established for this film, I think a major studio could create a fine movie version of a Simak novel, and prove that science fiction needn't be based on war and violence to succeed at the box office.

Maybe I'm revealing my ignorance, but Arthur Byron Cover sounds to me like an obvious pen name. Arthur: author; cover in the sense of a secret agent's cover; Byron as a pun, perhaps, on the things the writer will be buying with the royalties from this book. It must be someone very familiar with the science fiction field, to know that Dr. Smith used to work in the laboratories for a firm which made doughnut mixes.

I started Charley Tool &c. with the intention of reading a page or two carefully and then skimming the rest, since it looked as if it was a pastiche on a type of fiction that doesn't appeal to me. But surprisingly, I actually read it attentively all the way through and found more enjoyment in it than in the last professionally published novel of this type that I tried to read. Mad Ears gave me more trouble because I'm not familiar with Doc Savage tradition and at least a fair amount of knowledge of what-ever is being kidded is advisable for proper enjoyment of the kidding material. I can give it credit for possessing lots of energy and imagination and I can enjoy it for how it reflects on the whole tradition of pulp writing.

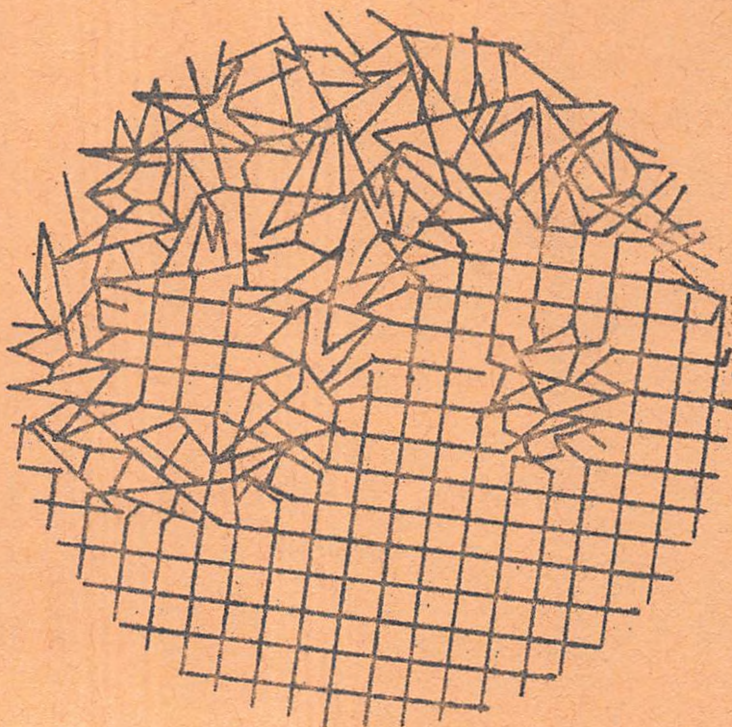
The minutes continue to be amusing although you really should provide a gloss for the published versions of them if anyone in the in the group today can remember enough of the in-group references that they contain after eight years. Just think how obscure many things in these minutes seem eight years in the future if not equipped immediately with footnotes and suggestions for further reading and lots of ibids.

Your want list amazes me. I've never even heard of about half of the prozines included in it, so just think of all the collectibles that my ignorance prevents me from having a desire for.

Yrs., &c.,

Harry Warner, Jr.

((So anyway, as I was telling Forry Ackerman over pancakes at Denvention, don't you think Harlan was doing better work when he was still writing for John Campbell with the rest of the Futurians?))



Sarah's Story

by the infamous

Irwin T. Lapeer

It's my turn to write now.

We're still stuck here in Jan's dormroom, sitting on the floor, in the middle of nowhere. I mean it. It's black everywhere, up and down, and through all the windows and doors. The whole room is, like, just sitting in the middle of empty space. Charley thinks there ~~must~~ be empty space back at the college where this room used to be.

They told you all about that in their two parts. Jan and Charley decided to while away the time by writing down what had happened so far, which is where their two stories come from.

Jan's is nice and simple, sort of. She describes how Charley and me popped into her room from our world, being sucked along by a guy who was transporting between worlds or dimensions or something like that and didn't know what he was doing exactly. Eventually the whole room, that's Jan's room, got sucked into psi space, us with it.

And after we got rid of the other guy (Jan blew up his space ship, which was this big tin-can-shaped thing) we wound up on a psi primitive planet until a local warlock (who was a real jerk) made us a deal and got us off planet. Charley talked about that one in his story.

So that just leaves the future for me to talk about, but the future hasn't happened yet. Boring.

Trouble is, Jan says, we've still got too much psi potential or something like that. We're just stuck here, sitting in space, because we can't land without burning up or something. She understands all about that kind of stuff because she uses it all the time on her world, where she's a soldier and goes around fighting people and having adventures and stuff like that. Charley says he understands it too; he goes to MIT and works with my dad there so he's used to pretending he understands stuff he doesn't understand. But even though I'm only ten years old at least I'm smart enough to understand that I don't understand some things. I hope you understood that.

Wait a minute...there's a noise in here. Something's going to happen, I think.

I

He's back. The creep, the one who made the psi machine that sucked us into this universe in the first place, the one we thought we got rid of in the exploding tin can. I mean, the one Jan described. She did it a lot better than I could. Go read her part to find out what I mean.

Gaston, the creep. That was the noise, Gaston coming into the room. He said he'd get us all home, but for a price.

He survived the blast when the tin can exploded, I guess. When the place started burning and the twerp died, he ran away and used

his transporter thingie to escape and come chasing after us. I guess he followed our path until he met Chuckles the Clown (the warlock) who told him where to find us. I wonder what Chuckles charged him. I hope he got gypped.

Anyway, we don't know yet what it is that Gaston wants us to do. He won't tell us until we've agreed to help him. Now we've got to figure out what to do.

Jan says she'll never cooperate. She tried to kill him once, when she blew up the tin can, even though she was sure that it would mean she'd die, too. She scares me sometimes. Not because she's violent...actually she isn't. But she's so sure of herself, and I guess I never am. And I wonder sometimes if that doesn't mean there's something missing inside of me. But also it means that she'll risk everything for a principle, which sounds great until you're the everything she's going to risk.

Charley's not saying anything. I'm going to wait to see what he does.

II

Sylly says to just keep talking and he'll get it all down. He says it's important to get it all down. I don't even know how he's writing this because horses can't write, but then he's a unicorn not a horse and unicorns are magic. Or something. I don't know.

Anyway, first what happened.

We were in the dorm room, the four of us, Jan and me and Charley and Gaston. And Chuckles the Clown had told him where to find us, I think I mentioned that. Anyway, he just suddenly appeared and made his offer. What's that, Sylly? Oh, the offer. It was that he would send us all home, unharmed, as soon as we did whatever he wanted us to do. Those were pretty much his words, best I can remember. That's the whole point--he wouldn't tell us what he wanted us to do ahead of time. Charley asked, "What if we agree to and then refuse once we find out what it is you want us to do?"

"That's easy," said Gaston, "I'll just get rid of you."

Charley wanted to know how, and Gaston started explaining. Charley kept asking him for more details, and said something, I don't know what, that got Gaston real interested in what Charley had to say. So Charley described his work with my dad in chemical psionics, and pretty soon they were involved in this big long hairy discussion that I couldn't follow at all.

Meanwhile, Jan had wrapped herself up in her cloak completely so that even her face was hidden. I wrapped myself up in my blanket and waddled over to her and poked her. She didn't move.

I tried to guess where her ear would be, and whispered, "Jan? Look, I think Charley's trying to distract Gaston. Do you think there's something we can do, like, while he's not paying attention to us?"

No answer.

I poked her again, but there was still no answer. I figured she must be doing something super-secret, and that I'd better leave her alone.

Well, that left me with nothing to do. It didn't seem fair---there was Jan with her psi powers, and Charley knew all about chemistry and science and stuff, but I didn't have anything. I mean,

I'm just a little kid, right? I was afraid even to try anything, because I was afraid of screwing up some deep-seated plans that the other two might have.

But, I figured, Jan's probably doing something I can't help with anyway; while on the other hand, it's too bad to waste all the distracting that Charley was doing. So I looked around to see if there was something I could use as a weapon to put Gaston out of commission.

There wasn't much. I figured I could hit him over the head with a book, or else strangle him with my blanket. Unfortunately all the big books were over on the desk next to where Charley and Gaston were sitting, and I didn't think I could just sort of wander over there and try out various tomes by their weight without being noticed. Instead, I snuck around, slowly, until I was behind Gaston, with him between Charley and me so Charley couldn't see me either, and I slipped out of my blanket and wound it into a rope. Then I counted to three, took a deep breath, and flung it over Gaston's head and pulled.

He shouted out a bad word and ripped the blanket out of my hands.

"Sarah," said Charley, "what are you trying to do?"

"Give me my blanket back!" I said. (Did Charley explain why I was wearing a blanket? It was because Chuckles the Clown took all my clothes away from me. Really stupid. I don't want to go into it.)

"If you can't keep this brat under control," Gaston started.

"Sarah!" Charley started.

"Whose side are you on?" I asked.

"I'm on your side, don't worry," he said. "But you just don't go around strangling people. It isn't done."

"You're just mad because it didn't work."

"You interrupted a serious discussion," said Charley. "Besides, if you'd killed him" ("Fat chance!" muttered Gaston) "how'd we get home?"

"Well, I didn't kill him, and I still don't know how we're getting home." They were both looking at me, which I didn't like. "And I don't like you making deals with him. He's a bad guy."

"Sarah, I'm not the sort of person who would make any kind of deal without talking it over with you first. This involves all of us, right?"

"Just so long as you remember that," I muttered.

"Charles," said Gaston, "if we could get back to the point..." Maybe it was just my imagination, but it seemed Charley was sounding more like himself again, and I think Gaston didn't like that.

"Make him gimme back my blanket!" I said.

"CHARLES!"

"Just a sec," said Charley.

"We really don't need her here," said Gaston. And he waved something at me.

The first thing I knew I was real dizzy, and then I felt awful, just awful. Everything was black, and then red, and then black again. I felt like I wanted to throw up, but I couldn't.

Then it was light again, and it felt like I was falling; and when I landed, hard, I knew I had been falling. It was cold, and mushy, like half-melted snow, and it smelled smoky; and I knew I'd

been there before.

And then Syllly, that's Sylvester the unicorn from Chuckles the Clown's world, walked up to me and said, "Hello, Girl." And I threw up.

III

It wasn't Syllly who made me throw up, it was just that I was feeling cold and sick. The fact is, it was nice to see a friendly face. The first thing he did was breathe on me to try to warm me up; and then he had me crawl onto his back and he carried me to a cave where I'd be out of the snow.

It was still cold there though, and I was shivering like anything.

Now this next part sounds weird (as if talking unicorns weren't weird enough) but I was sort of groggy and feverish so I don't remember so well. Anyway, what I think happened was that this big black bear came into the cave, and Syllly talked to it, her, and told me her name was Ursula (yeah, I know Latin) and that I should cuddle up with her to keep warm while he was gone to get me some clothes. And I was too tired to argue. And I don't know how to describe it, but she was so warm, and so cozy....

Anyway, when I woke up I felt a whole lot better. But the bear was gone by then, and I was under some thick robes, and Syllly had brought me a complete outfit, funny clothes like from olden times but really neat, and they fit me, too.

I asked him where he got the clothes from.

"I am a rather well known unicorn," he said. "And it seems there's a wealthy family in town by the castle where your friend Chuckles resides," (he giggled, and so did I), "who have wanted to capture me for some time. Of course, none of the grown-ups are very tempting bait" (he'd explained that part to me before---see Charley's story) "and so finally they bribed the youngest daughter, little Anny, with some candy, to go out into the woods and try to catch me. It's cold out here, as you may have noticed, and she doesn't much care for animals; I suspect it must have taken a terrible amount of candy. Anyway, she's about your size. I knew, I'd been watching her for days. Her family were all hidden in a circle around her, waiting for me to walk up to her and fall into their trap. It was a very foolish strategy on their part, of course; they do so underestimate me.

"When I first saw you, I was struck immediately by the fact that you were both of the same general stature; a most fortuitous coincidence. Well, once I had safely ensconced you in this shelter, I went through the woods to where this foolish family were attempting their Syllly-snare. They'd been waiting there for hours; it must have been quite boring work for them.

"I placed myself just outside their hidden circle and called out, 'Little Anny, have you come to play?'

"'Oh, yes, Mister Unicorn,' she twittered back.

"'Well, sweet child, won't you come over here and play with me?' It was actually rather degrading to make myself talk like that, like some character out of an imitation fairy tale, but I sensed they expected it of me. I hope you appreciate what I went through for your sake.

" 'Oh, no, Mister Unicorn,' she said, 'you come here in the clearing and play with me.'

"You could hear all the grownups in the circle muttering, waiting to see what I would do. Well, I made a most unusual condition for my acquiescence, the nature of which I presume is now obvious to you. I do hope the Unicorn's Guild doesn't hear of it; I'm not sure they'd quite approve. Strangely enough, none of her family seemed to find anything odd in my request, which does give you pause to wonder, doesn't it? Then, when she'd done what I asked, I stepped inside their circle, picked up all her clothes with my horn, and brought them back here."

"But how did you get out of the trap?" I asked.

Sylly paused, and pretended to look modest. "Teleportation."

I started laughing. So did Sylly. "That's not very fair," I accused him.

"I told you they weren't very clever," he said. "Oh, they do so underestimate me."

"But what about the girl?"

"I wouldn't feel too sorry for her," he said. "She'll be doing what she did soon enough for a living, I'm sure."

"That's nasty," I said.

"It's true," he said.

I remembered how he had talked about Chuckles, too. "You know," I said, "you really aren't very nice sometimes."

"Girl," he said, "I am not a nice person. I am a nasty unicorn. I suppose you'd do well to remember that." He said it in a sort of funny tone of voice, not like he was proud of it, but not like he was ashamed, either.

"If I were nice," he went on, "do you think I'd make Chuckles make such a clown of himself all the time trying to catch me? Or would I play tricks on people who want to use my power? Or only let a certain kind of person capture me? Oh, no. If I were nice, why, I'd just give away magic spells like popcorn. I'd probably give away popcorn, too."

Then he really got serious, and looked me straight in the eye (which is hard to do if you're a horse, or a unicorn, since your eyes are in funny places for that.)

"I can be mean. I can be cruel," he said. "I am a stubborn, egotistical, stuck-up, know-it-all unicorn, and I can seem really downright rotten at times. I'm no fun to be around for long. You never see unicorns travelling in groups, do you? Oh, no."

And then he said a funny thing, almost to himself. "Don't ever confuse 'nice' with 'good'," he said.

I thought about that for a while, and I could see what he meant. I knew some people who seemed like really nice people, but who always seemed to let you down when it mattered. They were the kind of people who would tell you lies because they were afraid of hurting your feelings.

"Is what you did," I asked, slowly, "the way you tricked those people out of these clothes---was that being good? I mean, just because you didn't say so, in so many words, that you'd let them capture you if she gave you these things, still you know that's what they thought. You did mislead them. I mean...."

"You mean, can you trust me? Can you trust me not to trick you? Yes." Sylly paused. "You see, I did let them capture me."

'You mean, you're working for them now?'

"No. I let them catch me, and let them make their offer. That's all they had a right to expect. And I refused. And..." he nuzzled a foreleg, and seemed to be remembering something unpleasant, "that's when I decided it was best to do some quick teleportation."

"Oh," I said. "By the way, how did I get here?"

"I intercepted you."

"Does Gaston know where I am?"

"Not unless Charley tells him. I put a picture of the two of us in Charley's mind. He knows you're safe here. I told Jan, too, but she's not talking much any more."

"How am I going to get home?"

"I can send you. No problem. Didn't I tell you that, the last time? I'm just waiting for him to arrive. He'll be coming here, sooner or later."

IV

It was later...about three days later, in fact. Actually, those were pretty fun days; I only wish I could have enjoyed them more, but I was worried about Charley and Jan all the time. I kept pestering Syllly about them, but he'd just say that I'd taken care of myself, now it was up to them to take care of themselves, and he wouldn't help them unless they asked. I said that was mean, and he agreed.

But finally, on the third day, here came Charley walking out of the woods towards my cave.

Syllly wasn't there at the moment. I'd been playing with this little squirrel (name of Theodore), but as soon as Charley appeared he scooted off, and the two of us were alone. And no one else ever looked so nice.

I won't go into the whole scene...you can imagine, we were awfully happy to see each other. I wanted to know where he'd been, and he wanted to know where I'd got my new clothes, and I told him about Syllly, and then I asked him what happened to Jan.

"We're going home!" he said.

"I know," I said, "but you didn't tell me. Where's Jan?"

"Look," he said, "just trust me. Do what I tell you and we'll get home. It's OK. It's all been arranged."

Something funny about that.

"Charley...tell me what happened."

"Nothing happened. It's all been settled."

"How can anything have been settled if nothing happened?"

"She's gone. She's probably home herself by now."

"How did it happen?"

"Look, Sarah, we have just a few minutes to get ready, don't ask questions now."

"How did it happen, Charley?" He knows I can be real stubborn when I want to be.

"Look, ah...her Dad came and rescued us and everything's all fixed. Now the first thing we have to do is..."

"You sold out."

"Ruh?"

"To Gaston. You sold out to Gaston."

Long pause.

"Look," said Charley, "you're just a little kid. You got to understand that real people aren't these cartoon good-guys/bad-guys kind of creatures. Just because you liked Jan doesn't mean that Gaston is horribly evil..."

"What happened to Jan, Charley?"

Long pause.

"She's dead."

"Gaston killed her, and you're telling me he's not..."

"No, you see, that's my whole point. He didn't kill her. She killed herself....Honest. I was there! I didn't want her to do it. But she wouldn't cooperate, and she did it to try to kill Gaston. So if you thought Gaston was evil for trying to kill her---which he never did, by the way---then mustn't she be evil for trying to kill him? I mean, she's the one who blew up the tin can and killed all those other people in the first place."

It made sense, but it didn't make sense, if you know what I mean. Something was wrong there.

"Charley," I said, "you said you were on her side."

"Did I?" he said. "Well...back when I said that, I still was."

Sylly showed up at that point. "Hi," said Charley, as if nothing had happened.

"Hello," said Sylly.

"Look, Sarah," said Charley, "we can talk about this later, but we've got to get ready to go right now. Gaston's thing only works for a certain time..."

"What did you do for him?" I asked. "What was his price?"

"Nothing," said Charley. He saw I didn't believe him. "Really, I mean as it turned out, since Jan wouldn't cooperate, since she blew herself up, we couldn't, uh, do it anyway. So I didn't have to do anything. But look, we really have to go now. Sorry to cut out on you so fast, Sylly, but you understand how it is..."

I looked at Sylly. He looked back at me. We didn't say anything. Then I turned to Charley.

"We don't need Gaston," I said, "Sylly can get us home."

"Well," said Charley, "maybe he can. But I know for sure that Gaston knows where to send us. And he's expecting us."

"You go," I said to Charley. "You go Gaston's way. I'll have Sylly send me."

He paused for a minute, looking at both of us. Then he ran back into the woods the way he came.

V

I did a really silly thing. I cried.

I cried harder than when my pet hamster died. I cried harder than when the Red Sox lost the pennant on the last day. I cried harder than I'd ever cried before.

You got to understand. Charley was my friend. We shared everything together, everything. Every time I'd do something, anything, I'd think about how much fun it would be to tell Charley about it. I even had this dream...stupid, little girl dream, I'm really embarrassed to even talk about it now...that when I was grown up we'd get married and live happily ever after, together, just like in a fairy tale. And it was all over now. Completely. Forever.

And the worst part was, Charley didn't even understand it.

Didn't even know why...why we couldn't be friends any more. He'd changed; he'd changed an awful lot. I guess he'd say he was growing up; well, if that's being grown up I want to be a little kid forever.

No, I guess the worst part of it was, he was changing all the time, and I thought I was so close to him but I didn't see it.

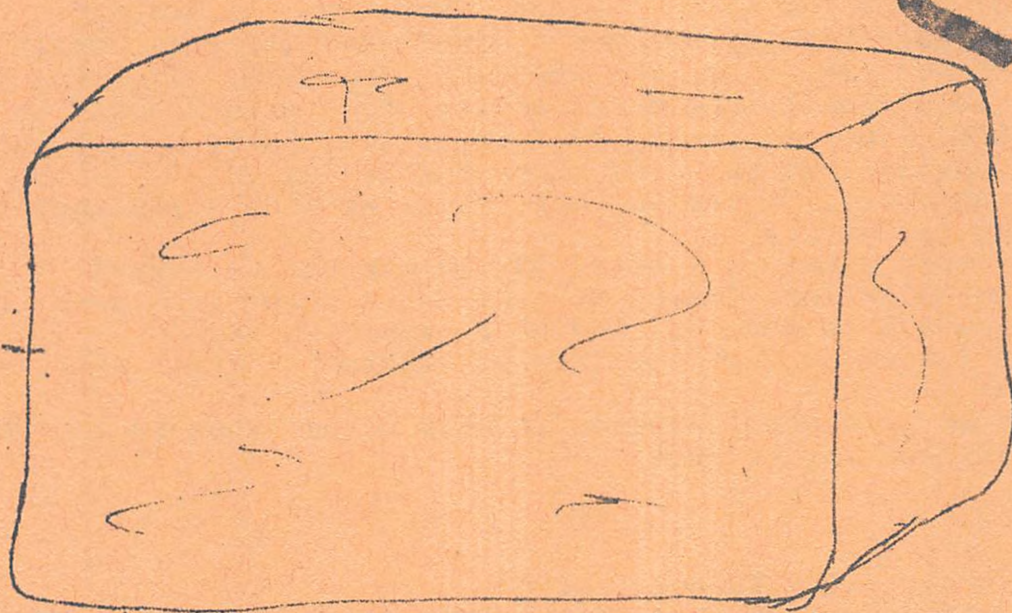
After I'd finished crying, Syllly came over to me. So did the squirrel. "Do you want to go home now?" he asked.

Syllly showed me these pages. Every time I talk something at him, the words magically appear on them. I'm watching them do it right now. Spelled right and everything. Osteopath. Exaggerate. Antidisestablishmentarianism. It's neat!

Maybe Syllly can send home this story.

I want to stay here with the squirrels.

NEW! Tofu Lite



All the flavor you expect from regular tofu
— with only HALF the calories!

Order and meaning in Science Fiction Bookshelves

by Guy Consolmagno

It was the sort of conversation that gives the MITSFS a bad name, with the sort of character who gives MIT a bad reputation. His thesis, expressed in loud and unimaginative simple declarative sentences, was that science fiction was the only literature worth reading, and that Chaucer, Goethe, or Dostoevski (whose name I can't spell)((Dostoevsky--ed.)) were pointless hacks, compared to the philosophical richness and insight into the human condition to be found in the works of Robert A. Heinlein. His opponent was a fancier of the New Wave. The development of this conversation can be left as an exercise to the reader. My point here is merely to remind ourselves of the vast differences, nay, extremes to be found in the outlooks of people who read "the stuff".

We all know the differences exist. What most of you may not realize, however, is that there is a simple and elegant means of measuring and quantifying those differences, a method which has been uncovered through years of relentless research in the circulating room of the MITSFS.

The premise is simple. We define a linear scale of philosophical attitudes, ranging the extreme of libertarianism--every man for himself (the sex-specific pronouns are intentional)--to the extreme of social altruism--from each, according to her abilities, to each according to his or her needs. The philosophical position of the fans of any given author can be determined by a numerical scale which I will call the chaos index. Libertarians have a chaos index of one, communists one of zero. To determine the chaos of any given author, one merely counts the number of misshelved books by that author, normalized by the number of books present.

The scheme obviously works best when time-averaged, and most accurate for those authors with the largest number of books.

It has been my duty for the past three years to keep in order four standards of bookshelves in the circulating room, containing paperbacks ranging from Hal Clement to Marvin Peake, and over three years a definite (and sometimes surprising) pattern has emerged.

As one might expect, Robert Heinlein has a sizeable chaos index, somewhere 0.1. People who borrow Heinleins are not the sort of people who think it's very important reshelve them in proper order--it's a victory to get them to return the books in the first place. Cooperation and concern for their fellows do not rate highly with them. The index would likely be higher, except that there are so many Heinlein books. (The reordering that I do, to reset the index to zero, occurs nominally once a week).

But he's not by any means the highest. Without question, Larry Niven is the winner--his index is never less than 0.5. (Comments that Niven readers can't remember the alphabet are not appropriate).

The lowest? In my opinion, Andre Norton is far and away the winner. With nearly three shelves' worth of books, all of them popular and often borrowed, it is a rare occasion to find any of them out of order. (Perhaps the House Un-American Activities Committee should be looking into this lady--she obviously has pinko tendencies!)

A spot check of the shelves indicate that Asimov and Brunner have quite a low chaos index; Clarke is moderate; Burroughs is rather high. De Camp's Conan novels are surprisingly low. The Perry Rhodan novels come in at exactly zero.

Further research will continue, pending a grant from NSF.



Tales of the MITSFS: The Star Chamber Strikes Back #1

The Return of the Gavel Block

by Vazny Romanov (as told by Micheal Taviss)

-1-

The smoke swirled around us. Only moments before we had been in the Student Center. It was approximately 5:00 p.m. SST, Friday, and we were going to the weekly meeting. I unlocked the door to the MITSFS, commenting on how strange it was that no one was there yet. Inside was a thick cloud of smoke. When we walked into the library, the door slammed of its own accord and vanished leaving only the dark fumes and plumes.

"That's enough, Carl" Cheryl called.

"How...?"

"He's got the Gavel."

"Ummm."

The Skinner and the Onseck appeared out of thick air, coughing. "Arghh" Carl gasped.

"Where the fuck are we?" Ken batted the air in front of his face.

"Another place," the Skinner intoned, spreading his arms out from his side, Gavel in his right hand. "A place out of touch with our universe, but right next door to the MITSFS. A corner of timelessness accessible only by the One True Skinner...."

"Cut it, Carl," I interrupted. "Why'd you bring us here?"

"There is a Task, a Sacred Trust."

"Sounds interesting," Cheryl said. "But I'm washing my hair tonight."

"Silence! Dost thou dare refuseth the request of the Skinner? Hast thou not accepted the position of Vice, and the duties that go with said job? Ye art constrained..."

"All right, alright," Cheryl cut him off. "Stop trying to be Gary Goldberg. What do you want me to do?"

Carl waved a negligent hand and Gavel behind him and a throne appeared. He sat carelessly and beckoned at Ken. "Speak Onseck."

"You both know that the Gavel Block disappeared several months ago. Well, we finally got a lead on it. The Block was stolen!"

"What?"

"Who would dare?"

"The Sissies," Ken continued. "The Soviet Socialist Society of Speculative Stories."

"Not the SSSSS!"

"Our archrivals!"

"They had help," Carl added.

"The sissies were tipped as to the location of the Block," Ken resumed the tale. "The traitors next door were easily bribed into giving out the information."

"The Student Art Association, of course," Cheryl said.

"But would even the SAA stoop so low?"

"The Sissies offered the perfect bribe," Carl said. "Without the Gavel Block--the energy source for the Gavel--our power is cut in half. We will have to delay the Master Plan, perhaps indefinitely."

"Sure," I burst out. "With a weakened Gavel there's no way we can take over the fourth floor."

"We have to get it back," Cheryl said firmly.

"Exactly," Carl leaned forward.

"Oh no," Cheryl protested. "You're not thinking..."

"Yes I am. You and the Embezzler are going to the Soviet Union to recover the Gavel Block."

"Just hold on," I said. "What have I got to do with this Skinner-brained scheme?"

"The Vice might need help. Besides, somebody has to keep track of the expense account."

"Why don't you go?" Cheryl asked.

"I've got to run this week's meeting."

"How are we going to locate the Block?" she tried again.

"Ken?" The Onseck held out his hands in response, and suddenly the alternate Gavel appeared in them. "Henceforth," Carl boomed, "Let this be known as the Vice-Gavel." He touched it with the True Instrument of Power. A glow ran up and down the Vice-Gavel's length. "There. That should serve you. I'm not sure what it'll do, but it'll do it well." Ken gave the Vice-Gavel to Cheryl.

"But, but the Block is solid titanium." Cheryl went down for the third time. "It must weigh over 25 kilos."

"Forty kilos. Why? Don't you think you can handle it?"

"I can handle anything you can, buster."

"Good. To make things interesting, let's have a small wager. A dinner at Parker House if you're back before the end of today's meeting. To make things equitable, time will flow at the rate of one minute SST for one hour in the Soviet Union."

"Done."

"Now wait..." I started.

"To return, just link hands and chant the motto of the MITSPS. He waved the Gavel. Smoke welled up around us. When it cleared, in Leningrad.

"...a minute." I finished.

-2-

"Uhh, Cheryl, people are staring." Not surprising. Neither of us were garbed in typical Soviet clothing. For that matter, I was unsure of the time of day or year. Leningrad is Zone plus two I believe, so it should have been very early in the ayem. It looked to be roughly the same time EST as when we'd started Gavel-tripping. All the good comrades were hurrying home, pointedly ignoring the T-shirt sporting students in their midst, one of them carrying what looked like a large wrench. The local constabulary probably wouldn't take the same live and let live attitude. Time to do a bit of blending.

"Let's try this dimestore gadget out." Cheryl held the Vice-Gavel at arm's length. "Clothing," she said. A bikini appeared. "Oops"

"Time to go." I pointed a thumb over my shoulder. "The Glee Club has arrived." Three men in uniform were looking at us curiously. We slunk conspicuously into an alley. We thought of splitting up but decided that we'd work better if we were all in one piece.

"Hsst," Cheryl hissed. "Turn right at the next left." This fooled the Communists, who were used to always going left, even when after rights. Right? So, anyway, we left them behind and ended up outside a clothing store.

"Here we go again." Cheryl arched her eyebrows at the Vice-Gavel.

"This time try for money." We got three three dollar bills and a T-token. "Russian Money." Two pair pantyhose and one pair Levi's. "Bingo!" That was enough for two complete outfits of workclothes and dinner at the local Greasy Spoon. Two and a half minutes SST later we were on our way. The Vice took a sight (don't ask me how, she was a sight) and we got a bearing. We inched our way through the deserted back streets of Leningrad following the Vice-Gavel. By 5:03:17 we knew something was wrong.

"We're leaving the city," Cheryl said.

"Damn. Carl's aim couldn't have been that far off, so..."

"...something's gone wrong. What do we do now?"

"When in danger, or in doubt--" I recited.

"Stop quoting Heinlein quoting someone else," Cheryl interrupted. "And help me look for a telephone booth." After searching sidestreets for about fifteen seconds SST we found a box that looked like the unlikely offspring of the Iron Maiden.

"Here it is," Cheryl said, flipping through the pages. "The CCCCC"

"I wonder," I mused. "Do they call themselves the See-sees?"

"What I wouldn't give for a roadmap." My companion ignored me. The Vice-Gavel glowed obligingly, and a reasonable facsimile--in English yet--appeared.

"Well now you won't have to give it."

"Let's go." Cheryl located our foe's HQ. "And try to keep the bad jokes down to one a page. That meeting won't last for ever."

"Twenty minutes" I said.

"Uneducated guess?"

"Hope." I snifed. "I looked it up in next week's minutes."

"Then you know how this adventure is going to come out," Cheryl protested.

"So do most of our readers" I said helpfully. "C'mon. We've only got another 16 hours, and I've got a feeling we're going to need every minute of them."

We made our way to the Sissies hangout without incident. From the outside they weren't much to look at: a meagre display of book jackets and a poster dotted with Cyrillic characters. I was more interested in the behavior of our 75 cm long companion. The Vice-Gavel was quivering like a Tribble in heat. I was sure our search was over.

A simple gesture unlocked the door. Once inside, the eerie blue glow of the Vice-Gavel revealed about a dozen bookshelves--half empty, a filing cabinet, a desk, and a few chairs.

"Let's see what they've got," I headed for the books.

"Save it for a more legitimate visit," Cheryl ordered. "If that light means what I think it does we're running out of minutes." I followed her gaze (Ever try to follow a gaze? It's almost as difficult as catching forty winks.) and saw a guard travelling the path below the window to the Society. No doubt he'd be up here shortly. Cheryl gasped behind me.

"It's not here" she said.

"But the Vice-Gavel" I protested.

"Residue only. We were headed right in the first place. Look at this." I read the official communiqué over her shoulder in the language translating light cast by our magic wand.

"...hereby requisitioned by the Supreme Soviet. You have done the state a great service." I didn't realize I was reading aloud until I stopped.

"Keep going."

"To replace this valuable item we donate a solid steel block engraved with the seal of the Soviet Union...' what is this nonsense?" Cheryl pointed at the block of metal in the corner, obviously not ours. "The Gavel Block...the Supreme Soviet."

"The Kremlin." Cheryl nodded. The light I'd seen earlier hit us both in the face at that moment. Behind it I could just make out the silhouette of a man, with a gun.

-3-

Cheryl pointed the wrench end of the Vice-Gavel at the guard. Before he could move a solid beam of white light leapt from the two prongs and caught him full on the torso. I do mean solid. The guy dropped his gun and flash, uttered a strangled cry, and was literally thrown backwards out the door of the Sissies' rooms into the wall.

I heard a roar like the pounding of the surf. I flung my arms up to shield my face and turned my head. When the flashbulbs stopped going off in front of my face, and the stink of ozone left my nostrils, we were in Moscow. Standing outside the Kremlin, to be precise.

"Shazam!" I said. "What you do?"

"I didn't" Cheryl was on one knee, the Vice-Gavel in her hand, round end down. She stood up slowly. "It was like something grabbed hold of me and made me kneel and slam the end of the Vice-Gavel into the ground. Then here we are."

"Huh. Shades of the Mighty Thor. Well, fire up the old whatsis again and this time bring us right in on top of the target."

"I can't. There's some sort of operating frequency that all of the MITSFS relics make use of. Unfortunately, within a certain range any two items will interfere with each other unless they're attuned to each other."

"I don't get it. The Gavel and the Block sat in the same room for years without screwing each other up."

"Because they had time to adapt..." Cheryl cocked her head, like she was listening to a secret voice in her head. "Try this. If you take two bits of heart tissue and observe them, they'll beat out of synch. Their rates of beating--their period, or frequency--will be identical; but you wouldn't expect them to be in phase. That's what the Vice-Gavel and the Gavel Block are doing to each other right now."

"However, if you bring the two bits in contact, within a dozen beats they will be in phase. The same process of adjustment applies to our equipment."

"I dig. I don't like, though. Our job would have been much easier the other way."

"And this story would have been a lot duller," Cheryl retorted.

"How do you know all this stuff?"

"I, I don't know." Cheryl was taken aback. She bit her lip and thought for a few seconds before replying. "It just popped into my head when you asked me, like someone telling me lessons."

"Okay, add telepathy to the list of talents that the Gavel has." I sighed and looked around. The city was very black and very imposing. I checked my watch. "Twelve hours or twelve minutes to crack this joint. Take your frame of reference. All we need is a map with all the passages marked and a red "X" on the room with the block."

A few seconds later we were on our knees poring over a very large piece of paper. Not only was the target marked, but the optimal route was also shown, as well as a 'YOU ARE HERE' arrow. Restrooms were tastefully indicated by yellow caricatures of men and women.

"Handy gadget," I remarked, looking at the Vice-Gavel thoughtfully. "Maybe we could rent it out to tourist agencies. No," I added, catching a cold glare from the Vice. "I guess not."

"Pardon me," a voice behind us said. We were on our feet with adrenalin speed. A uniformed tyoe was standing a few feet away. "I presume you are American tourists. I must ask you why you are out at this hour. Did your Intourist guide not..." His voice trailed away into silence and I followed the dotted lines from his eyes to the map. I could almost hear the gears clicking into place. "Spies!" he yelled, and gathered breath for an even louder alert.

Cheryl wielded the Vice-Gavel with consummate speed and skill. The guard toppled to the ground, a large bruise already forming on his chin.

"Crude" I said, folding our map.

"But effective." Cheryl countered. She did a 360 on the surroundings, then lifted the Vice-Gavel to her shoulder, aimed, and fired in one smooth motion. The double beam took out both guards at the entrance we wanted.

"Nicely done."

"Thanks, now come on." Nearby a klaxon had started wailing, and floodlights all around us were making hissing noises as their arcs caught. "Sharp left, then down the second flight of stairs and into the maintenance closet." Cheryl shouldered as we pounded for the door. She jiggered the lock on the run. I caught a whiff of aftershave from one of the unconscious bodies and wondered absently if it was regulation. Then we were inside and it was dark again.

We found the closet without difficulty, and for a miracle it wasn't locked. We had lost them for the moment because no one had thought to alert the men inside the building, but I was sure a search would be getting under way any second. We had a few seconds, though. Which was just as well because right then the Vice-Gavel ran out of juice.

-4-

"Are you sure you know where we are?"

I consulted our map and pointed out one of four branching corridors in lieu of an answer. "That one." We set off in the indicated direction.

Since the Vice-Gavel had stopped working, I'd been guiding us. I may not have Skinner-sense, or belong to the elite Vice-squad, but I am an MIT tunnel-hacker from way back. Handy frosh fact: MIT has more tunnels and corridors than any other place in the world except the Pentagon and the Kremlin. I was proving that statement right now. I wasn't sure exactly where we were, but we'd come at least two miles.

Military bureaucracy was the only thing that had saved us from capture. They knew we were in the complex. But as intruders we could go anywhere--and the guards were restricted to limited patrol areas. A concentrated search would have nailed us, but to avoid

revealing secrets to their own men, the brass opted to let us wander. They probably figured that we'd stumble into a guardpost sooner or later. They didn't know about our map.

"We're lost" Cheryl said.

"We are not," I retorted. "Trust my sense of direction."

"I'll remember that when they're torturing us."

"If that tin toy hadn't given up on us we wouldn't have to skulk about like troglodytes."

"Well don't blame me. I didn't charge it. Anyhow, if we get as far as the block we'll just zap home on the escape cluease."

"That's right--the motto. Good, because we're here. After you madame." I bowed and swept her into a room. There were several large machines in it. Various drills and jackhammers were arrayed around a pedestal. On the pedestal--The Gavel Block!

"Let's go." I helped Cheryl over the low railing. We freed the Block from its resting place. With no little effort I lifted the forty kilo hunk of titanium to my chest. "Grab my arm." She did so, raising the Vice-Gavel into the other hand. We inoned:

"WE'RE NOT FANS; WE JUST READ THE STUFF!" nothing happened.

"Shit."

"We've got to get out of here, Micheal."

"Shit."

"We probably set off an alarm when we released the Block..."

"Shit"

"...to say nothing of the noise we made chanting."

"Shit." Pause. "Carl, you die."

"C'mon!" We ran for the door. It was kicked open as we reached it. I looked into the muzzle of a rifle.

"Drop it!" the guard snarled in heavily accented English. I obliged.

After retrieving the Block, we made tracks. We left the guard in our wake hopping around clutching his smashed foot and screaming Russian obscenities.

We barely got a hundred meters, before I was panting. "S-stop." I gasped. Cheryl doubled back and tried to help but it was no use.

"I could carry that thing for miles if we weren't running," she moaned.

"I'm s-sure you could," I replied, still breathing heavily.

"Let's try the password again." We repeated the motto with identical results to the previous effort.

"Why doesn't it work?" Cheryl demanded.

"All I can figure out is that the Block and the Vice-Gavel are interfering." I said.

"That's impossible. The attuning process is virtually instantaneous. Besides, the Vice-Gavel isn't interfering with anything right now. It's out of power..." We stared at each other.

"That's it!" I cried, and flushed when I heard a shout down the corridor.

"I think you're right." Cheryl said slowly. "no power, no trip home. Carl would forget to compensate."

"Then we recharge the gadget." Footsteps hurried in our direction.

"There's no time! I don't know how!" We snatched up the relics and fled the men with the guns. Suddenly another bunch erupted from a side passage ahead of us.

"Now or never!" I shouted, dropping the Gavel Block.

Cheryl laid the Vice-Gavel on the Block. A pulse of blue light flared. The soldiers drew back for a few seconds. Then an officer

shouted something in Russian. I caught a fleeting glimpse of guns being aimed and fired. "Get us out of here!" Cheryl yelled. Everything went black.

-5-

I opened my eyes. A black monolith floated by like a block of wood on water. I realized that it was the Gavel Block. Carefully I looked down to see if my feet were on the ground. They weren't. Obviously I'd died and gone to Heaven. But why was the Gavel Block here with me?

I snagged it as it went by and scaled it at a shadowy hole the size of a large breadbox on the 'ceiling'. A stray thought tickled the back of my brain. I pounced on it and knew where I was. Several things happened at once. Cheryl popped out of the hole and was hit with the Gavel Block amidships. The two tumbled end over end through the cabin. I would have gone to help, but the reaction to my push had thrown me in the opposite direction. I fetched up against a bulkhead and rotated slowly. Then I had to clamp down hard to keep from pushing myself away again.

The bulkhead was a very transparent porthole. Far 'below' was Africa. "Yipes," I whispered. "Watch that first step." I reveled in the glory of the view for a few moments. The atmosphere was very clear and the night shrouded face of the planet was pockmarked with the acne of city lights. I located the terminator, just barely visible over the curve of the Earth--on the eastern coast of North America. "Whoops." I checked my watch. "Cheryl!" I called. "Stop playing with the Gavel Block and come over here." She glided up beside me, a trifle clumsy.

"For your information, Embezzler, once in motion a body continues in a straight line until stopped. A forty kilo Gavel Block masses almost as much as I do so I had a bit of trouble stopping it."

"Yeah. Sorry. I was just a bit unprepared to awaken aboard one of the Salyut space stations. We've got to get moving if you're going to win that bet. My best estimate indicates that the time in the MITSFS is about 5:18:45 SST. I don't know what kind of advantage we get while in geosynchronous orbit, but we have to leave.

"Not to worry. The instrument of our departure is right here, and fully recharged."

"Then what's to stop us from checking out of this zero gee resort?"

"Nothing. Grab the Block and carefully maneuver it into the airlock."

"Huh?"

"I've got a little surprise planned for the folks back in the MITSFS." I looked at her blankly, then got it.

"Ah-ha. That'll teach Carl." I slid the Block into the lock, and dogged it. Cheryl manipulated the controls and a few moments later the Salyut had a satellite. Cheryl finished programming the Vice-Gavel. She fired it through the plexiglass and a bright blue discharge bathed the Gavel Block for about ten seconds. It took off like it had just gotten a hotfoot, and was soon lost to sight.

"Ready?" the Vice asked.

"Hang on." I dug up a piece of paper and a pen. I scribbled

'Frodo Lives--a message from the Center of the Universe" and stuck it among the controls. "Just wanted to leave a souvenir for our Russian friends. Ready." I took her hand.

"WE'RE NOT FANS; WE JUST READ THE STUFF! Hello Carl."

"You're about three seconds later than I expected," the Skinner said.

"So you did know what was happening all along?" Cheryl asked.

"Sure. I wasn't going to risk half of the Star Chamber, to say nothing of the Vice-Gavel."

"What!" I started towards him. "And you never told us?"

"Let it ride, Micheal" Cheryl advised. After all, we did win the bet."

"Now wait a minute," a voice drawled behind me. I turned and saw the Official Hairsplitter sitting there in the living fle--er, he was sitting there. "I demand that you show us the Gavel Block. I will not be satisfied with mere statements from the Star Chamber. Judging from your recent nonactivity..."

"What!" Cheryl had fury in her eye.

"Hush," I hushed, and grabbed a handy pocket calculator to solve an equation.

"...and furthermore," Chuckles continued. "I am not going to permit the Society to..."

"Scuse me," I said. "Would you move about two and a half feet to the left? That's it, thank you."

"Now tell me where the Gavel Block is or admit the fallacy of your story." Chuckles leered.

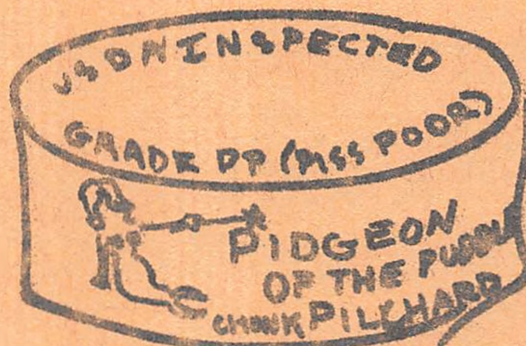
"Oh, it will be here in" I looked at my watch. "Three...two...one--now!" Impact! The roof tore open and the Gavel Block slammed home right on top of you-know-who. "there we go," I said sweetly. "Does that satisfy you?"

"I guess I'd better repair the damage before Physical Plant gets upset," Carl sighed. He waved the Gavel and all the debris (including the puddle of red jelly) vanished.

"Did you...?" I asked.

"Yeah, but he'll come to somewhere out in Michigan. With luck we won't see him for a couple of weeks. And now--meeting adjourned." Carl hit the Gavel Block with the Gavel. Mission accomplished.

MORAL: DON'T FLAME AT GROUND ZERO



MOVIES

Paleolithic Follies

"Quest for Fire" must be one of most atrocious and disappointing movies I have ever seen. On paper, it had such promise--it looked like a scientifically-sound-yet-enjoyable caveman movie. No such luck.

Oh, it had its bright spots--mostly bits of slapstick comedy. The scene where three of the main characters are trapped in a tree by a saber-toothed lion is one of the funniest things I have ever seen.

However, the science involved was not paleoanthropology, but sociobiology of the Lionel Tiger/Konrad Lorenz/Robert Ardrey variety. (Incidentally, Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox met in a zoo.) (An interesting discussion and compelling rebuttal of these men's theories can be found in Ashley Montagu's The Nature of Human Aggression.)

Anyway, this tribe (the Wagaboo? Most of the names have since escaped me) are attacked by another hunter-gatherer tribe, in a manner almost unknown among such peoples, and they lose their fire. The poor things had apparently found it originally and couldn't just make a new one, so they send their best&brightest out to find another. Naoh, the tall, blond blue-eyed one is the brains of this little expedition.

Eventually, they come upon another tribe, the Kzamm, I believe, of cannibalistic Neanderthals. At this point, I wanted to leave. My poor scientific sensibilities! Y'see, I have an interest in paleoanthropology, and I'm acquainted with the Neanderthal..

(WARNING: LECTURE IN FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH)

A brief precis of current knowledge concerning the Neanderthal:

The Neanderthal were a race of Paleolithic men. Like other Northern Europeans, they were probably hairy and fair of complexion. Contrary to popular belief, they were straight-limbed; the original reconstruction was of a severely arthritic individual, done by a man determined to prove the sub-humanness of these people. They may or may not have practiced ritual cannibalism. They buried their dead with great ceremony, and cared for their disabled, such as the arthritic individual. They may have had the power of speech.

(END LECTURE)

Anyway, Naoh and cohorts find this group of stooped, bowlegged sadists in possession of the desired fire. We are given a closeup of one of the Kzamm. I was distressed by the familiarity of that face: I've seen it in a KKK pamphlet, labelled with a racial epithet.

The Kzamm have two people of yet another tribe trussed up and are eating them in pieces.

The questers snatch a brand brand from the fire and bolt, proving themselves the humanitarians of the movie by leaving the captives hanging. They then go off and tame mammoths.

And what mammoths! I had thought that Ray Harryhausen's recent senile efforts were poor, but compared to this, he's still doing "Jason and the Argonauts." I mean, this makes "Flesh Gordon" look like "Closed Mondays."

Meanwhile, one of the prisoners, a female named Ika, escapes and joins them. Naoh proceeds to show his admiration of her unfamiliar charms by raping her, rape being the filmmaker's idea of the standard Paleolithic sex act. (I interpret this thusly because the affected females neither sexually present nor show signs of oestrus. Naoh jumps on if one happens to bend over.) Ika disappears. Naoh, for unknown reasons, abandons his duty to his tribe and follows her. I have yet to figure out what he wanted with a woman who, besides probably being rather unattractive from his viewpoint, has the negative survival trait of chattering loudly and constantly. (No wonder the Kzamm caught her!)

Naoh stumbles into a swamp outside Ika's village and is captured by her people. They paint his body like their own and throw a party. Then they put him in a hut with a hugely obese woman.

Now this could've been a wonderful scene--Hollywood strikes a blow against looksism! Naoh is offered their very best; it isn't easy for hunter-gatherers to fatten up a woman.

The scene is played for laughs.

Naoh's friends liberate them, much to his chagrin. Ika follows them and teaches Naoh to have civilized sex. The filmmaker's ethnocentrism shows in his choice of the Western missionary position as the height of erotic ecstasy.

They return to Naoh's tribe. A dark-skinned trio, the tribal delinquents, intercept and attack them. Naoh and company defeat them with spearthrowers. I appreciated the appearance of the spearthrowers, but only because I've always wondered what one looked like. They reach the rest of the people. They all dance ecstatically. They drop the fire in the swamp. Oh, shit! Naoh shows them how to make a fire with a firedrill. Ika shows them how to do it right. Ika gets pregnant. Mankind lives happily ever after. The producers make a sequel. Oh, shit!

If you must see "Quest for Fire", see it at LSC. Preferably with an LSC member.

Oh, the book is even worse.

Heavy Metal

Every bit as wonderful as the magazine. What more can I say?

Politically Correct Barbarians?

When I entered the theatre, I really expected to dislike "Conan the Barbarian". When I came out, I wondered if any of the reviewers I had read had bothered to see the movie. Arnold Schwarzenegger speaks perfectly understandable English.

I was dreading long, loving shots of bloody mangled bodies, like unto "Heavy Metal". While there is a lot of bloodshed, it is surprisingly tasteful. The sympathetic characters usually don't seem to enjoy hacking people apart, and the process is not explicit. For example, "Conan" includes two decapitations: one, Conan's mother, takes place at waist level; all we see is a veil of hair and Conan's

reaction. The other is out of focus.

"Conan" is startlingly non-sexist. Violence against women is not a theme; women get killed in the same manner as men, they are not terrorized because of their helplessness. There are no rape scenes; one early scene looks like it might lead to one, but if it does, we don't see it. Several strong characters are female. Valeria, the thief who falls in love with Conan, can clearly take care of herself. In addition, she is not beautiful in the Hollywood sense. Unfortunately, she also can't act very well. On the other side of the fence, men care, and cry.

Several major characters, such as Conan's sidekick and the major villain, are people of color. I did spend a lot of time wondering how a black Thulsa Doom came to lead a group of marauders in Northern Europe; however, the cities of the Hyperborean Age seem to be integrated.

There is some weapon worship. Still, Conan's soliloquy to steel quickly starts sounding rather like a macho version of "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend".

The sets are good, some lines are wonderful ("I thought they were just another snake cult" indeed!), the effects are OK, the plot is adequate, and James Earl Jones is amazing. Worth seeing.

The Mild Annoyance of the Khan

My first reaction to "Star Trek: The Wrath of the Khan", was, "Decent episode." This is Star Trek as those of us who were Trekkies in high school remember it; none of this pretentiousness of "Captain Kirk Meets the Last 45 Minutes of '2001'".

I admit to a few quibbles: how could the first-season Khan have met the second-season Chekov? Wasn't it inappropriate to play a Christian hymn at Spock's funeral? Why did a terraformed nebula turn into a planet? Where did all those plants come from? And how did a Romulan-Vulcan hybrid get into Starfleet?

Still, a good time. I hope that the next one could be less violent. Speaking of which: when I first heard that Spock died in this movie, I suggested to several people that in "Star Trek III", the Federation would discover how to raise the dead. I've already heard rumors that this is indeed so.

Oh, Rachel!

"Blade Runner" is actually a decent movie. It's clearly based on Philip K. Dick's book, although several major facets (such as Mercerism) have been left out. In addition, society has replaced androids as the major symbol of inhumanity.

The sets give a definite overcrowded, sleazy city feel. The music is Vangelis, very worthwhile. Harrison Ford is still playing the same character he's played since "American Graffiti", but it's gaining depth and complexity. The ending is un-Dicksianly happy. The title still loses. How could anyone punt a catchy title like Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

"Blade Runner", in a nice final touch, is dedicated "to the memory of Philip K. Dick".

Do Nurdroids Dream of Electronic Frisbees?

For a mindless good time, "Tron" is definately your movie. It does, contrary to popular report, have a plot, in fact, The Plot: Good Vs. Evil. The effects are intense, but only on a large screen. The costumes are dumb. The spin-off video game losses. There is a sense of disorientation to this movie; Disney has changed since I was an urchin. Conceptual art by Mobius. Music by Wendy Carlos. Certain lines: "Does she still leave her clothes all over the floor?" Also, there is a sense of familiarity. Many of the characters are hackers, and I've met most of them.

MCP must be the best electronic villian since HAL 9000. It has much the same motivation, function over users. The other programs look like their writers, whom they worship. I would've liked to have seen a really long religious discussion among the programs. I was especially fond of the displaced acturial program. (I've met that one, too.)

Proper enjoyment of this movie definately requires an altered state of awareness, so bring your hallucinogens. And maybe a hacker.

TELEVISION

Carl Sagan, Where Are You When I Need You?

I've seen "Cosmos" a couple of times. I thought Sagan was rather condescending. Some people insist that this is really his childlike sense of wonder. I don't know.

"OMNI: The New Fronteir" does not have a Carl Sagan for an announcer. It doesn't have a scientist at all. It does have Peter Ustinov, and he is ungodly pompous, not to mention exceedingly unpleasant looking without his beard.

The opening credits are fairly nice. Some interesting graphics, rather like some of the better ones in the magazine. I would've enjoyed seeing this in color. This ends. We have commercials and come back to see a plastic Greek temple, presumably on an asteroid, considering the background view of stars and planets.

The episode I saw started with a piece on a neurofibrometosis victim named Kenny Washington. The then-trendy John Merrick (the Elephant Man) was quickly mentioned. Washington, who is badly disfigured but does not seem to be otherwise handicapped, told of never having held a job, except for having played a scary thing in "The Sentinel". He also spoke of being uneducated. This seemed a natural place for a discussion on the place of the disfigured in society, but this did not happen. There was film of a microsurgery operation being performed on Kenny, and mention was made of its applicability to burn patients. This rather graphic scene was followed by a commercial for a steak restaurant.

The second segment concerned the terraforming of Mars. The piece started with a quote from Genesis and synthesizer music of the sort used in bad sci-fi movies. The segment included nice molecular modals, a very photogenic scientist from the University of Colorado, and discussions of planetary ecosynthesis, "Mars jama", lichens, and Russians, yet completely fails to hold interest. The

writer couldn't resist stating that Mars could be changed from a "red to a green planet", which must be one of the most tasteless phrases of the year.

Sponsors of this episode included, in addition to Sizzler, Dodge (but not the Dodge Omni), the Navy, the U.S. Metric Board, and the Airforce, whose ad was followed by one for Huggies diapers.

It may be expected that a non-profit show like "Cosmos" makes "OMNI" look poor. One evening, I watched "In Search Of...", the Leonard Nimoy pseudo-science program immediately before watching "OMNI". Even though "OMNI" covered a subject that interests me and "In Search Of..." didn't, the latter was far more captivating. Nimoy, unlike Ustinov, seemed fairly excited about what was going on, and the rest of the program followed suit.

I guess my main objections to this program are similar to those to the magazine: "OMNI" is pretentious, flashy, shallow, and utterly lacking in humanity.

While I'm flaming about TV, I feel that should mention that "Hill Street Blues" is every bit as wonderful as Harlan Ellison insists it is. The characters look and act like real people. They have feelings, and none of them are traditional Hollywood glamour objects. Violence occurs, but only as necessary to the story, and when it occurs, it seems true. There are no corpses being used as casual set decoration on this show. There is plenty of sex, but it is adult in the positive meaning of the word; no sniggering about double entendres and large, bouncing breasts here.

The program is tightly plotted, well-written, and well-acted. It is very clear that someone high up at NBC's hierarchy cares about. Even the theme music is good, very tasteful. Tasteful. Definately the word I would most associate with this program.

If you're watching television more than twice a week and you're not watching "Hill Street Blues", you should be ashamed of yourself.



10/27/72

Pseudobananacomm -- The Vice, with disclaimers that it in no way conflicted with the Society's faith in the Great Pumpkin, presented a Jack-o'-banana in observance of the holiday season.

Gave'comm wearily noted that he'd carried the Gavel and the Block by himself; so saying, he proceeded to prove that he's No Fun, having fallen right over.

Pumpkincomm -- As the Vice launched treats of tiny boxes of Milk Duds into the audience, Mailman moved that, as the Hallowed Evening, the Eve of All Saints' Day, was drawing nigh, the Society reaffirm its unfaltering, unswerving, and undying faith in the Great Pumpkin. The vote was definitely unanimous - two - three pumpkins + Spehn.

Randomcomm -- Breidbart noted that in Star Trek #8, it is noted at one point that Spock has but 72 hours to live, yet 48 hours later, he has just 14 remaining. Clearly, the relativistic effects of travel at warp speeds must be taken into account.

Davidson started to read a letter from The Alpert, but was hooted and sung down until he decided to tell a story. Sparkling raconteur that he is, he spoke of the Baker House piano dropping of a few evenings past and of future plans to repeat the spectacle with a VW.

11/10

Minicult (Ruffa) -- Information was received concerning a calculator made by the John Fluke Company; it was suggested that their slogan might be, "If it works right, it must be a Fluke!"

11/17

Stranglecomm -- A voice called The Alpert long distance at 3 am Wednesday morning to inform him that "this is Mark Swanson and you know what? I'M COOL!!" The call to Philadelphia then abruptly ended.

Irwin T. Lapeer was a write-in candidate for UMOC and may be ranking 5th among the write-ins; he later finished 8th overall.

11/24

Untitledcomm -- Irwin T. Lapeer is in the running to be the author of the Tech Show, having submitted a scenario based on Tom Swift and his Flying Lab, complete with dancing slide rules. He was told that the idea was liked, but because of copyright laws, he would simply have to change the characters and the plot.

1/5/73

Old Business Algot: Actively seeking something for this part of the Meeting, Briedbart, the one-man audience, gave forth, with some prompting from the Vice, a move to censure the Lord High Embezzler for not bringing a comic book to the Meeting (indeed, only these two aforesaid worthies were present). This passed at 5 - 0 - Briedbart's left leg (he explained that it has chickened at every motion for over a year) + Spehn.

A several-minute discussion followed on old comics and old Life magazines, which will soon be collectors' items.

It was moved that the Society observe a moment of silence for the passing on of LIFE-as-we-know-it on Earth. The motion passed at unanimous - zero- one + Spehn.

Minicult (Briedbart) -- In preparing his thesis, he has found that making time run inside-out is more helpful than merely making it run backwards. He did not proceed to clarify this statement, but perhaps there is an idea for a novel here.

1/19

A stray photographer of some sort was censured for wanting to know about something named "Infinitycon"; the vote was 6 - 0 - 5 + Spehn. This same person was not shamed by his censure, it seems, for he then moved to ask if anyone was going to New York this weekend. This passed at 12 - 1 - 5 + Spehn, but someone told the photographer that passage of a motion meant it couldn't be carried out. The Skinner made no comment.

Minicult (Bernstein) -- On typing the word "life" into a LOGO console, the computer responded with a printout: "Life has no meaning." No one was moved to suicide, except perhaps for Bernstein, for his innocent comment brought forth a deluge of computer anecdotes, which the Pseudo-onsec tried to record, despite the fact that he didn't know what anyone was talking about.

1/26

Pseudountitledcomm -- Mr. T. Science (Fiction Society) received more mail from Doubleday Bargain Book Club: "A special offer for someone special, Mr. Science! Because you're the kind of customer we like best..."

Jonathan Finger moved that a committee be established to assassinate the Skinner. This moved The Davidson to reminisce upon the strange situation of George Phillies, who decided to stay at the Institute, although he knew his presence would be anathema to the Skinner that was elected after George elected not to tyrannize the Society any longer. Thus, The Phillies is Permanent Deceased President and Skinner, as a committee of the Society assassinated him. (To anyone who may doubt the veracity of this last bit, ask yourself if any committee of MITSFS ever does anything.) After the Skinner finished his tale, the motion was passed at 9 - 5 - 4 + Spehn. Mr. Finger was appointed to the committee and several suggestions as to the name of the committee were taken. After discarding the obvious, such as "Murdercomm" and "Deathcomm", the name "Ass.comm" was offered. The Society welcomed it, the

1/26 (continued)

Skinner proclaimed it, and Mr. Finger welcomed it as if he were made for the position of "Ass.com".

Libcomm moved that Seth Breidbart's left leg not be counted as a chicken vote. This originally passed at 5 - 4 - 2 + Spehn, but, after it was pointed out that one of the chicken votes had been SB's left leg, the count was found to be 5 - 4 - 1 + SBLL + Spehn.

2/2

Minicult (Y) -- A 1932 magazine reported that Belgium was planning to build an unmanned, uninstrumented moon rocket and to launch it from a balloon.

A motion to delete the previous minute failed at 4 + one bozo - 5 + three dwarves - 1 + 1 wrench + SBLL + Spehn.

In this Meeting, 33 motions were made, 26 were seconded, and 18 were voted on.

2/9

Chartcomm presented the Society with a hand-painted, full color, black and white, gigantic, big, huge, and not in the least unimpressive Chart of the MITSFS. Yes, with this Chart, even you can understand the MITSFS. As soon as a suitable frame is found, the entire mess will be exhibited in the Library.

And, yes... at the bottom is inscribed, "Presented to the MITSFS, December 1, 1972".

2/16

Slobcomm said he was actually doing something... or, at any rate, had asked someone else, "Say, if you ever find out who this Lobdell character was let me know."

Since there were several extra motions at the Meeting two weeks ago which had never been voted on, it was moved that the Society be defined as having voted on them. This motion tied at 9 - 9 - 0 + SBLL + Spehn and was passed at 99 - 9 - 0 + SBLL + Spehn.

A random wished to censure DC for discontinuing New Gods comics. In noting that this truly was Old Business (said comics being out of circulation for nearly a year, Ruffa proposed to honor the spirit of the motion and moved to censure Warren G. Harding for the Teapot Dome Scandal. This passed at greater than 15 - 0 - 2 + SBLL + Spehn.

Minicult (Consolmagno) -- He read the list of possible side-effects which come from taking a cough syrup known as Benylin, any one of which could be worse than coughing.

BOOKS

Medical Watergate

by L. Shawn Gramates

Suffer the Children: The Story of Thalidomide
by The Insight Team of The Sunday Times of London
1979 The Viking Press 12.95

Suffer the Children is the first complete story of the thalidomide disaster, from the development of the drug to the lawsuit brought on behalf of the British thalidomide children. The story of this tragedy underscores the need for industrial regulation.

The early part of the book is concerned with the development and marketing of thalidomide. It was developed in the mid-1950's by Chemie Grünenthal, a German pharmaceutical company. The molecule appeared to be a structural analogue of known barbituates, and was soon marketed as a completely safe and effective tranquilizer. No other drug company succeeded in finding any pharmacological effect of thalidomide at all. Several German doctors, many of them connected financially to Chemie Grünenthal, did thalidomide studies, the longest lasting twelve weeks. A Dr. Herman Jung, who had financial connections, gave the drug to 20 patients for four weeks and declared that it decreased desire for masturbation, alleviated moral tension, and cured premature ejaculation, all without side effects. In a second study, he found that thalidomide produced dizziness, shivering, constipation, and buzzing in the ears. Chemie Grünenthal ignored this study, as it did others where side effects such as hangover, nausea, and wakefulness were found. In one test, thalidomide was given to women in labor. On the basis of this study, it was marketed specifically as a drug safe for use in all stages of pregnancy. No double-blind studies nor pregnant animal studies were ever done.

Within a year, many doctors found some of their patients who used thalidomide, which was available over the counter, were suffering from peripheral neuritis (nerve damage to the extremities) which proved to be irreversible. In a striking example of the practice of industrial self-regulation, Chemie Grünenthal denounced these doctors as crackpots and troublemakers and blocked publication of their papers by threatening the medical journals with an advertising boycott.

Chemie Grünenthal sold the British license for the production of thalidomide to Distillers Company (Biochemical) Ltd., and they sold it to the American company, Richardson-Merrill (makers of Vicks). Richardson-Merrill sent the drug, which they called Kevadon, to some 200 doctors, telling them that the drug had been thoroughly tested and that they were only looking for confirmation of laboratory findings, and that the doctors did not have to return the report forms. It is not known how many American women received Kevadon.

In 1957, phocomelic (flipper-like limbs) babies began appearing in Germany. In 1961, Dr. William McBride, an Australian obstetrician delivered three phocomelic babies with bowel atresia in less

than a month. Most doctors never see one such case in a career. In May of 1961, he sent a letter to Distillers. It was not reported to high levels of the company until November. Thalidomide was not withdrawn until the following December.

Meanwhile, in the United States, Frances Kelsey of the Food and Drug Administration blocked approval of Kevadon after hearing rumors of the peripheral neuritis side effect.

Lawsuits started. This is when The Sunday Times of London became involved. Much of the rest of the book documents the effects of thalidomide on the lives of the affected children and their families, the process of the suit against Distillers Company (Bio-chemical), Ltd., and the Sunday Times crusade to procure for them a fair hearing. We are given some interesting insights into the workings of the British legal system.

All in all, Suffer the Children is a compelling and thought-provoking book. The Insight Team of The Sunday Times of London should be commended for telling such a potentially lurid story in a non-sensationalistic manner.

TZ 35

Your illo could be here!

Science Fiction--A No-Frills Book

review by Robert van der Heide

Yet another thin, expensive book from Jove.

Recently the folks who distribute Davis magazines bobbled a bit and sent me two issues within two days of each other. This made me painfully aware of the fact that modern science fiction has its share of stale plots, stale writing conventions, stale characters, etc. etc. and richly deserves some good satire. So why pay 2.5860022¢ a page for a hack on a style that's been dead since 1958? It reads like a Lucky Starr.

When one encounters the phrase "We'll beam right into the council chamber" in such a book, it should either slip right past or cause an "Aha, I know where they stole that." I cringed at the anachronism. Then I asked myself why the most overused phrase in science fiction today (I just from Star Trek alone) should feel like an anachronism in a book published in 1982. But it still felt that way. It reads like a Lucky Starr.

If you by any chance have a hankering for a parody of "golden age" s.f., don't bother. The author(s?)' unnatural dialogue and clumsy love scenes are far surpassed in hilarity by things Doc. Smith wrote in all seriousness. I'm sure all my readers are familiar with the concept of "so bad it's funny". After all, you are reading T.Z. But this book isn't quite bad enough to be funny, and is therefore merely very very bad. Perhaps the fact that by virtue of being just not quite bad enough to be funny it is as bad as it can possibly be is supposed to be funny, but if so, it's not all that funny. (I bet you think I believe you understood what I just said.)

The one place where this book is truly bad is where it has no right to be. There are several places where the plot is sufficiently incoherent that I can't tell for sure if it's self-contradictory. Campbell (and his successors) never required prose to sing, but he did demand it make sense. If this incoherence is parody, it's misguided.

When "Professor Josiah Carberry, lecturer in psychoceramics" makes you fall out of your chair, you know you're starved for humor. You crave bad sci-fi? Go to the next L.S.C. marathon.

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THE PRIDE OF CHANUR

by C. J. Cherryh

review by Robert van der Heide

I must start by admitting that I was less impressed than some people by the Faded Sun trilogy. In particular, I found the transitions from alien to human viewpoint jarring, the human characters badly handled, and a culture that has survived 50,000 years without change hard to believe. Therefore I am not upset that Pride covers some of the same thematic ground - it does it better.

In this book the author takes one viewpoint and sticks to it: that of Pyanfar Chanur, captain of the trading ship Pride of Chanur. She and her crew are Hani, members of a race whose thinking is similar enough to human that the reader can understand and come to like them, but different enough to be interesting. Her crew are all individuals, and interesting characters.

The universe the Pride travels in is complex and well thought out. It contains many races. Some are so alien as to be almost incomprehensible, yet are convincing as beings who could create their own sort of technical civilization. Others are closer to human, including the Stsho, who sound almost like something Jack Vance would have thought up. And then there the Kif. They are congenital bad guys, but in such a way that it is plausible that evolution could have created such a creature. Kif, Hani, Stsho and all the others are members of the Compact, a loose, primarily trade oriented organization.

The plot concerns Pyanfar and the Pride's struggle with the Kif after Tully, a crewmember on the first human ship to encounter any member race of the Compact, unfortunately the Kif, escapes from his captors and takes refuge aboard the Pride. As the sole source of information about a whole new race he is of great strategic importance. This, mixed with political struggles on the Hani homeworld, leads to enough Byzantine plotting and dramatic space battles to satisfy most adventure story fans.

But Tully is no pulp superhero, saving the day singlehandedly. He is lost and alone and far from home, a victim of events largely beyond his control. But he uses what little power he has wisely, and bears up under his desperate situation with quiet but admirable courage.

We always see him through Pyanfar's perceptions, a filter that makes human faults and virtues and actions look a bit different than usual.

What is refreshing about this book is that the alien races are not monolithic. Though much of it is implied, or not seen clearly from the Hani viewpoint, they all seem to have as generous a share of political and cultural strife as we humans.

In particular the Hani are beginning to have some stirrings of what will someday be a major upheaval in the parts males and females play in their society. This book looks at the biological sources and implications of masculinity and femininity, and nature versus nurture questions, from a new and unusual viewpoint. And that sort of thing is one of the things science fiction is supposed to be about.

Comments on "Order and Meaning in Science Fiction Bookshelves"

by Diana Worthy

On reading Guy's article with a statistician's eye, I'd like to offer some thoughts. Possible confounding factors (known as "covariates" in the statistics biz) spring to mind:

1. Are books more or less likely to be put back in order if only a few are on the library's shelves at any given time? (This will be the case if the author is very popular, has few titles, or is an author MITSFS has few multiple copies of.) For example, the Marion Zimmer Bradley books are completely out of order, but only 6 of them are on the shelves at the moment. Therefore, it's not hard to scan the titles to see if a particular item is here. Does this paucity encourage laziness in reordering among patrons, particularly if one person has out and brings back several of an author's books at once?
2. What is the effect of multiple copies of a given book on the propensity to reshelve in order? Does it make it easier to reshelve in order because there's already one copy in proper order? Or does it encourage the patron to think: "Well, there's already one in the right place; I can stick this in anywhere, and people can still find a copy in place"? Or are both effects present, cancelling each other out to some extent?
3. What is the effect of variant editions of the same title? Will three different copies of a Simak title, all distinctly different in appearance because they're different editions, be less likely to remain together, and so in order? Will uniform edition like those of Heinlein from Ace, make it harder to separate one title from another? (The Ace Heinleins all have black spines with white lettering.)
4. How about similar titles? If an author has a large number of titles whose first word is identical (like Burroughs' Tarzan series), or even only a large number of books whose titles share the same leading letter, will people simply cluster all the books with the same first word (letter) together and let it go at that? This seems to be true of Poul Anderson's books: All those titles starting with "H" are together, but not in strict order. This is like stopping in the middle of the bucket (radix) sort.
5. Does the sex of the patron influence the orderedness of the books? Women are generally politer, more considerate, **more** likely to think of others, either by natural inclination or training. Also, their verbal skills are higher on the average, so that it would take them less time and effort to realphabetize their books back onto the shelves. Maybe this explains Norton's well-orderedness. (Or maybe women are commies.)

6. Simply considering the problem in terms of a random-effects model, the more books an author has on the shelves, and the more people reading them, the more likely it is that at least one book will be reinserted out of order. Thus chaos should be proportional (or at least correlated) with prolificacy and popularity. Of course, the case of a single person circulating several books at a time introduces serial dependence into the model, a bane of statisticians. (You can see how things can get sticky in modelling, especially considering the effect of one person checking out a half-dozen books by someone like Heinlein. He won't take out two copies of the same title, and he might be more/less likely to take out uniform editions of the titles he selects.)

7. Will you (Guy) normalize by the average number of an author's books on the shelves at a given time, or by the total number of such books in circulation? How will multiple copies of one title affect this number, if at all? Or variant editions of the same title?

8. Frequency of circulation definitely will have an effect, as per item 6 above--it increases the number of insertions of a book in a given time span. High popularity of some author's titles over others can create nodes of chaos or non-chaos within an author's books. Having multiple copies cuts down on the frequency with which any one of those copies is circulated. (Low frequency of circulation probably explains why the Kenneth Robeson books, numerous and uniform though they are, are in such good order.)

I'll close with my own speculations on some of the authors you mention in your discussion, with possible important covariates.

Heinlein: Uniform editions, multiple copies of many titles, high popularity and frequency of circulation, large number of different titles, tendency for people to circulate more than one title at once.

Niven: Uniform editions, people trying to read books in one of his series in order. (Are they clustered roughly into his various series?)

For both Niven and Heinlein, readership is highly male.

Norton: High female readership (see item 5); non-uniformity of book format from title to title.

Asimov, Brunner, Clark, DeCamp: Non-uniformity of titles--different publishers, sizes, color and lettering of spine, except when in a series (e.g., Asimov's Lucky Starr series). This would make it easier to get a book back next to its sister copies without undue strain on the brain, decreasing the time-rate of entropy increase.

Burroughs: High uniformity of editions, tendency for people to read books in a series in order (like the Mars books), 20 odd titles whose first word is "Tarzan."

Perry Rhodan: All books have a number on the spine; even lazy non-verbal types like male MIT undergrads can sort by numbers. Also low frequency of circulation. (At any given time, maybe one person is reading his way through the series, and the order in which he reads is the order in which they are shelved.)

Norman: I see people reading these books in the library, but I suspect many patrons are too embarrassed to be seen signing them out.

Comment on Diane Worthy's comment on Guy Consolmagno's article--
No fair! She actually put a few microseconds of thought into her piece!

--Guy Consolmagno



cut

The Munching Goblin

(Yet again, still another
Doc Salvage adventure)

by Will Murray

Doc Salvage was conducting a scientific experiment with one of his men, Bunny, when the door went: KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

The Man of Brass thought it was a rather unusual thing for a door to do, but ignored the phenomenon. After all, he was a scientist, not a good one, it's true, but even a loser like himself knew that doors don't make noises of their own accord. So, with a shrug of his brass shoulder (and a twinkle in his oatmeal eyes) he returned to his experiment:

"Jack of Hearts," he said.

Bunny, the subject of this experiment, was seated just across from the Brass Man. Bunny had a pink roundish face, which went well with the white rabbit suit that he wore, but looked outrageous when he tried to screw it up into sneering expression, as he did now.

"Go Fish," Bunny snarled. His pink little nose quivered in his cute face and one floppy ear fell across his forehead. Bunny was quite big for his age, which was 32.

Doc was about to comply when the door again went: KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK. This time it also went: Knockity-knock at the end.

"Now what do you suppose could be causing that?" Doc muttered.

"Maybe there's a person behind the door," Bunny offered.

Doc was mad. Not only because one of his supposedly-dumb aides had figured it out before he did, but the reason for this experiment was to determine the extent of Bunny's intelligence. Doc decided to flunk him.

Doc went to the door with Bunny trailing behind.

When he opened the door, he was confronted by a bright-looking man with a chubby face and the biggest smile Doc had ever seen.

"Hi!" the chubby man said. He had a full exuberant voice like a radio announcer promising the moon inside a box of crackerjack. "I'll bet this is the biggest gun you've ever seen in your life!"

Doc, somewhat taken aback by all this, looked down at the long-barreled revolver that the chubby man held pointed toward him.

"Why, yes, you're right. That is the biggest gun I've ever seen in my life."

"Wellll, glad to hear it, glad to hear it! Now, why don't you step back into...."

Doc said, "Wait!" He spied Bunny off to one side and out of the chubby man's sight. Reaching over quickly, he picked the rabbit up by the ears, which was rather hard as the latter was over six feet tall, until his feet hung about an inch above ground. Doc thrust Bunny's face into the chubby man's own to let him get a real close look.

"And I'll bet that this is the biggest rabbit you've ever seen in your life," Doc

crowed.

The chubby man lost his great big smile and his jolly voice at the same time. "Errr... ah... well, yeah it is, at that." He gulped hard and sweat beaded his shiny brow. "Big 'un, ain't he?" he mumbled.

Bunny calmly chewed on a carrot while Doc felt his arm going numb with the strain of holding up a 200 pound rabbit. Not only that, but Doc had to stand on tippy-toe in order to lift him.

"And if you'll look closely," Doc continued, "you'll see that my rabbit is bigger than your gun."

The chubby man looked at the weapon in his hand, looked at the rabbit, and looked at his gun again, all with a very sick look on his face. He placed the gun beside the rabbit to be certain, and sure enough, the gun was just an itty-bitty thing compared to the big bad rabbit.

The chubby man tried on a smile that didn't stick to his face very well. He said, "Heh, heh, heh," a few times fast, which didn't seem to make the gun any bigger, nor the rabbit any smaller, either.

Doc, master of psychology, knew that he had him buffaloed. "All right, now," Doc commanded sternly, "Drop that gun!"

The chubby man hesitated.

Doc shook Bunny threateningly in his face.

That did it. "All right, all right! There, I've dropped it! J- just- just put that thing down, okay? Please?"

"Just as soon as you step inside," Doc rapped. "I want to talk to you."

"Okay, okay, I'm coming!" He stepped inside, edging nervously past the looming Bunny.

But, just as Doc was about to close the door, there came a loud MUNCH! from above, seemingly from the dirigible mooring mast that surmounted the Brass Man's skyscraper headquarters.

Now, Doc was reasonably certain that skyscrapers didn't go MUNCH of their own accord, but he had been caught with his pants down once today, and didn't want to go through that again.

So he hastily dropped Bunny onto the floor and indicated the chubby man saying, "If he moves, Bunny, sic him!"

The chubby man cowered in a corner and Doc stepped out.

He took the elevator up to the top floor and from there climbed a ladder that led to the skyscraper's spire.

Doc stepped out and, noticing that he was one hundred stories above the sidewalk, made a mental note not to fall if it could possibly be helped.

Doc scouted around for the source of the munching sound, which seemed all around him, but saw nothing. He did, however, become very dizzy from the height and, remembering a chapter from the Cub Scout Handbook, looked up.

He was still dizzy, but it did cut down on his search time considerably, for, directly above, perched atop the skyscraper's apex was — something!

This something was very big, very white and very hairy. That was about all that Doc could discern for the thing was sitting with its back to him.

From the back, it looked rather like Bunny, but Doc realized that it couldn't be when he saw what it was doing.

It was eating the dirigible mooring mast. This, Doc realized, explained the munching sounds. Of course, that was all that it explained, but...

At any rate, Doc knew Bunny to be a carrot eater exclusively, so that let him out.

The dirigible mooring mast was a total loss, Doc saw, because the thing,

whatever it was, had broken it off at the base and was calmly munching upon one end.

Doc decided the best and safest course to get to the bottom of this would be to call the police and let them worry about the whole thing. Unfortunately, just as he was turning to depart, his foot slipped on a rubber ball undoubtedly lost by some kids playing stickball in the street below, and the subsequent noise caused the munching thing to turn around. The mooring mast in its mouth also turned and knocked Doc over the edge of the skyscraper and into space.

Doc reacted with blinding speed, mostly because he was out of his mind with fear.

Clawing into his trick vest, he pulled out a Saint Christopher medal. He flung this away gingerly, as he'd actually been reaching for his ripcord. The latter he found and tugged upon.

Nothing happened.

Then, Doc realized why. The heels of his shoes should have popped off and two tiny 'chutes opened out when he pulled the ripcord, but... Doc happened to be falling feet first and the wind resistance prevented the heels from working.

About halfway down the skyscraper's side, Doc noted a flagpole sticking out. Just what he needed!

He made a snatch for the thing. The flagpole bent down, quivered and snapped up again, nearly scrambling what few brains the Brass Man boasted. After it had steadied, he inched along the thing until he gained a ledge.

Standing on the ledge, he heaved a sigh of relief for his narrow escape.

Then he took a swan dive off the ledge.

POP! POP!

The parachute worked!

Hanging heels up; he sailed gently down.

But not straight down, for the prevailing wind was rather stiff today and, as fate would have it, heading out to sea.

Doc made a one point landing in, of all things, a dugout drifting somewhere in the mid-Atlantic.

He discovered that he wouldn't be lonely on his little sea voyage. For the dugout was occupied — by about twenty or thirty parrots!

The Brass Man didn't know what the parrots were doing all by themselves in a dugout in the middle of the ocean, but he was certain that Lester Dent was behind the whole thing.

Back at headquarters, the chubby man was collecting his courage, mostly on the strength of the fact that the rabbit that was guarding him was engaged in absorbing game of This Little Piggy.

It was while Bunny was puzzling over an impasse (he had run out of toes — rabbits only have six) that the chubby man got his bright idea.

He pulled out a cigar, snipped off one end and dipped it into a jar of orange paint that reposed upon a nearby desk. Then, he ripped off some leaves from a potted coconut tree and stuck this on the blunt end.

The end result was amazingly like a carrot, if one didn't look at it for more than three seconds at a time, that is.

The chubby man approached cautiously. "Bunny want a carrot? Bunny want a carrot? Nice Bunny. Here it is, boy, right here." He set the spurious vegetable down in the middle of the floor and backed off.

Bunny let go of his toes and got up. While he was addressing himself to the decoy, the chubby man sidled past and out the door.

Bunny bit into the pseudo-carrot and spit the piece out with a "Ptooeey!" He shrugged, stuck it in his mouth and lit it up. It made no difference to him, he smoked real carrots as well.

It was while all this was transpiring that an unusual incident took place outside of Doc Salvage's headquarters building.

A little runt of a gent, all dressed in grey, was wheeling an odd bulky something down the street. He whistled as he worked, despite the fact that his burden was about the size of a storefront.

The runt got to a portion of the sidewalk that looked good enough and tipped the two-wheeler over.

A giant book, bound in red Spanish Morocco leather (with slight foxing and no dust jacket) and locked with a worn brass hasp and padlock, slammed onto the pavement.

This proved to be a giant Bible which the runt unlocked with a key and opened to Revelations. He then placed a blue ribbon that served as a bookmark between the open pages, drew a blackjack and slid into an alley.

Moments later, a tall, sandy-haired man came rushing down the street and, heading in the direction of Doc Salvage's headquarters, kept muttering to himself, "Doc Salvage! Have to reach Doc Salvage! Only hope left!"

Passersby ignored him. Men rushing pell-mell through the streets shouting the Brass Man's name were very common; especially on very sunny day.

However, today happened to be overcast.

The tall jasper had just about gotten to the entrance to the skyscraper when he fell for the oldest trick in the book.

Nearly to his goal, he stopped dead in his tracks, for a giant bible, its pages opened to Revelations, blocked his path.

Dumbfounded, he began to read. It was just as he was getting to the part about the end of the world and cataclysms and earthquakes and strange omens that were supposed to abound at that time when no fewer than four things occurred nearly simultaneously.

A man, suspended by twin parachutes that sprouted from his heels, floated past.

A furry white creature, that appeared to be chewing on a flagpole or something slinked down the street with a huge rabbit slung over one shoulder.

The tall sandy-haired man got religion.

And a little runt of a fellow came up from behind and blackjacked him.

He crawled, unconscious, onto Revelations and the runt tied him up with the bookmark ribbon. He then closed and locked the Bible with the man inside.

Lastly, he crated the huge book and addressed it to the Vatican, leaving it beside a handy mailbox.

The runt faded into the night and chuckled gleefully to himself, "Boy, what a sucker! Imagine falling for an old gag like that!"

Doc Salvage was elated. He'd been drifting with the mangy parrots for barely two hours when a passenger liner steamed into view. As it drew near, he was even more encouraged by the fact that the liner belonged to one of the many shipping firms that held wrested control of by underhanded means.

The dugout rocked quite a bit when the ship slid alongside. The parrots got rather nervous. People hung over the rails and waved to the Brass Man.

Someone called out, "Need a lift?"

One of the parrots said, "No thanks, Jack. No thanks, Jack," before Doc could say a word.

Then all the birds set up such a ruckus with their screeching and flapping of wings that Doc's frantic protests went unheard.

Some stupid tourist or a woman said something about "that clever ventriloquist in the funny little boat" and the liner, with all aboard waving and cheering at him, sailed off.

Doc spent the next two days getting used to the taste of raw parrot.

It was on the third day that the tramp steamer Bay of Fungo encountered Doc's dugout. He quickly drowned what few parrots were left and hailed the steamer.

He was quickly brought aboard where he met the captain.

"I'm Doc Salvage," Doc said, figuring to impress the seedy-looking skipper.

The skipper was impressed. Very.

"Doc Salvage? Not the Doc Salvage? The world famous surgeon - explorer - chemist - lawyer - botanist - geologist - psychologist - butcher - baker - candlestick-maker - Indian Chief and Jack of All Asses, Doc Salvage?"

Doc's chest swelled about half as much as his head, which was quite a bit. "Yep," he said.

The raw-skinned skipper eyed him suspiciously. "And wasn't your father the gob that sunk the Lusitania?"

Doc deflated. "Err... ahhh, yeah."

"Well scupper my uppers," the old salt said. "I've just the position for a man of your talents. My cook and dishwasher just died of malaria. Both of 'em. Now get in there and rustle up some grub. We're having parrot stew tonight."

Doc arrived in New York a week later with dishpan hands and the weird feeling that he was moulting.

Returning to headquarters, Doc discovered a scrawled in pink crayon (Bunny's favorite color) on top of his desk.

It read:

GONE OUT TO PLAY WITH MY NEW FRIEND -- BUNNY

Doc had a grim suspicion concerning just who this "friend" might be. Worse, the dust on the tabletop indicated that the message was almost two weeks old.

But, before Doc could begin to hatch a plan, a Herculean task for one of his brain capacity, the phone rang.

Right away, he knew that someone was calling him. He smiled, he was getting the hang of these things rather well, now.

"Hello," he said.

"Doc Salvage? Someone would like to see you," a strange voice said. "It's about the Munching Goblin. Meet me at the corner of King and Kong in Chinatown, right next to the dead Chinaman."

"Munching Goblin?" Doc asked. "What's a Munching Goblin?"

The dial tone ignored the question, though he asked about five more times before giving up.

Taking the elevator to the sidewalk, Doc started out for Chinatown. About two blocks later, he came across an extremely excited man who wore black spats over a pair of tennis sneakers. He grabbed Doc by the lapels and gesticulated down the street.

"I don't believe it! I just don't believe it!" the man said. "Here I was, walking down the street, minding my own business and -- POW! Boy, this must be my lucky day!"

Doc, caught up with the man's infectious enthusiasm, asked breathlessly, "What

happened? What'd you do?"

"I just won a Hennaaway! Can you imagine?"

"Wow," Doc said. "That's great! But, what's a Hennaaway?"

"Oh, about two pounds." And the man, laughing uproariously, sauntered down the street to accost another victim.

Doc, deciding to avoid a similar encounter, reverted to childhood. He lined up two small cars, side by side, and tied one to each shoe with a bit of twine and roller skated into Chinatown.

He ditched the cars and made for the corner of King and Kong. He had a bit of difficulty. Now, Doc had made it a point to become fluent in many foreign tongues for the express purpose of being able to cuss people without their understanding what he was saying. This he'd mastered to a fair degree, but reading these languages was another matter, mostly because he was nearsighted.

Doc did the best he could, and finding a corner that seemed right, he waited patiently.

The only problem was that his mysterious caller specified that they were to meet beside a dead chinaman and, as far as Doc could see, there were no Asian cadavers around.

Nervously, Doc waited.

After ten minutes, a Chinaman ambled by. Doc was about to ask directions when a low-slung roadster screeched past and a machine gun gobbled, sprawling the Chinese dead at Doc's feet.

Doc vented a sigh of relief. This was the right corner after all!

Moments later, another car drew abreast and a little grey man stepped out.

"Doc Salvage? Glad you could make it."

"I had a little trouble getting here," Doc offered, "and your Chinaman was late."

"Yeah, sorry about that. Couldn't be helped. The slippery little devil kept getting away from us."

The little runt led Doc to the car and helped him into the back seat. The door slammed shut and a partition clicked up between front and back seats. There were no door handles, Doc discovered. Not only that, but the little man began to cackle gleefully while a slow hiss came from under the seat.

Doc had a motto in long standing: When In Doubt — Ask.

"Is this a trap?" he inquired.

"No, of course not!" the other replied, getting into the driver's seat.

"Oh, good, I was worried." Doc settled back in his seat to enjoy the ride.

The hissing grew louder. Too late, Doc caught the unmistakable odor of crushed elves and fell unconscious. In another minute, he would have been sure the man was lying.

When Doc awoke, he found himself lying on a silken divan amid a dimly lighted chamber of Oriental opulence.

The walls were covered with black tapestries on which were worked, in red, gold and green threads, many mystic Oriental symbols: cheap transistor radios, tape recorders, intricate cameras, and the like.

On taborets and shelves all about him reposed priceless statuettes carved out of ivory and jet and imperial jade, all studded with brilliant gems. Doc recognized some of them — Godzilla, Mothra, Bruce Lee.

But, most amazing of all, was the immense idol that squatted at the far end of the room. It looked to be a huge Buddha, at first glance, until Doc recognized that it had the face of Roland Winters.

Doc approached it just as an elderly Chinese gentleman stepped from behind a teakwood panel which boasted a rice mosaic depicting Marco Polo being flayed slowly by an ostrich feather.

"Wow," Doc breathed. "Is it solid gold?" As always, things like this Buddha excited the Brass Man's greed.

"Regrettably, no," the Celestial answered in precise, clipped tones. "The idol is actually hollow, and made of glass. Further, if you examine closely, you will see it is filled with honey."

Doc looked closer. It was filled with honey! He could even see a few dead bees floating in it.

The Oriental shrugged expressively. "It impresses the yokels."

He clapped his long-nailed hands and a giant Sumo wrestler, more than nine feet tall and built like a yo-yo, wheeled in a little tray.

"He filled with honey, too?" Doc asked.

"Hardly. Wook, here, is filled only with ambition. Even now, he is uncertain of his vocation; perhaps he will become a butcher, or possibly a ballerina."

Wook picked Doc up with one arm and squished him down on a stool before the wheeled tray.

"At present, I tell him not to concern himself with trifles. Time enough for such considerations when he grows up. Don't you agree?"

"Grows up?"

"Yes, Wook is only ten years old. But, he will get bigger, don't worry."

"Worry, me?"

Wook bowed, flashed a grin at Doc and left.

"I," the Celestial said, "am the Mandarin Wing Ding. Won't you please try some of the delicious food you see before you? Our main course tonight is the ancient Chinese delicacy, Canton duck a la crunch."

"Don't mind if I do," Doc said. "Oh, by the way. Something's been bothering me.

"Was I kidnapped back there?"

Wing Ding smiled an inscrutable Oriental smile and said nothing.

Doc Salvage guessed the answer was No.

He addressed himself to the duck, while Wing Ding began a running commentary.

"The duck, you will observe, is done to a golden brown and basted with orange sauce. It is stuffed with a rare delicacy: the candied eyes of the Yang bird, of which only two are now left alive. Regrettably, both are male, the fault of our careless chef who is now our headless chef as well."

"He must look pretty funny when he goes to put on his chef's hat," Doc chuckled.

"Quite so."

Doc swallowed some of the duck. "One thing I can't figure out."

"Oh, only one?"

"Yes. This Canton Duck a la crunch: where does the crunch come in?"

"If you will examine meal more closely, you are sure to note that duck is nestled in a platter (solid gold, I might add) of unsweetened corn flakes."

Doc took a gander (so to speak) and — "Well, so it is! Damn clever, you Orientals."

Wing Ding shrugged carelessly. "We try."

Doc continued to attack the duck, reducing the latter to a shambles. This was due to the fact that he was attempting to utilize a pair of lacquered chopsticks the way one would use knife and fork.

Wing Ding remained inscrutable, which was his clever way of laughing.

"Permit me," the Mandarin intoned, "to entertain you with an interesting but sad tale of my homeland while you eat."

Doc flinched at what he thought was "tail", and visions of an Oriental whip torture danced on the small floor of his mind. He breathed easier, though, when his host commenced a sing-song story.

"There was a temple in China," he began, "wherein dwelt a wondrous idol. This idol had many followers. The reason for its large following was quite simple, for it was no joss of gold nor bronze, but a living creature. Its worshippers called him Chinga Sa, a name that fitted him well for it had no meaning. For many years Chinga Sa sat upon his altar eating betel nuts and unwary maidens, until one sad day he stood up. This, quite naturally, led to walking and more walking until, one day, Chinga Sa had wandered so far that he could not be found.

"This circumstance led to a world wide hunt that only now is bearing fruit, as reports have reached me of the creature's appearance in this very city."

The Mandarin Wing Ding paused and awaited Doc Salvage's reaction. It was not exactly what he expected.

"That's a very good story. Did you hear the one about the farmer's daughter and the itinerant movie star?"

"Yes," Wing Ding inserted quickly, "twice this week, in fact. But you evidently fail to see the point I was driving at.

"This Chinga Sa is the very creature that was last seen atop your own headquarters."

"Oh, now I see!" the Brass Man said. His brow clouded. "But I still don't get it." He was afraid that he was supposed to laugh, or something. If it was a joke, he couldn't see anything funny in it.

"I am prepared to offer you, on behalf of the idol's keepers, a suitable reward for its safe return."

Doc Salvage's oatmeal-at-full-boil eyes twinkled with greed. His nose gleamed with perfidy, as well.

"How suitable a reward?" Doc inquired. "I don't come cheap, you know. As a matter of fact, I have a backlog of clients that includes two Prime Ministers, a Countess, four Senators and a crippled ballerina." None of which was true, of course.

The Mandarin was not perturbed, having sized up Doc from the start. "Shall we say... all the tea in China?"

Doc nearly had a fit and would have died of acute greed right then and there if it weren't for the fact that dying would have deprived him of all that loot. In short, he swallowed it.

Wing Ding continued to look inscrutable.

Doc shrugged, "Okay, it'll kill an evening."

"Very good. Now that this matter is settled, I must ask you to leave, so that you may begin the quest."

"But I haven't finished my duck yet," Doc protested.

His host looked at the shambles he'd made of the bird through his inept use of chopsticks and resisted an urge to say, "Oh, yes, you have,"

Instead he said, "I'm afraid that it would place me in a difficult position, were you to stay. Let me tell you something that even you, with all your, shall we say, peculiar genius, do not know."

Doc listened wide-eyed as he was led to the door.

"On nights of the full moon, all Orientals, including myself, turn into..." he looked around to see that no one was about and whispered into Doc's ear, "golden

pomegranates!"

Doc straightened and gave Wing Ding the fish eye. "You're pulling my leg," he chuckled.

The Mandarin continued looking inscrutable.

"REAL gold?" Doc asked in a wondering tone.

The Mandarin nodded. "Wow!" Doc breathed.

"It is one of the East's most closely guarded secrets. You will tell no one of this?" Wing Ding admonished.

"Cross my heart," Doc promised.

"Good. Now, when you find the idol, bring it here to my abode."

Doc turned to go out, but the Mandarin had a few parting words.

"One last thing," he said. "Chinga Sa has a marked fondness for rabbits."

"Of course, everyone knows that!"

"Oh, so? Tell me, Honorable Salvage. In your profession, are you subject to being struck upon the head quite often?"

"No," Doc said, "more than that. But, how did you know?"

"It was an educated guess." Wing Ding closed the door, still looking inscrutable.

Doc walked away from Chinatown, muttering to himself, "Golden pomegranates! WOW!"

It took seven servants, each equipped with water hoses and electric cattle prods, three hours to bring Wing Ding's fit of laughter under reasonable control.

Even then, he spent the rest of his life subject to uncontrollable spasms of giggling at half-hour intervals, or whenever he saw a bowl of fruit.

When Doc Salvage, his mind whirling with visions of tea and pomegranates, finally arrived back at his skyscraper headquarters, he found two of his derelict aides present.

"Hem" Bricks, disbarred barrister and resplendent in his hand-sewn purple and yellow tuxedo, was attempting to open his umbrella-flame-thrower. He was having a bit of difficulty with this.

The umbrella happened to have been shoved to the handle down the throat of another of Doc's men.

The latter was "Mink" Maypole, renowned failure and chemical incompetent. He was not enjoying Hem's efforts at dredging his insides with the umbrella. In fact the mink-clad, panda-like man was putting up one hell of a fight.

Doc recognized this little bit of playful foiderol for what it really was: Hem's semi-weekly attempt to murder Mink for past grudges.

Doc clipped Hem on the noggin with a desk and removed the umbrella from Mink's throat none too gently and beat them both severely for the better part of an hour with various handy objects including: a cyclotron, the right ear off the Statue of Liberty, and a stuffed mastodon.

After they had quieted down due to severe concussions, Doc attempted to rouse them with stimulants and face slapping, but to no avail.

But, when he dangled them both out the window and threatened to precipitate them both to a rude, if painful, awakening, they decided to snap out of it.

"We've got to find Bunny," Doc said.

"Why?" Hem inquired.

"Because he's gone off and eloped or something with I-don't-know-what."

"Leaping Lepus," Mink yelled, "We've gotta find him, we gotta. You know how fast rabbits multiply. If we don't stop him, there'll be whole gangs of giant bunnies all over the place."

"Wait a minute," Hem interjected, "what did he run off wid? Dere ain't another rabbit like him in de whole world."

Doc seldom lied without a good reason. Today's good reason was simple: honest greed. If Mink or Hem ever caught on that there was any loot at all in this, never mind all the tea in China, they'd probably want to be paid in something other than cigarette coupons and season passes to the flea circus.

"All I know is that it's big and furry and likes to munch on things."

Mink and Hem stood about and practiced looking confused. Mink scratched his pet warthog, *Corpus Delicti*, on the head. *Corpus* always went where Mink went, riding in a pocket of Mink's fur coat. The warthog found walking difficult as he was quite extinct, hence his name.

Doc was on the threshold of issuing a totally unintelligible order in hopes that Mink and Hem would misunderstand it and run off and stumble onto a clue when the phone rang.

Doc, for once, did the sensible thing and answered it.

It was the FBI calling, and they were annoyed. Doc hoped they weren't pissed off at him and planning to raise his "protection" fee.

"We just received a Bible from the Vatican," the head of the FBI told Doc matter-of-factly.

"I hope you're religious," Doc offered.

"It was a very large Bible — about seven feet tall and four wide."

"In that case," Doc told him, "I hope you're very religious."

"One of our best agents was found between two pages, flat as a bank note."

"I hope he was very religious, then," Doc said. He couldn't see where this aimless conversation was going.

"Our agent vanished on his way to meet with you."

Then Doc saw. "Oh," he said in a very small voice.

"You'd better get down here right quick," the head of the FBI said, giving him an address.

"Okay," Doc said. "Anything else?"

"Yes — I hope that you are very religious."

Doc Salvage, Mink and Hem went to their secret warehouse/hangar via their special pneumatic tube. They entered the bullet-shaped craft, which promptly fell 86 stories and nearly crushed them to death. They had forgotten to activate the pneumatic pressure before releasing the car. They clambered out and had to walk twelve blocks through the tube.

The car, which Mink had dubbed the "Go-To-Hell", had been installed at great expense by the Man of Brass in order to avoid bill collectors and the Draft. Typically, it cost more to build than the debts of most small countries — not to mention more than Doc's own debt-load.

When they got to their hangar, Mink and Hem blurted together: "LOOK, DOC!!!"

Doc looked. Their stratosphere dirigible which hung from the roof, resembled a chorus girl's discarded nylon. It was flat and shapeless; the helium had been sucked out of it. There were teeth marks on the gondola.

There were no teeth marks on any of their planes, they were pleased to learn. This was because, they found on closer inspection, every propeller had been neatly bitten off of every wing. This also applied to every screw on the "Welldiver", the submersible that Doc had stolen and which he used exclusively to explore Artesian wells.

The only clue they found was a half-eaten carrot. It wasn't hard for Doc to deduce the rest. Mink and Hem had to have it spelled out for them, however —

twice, in fact. Even then they were a bit hazy.

"Okay, okay, just forget it!" Doc finished up. "Never mind what happened; we just take a taxi to Washington, that's all."

The headquarters of the FBI, its director had informed Doc, was in Washington. They hailed a cab, and scrambled aboard.

"Washington! And make it snappy," Doc directed. The driver, scared out of his mind by the peculiar trio who accosted him, hastily complied.

It was quite a long while later that they arrived on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington. They climbed out.

"Tip the man, Mink," Doc ordered.

Mink ambled to the front bumper, took hold and upended the cab.

The hackney said, "Thanks, bub," as they entered their building. He didn't sound sincere.

On the fourth floor they found a single door at one end of a gloomy, deserted corridor. In keeping with the current trends in doors, there was a knob, meant to be turned, and a legend on the pebbled glass. It read:

DEPARTMENT OF REDUNDANCY DEPARTMENT

"Yep, this is it," Hem said:

Doc grasped the knob with his mighty brass hand and gave it a turn. It wouldn't turn.

Mink, recalling the last time he futilely tried to open the twist cap of a Pepsi with his furry paw, tried to solve the dilemma in a similar fashion. He grasped the knob in his teeth and rotated his head. The knob didn't turn for him either, but the effort cost him a sore tooth, so he backed off, satisfied.

Hem tried; no success. "It won't turn," he said, as if that were news — or a new discovery.

They then proceeded to stand around for several minutes with their hands in their pockets and their faces at half-mast.

In time this led to a certain amount of boredom which led to Hem tripping Mink to the floor with his umbrella-flame-thrower.

Mink clambered to his feet, snarling: "You shylock —"

"Shyster," Hem corrected.

"— I'll knock you so —"

"Knock! That's it!" Doc howled in glee. Mink and Hem froze in attitudes of surprise and mutual mayhem.

Doc knocked. On the door, of course.

Nothing happened.

Then something happened: their faces fell.

But that was about it. The door certainly didn't open.

Bored again, Mink tried to rip one of Hem's ears off. Hem screeched by way of response and the two lapsed into an ear-tugging session. A painful occupation, inasmuch as their ears were still sore in the wake of corrective operations Doc performed on their aural organs as a result of their last adventure, Mad Ears.

While they played, Doc removed a tube of dental floss from his glimcrack vest. He pulled out several yards of the stuff, tried to loop it around the edges of the door.

It wouldn't stick. At that point, Mink howled as Hem endeavored to bite off both of his thumbs, and Doc spied the pink wad of gum in Mink's open mouth. Doc reached out and procured enough to effectively anchor the floss around the door. He then produced a kitchen match and applied it to the floss.

The floss erupted into a frame of sizzling blue sparks.

The floss was one of the Brass Man's many clever, if absurd, inventions. It was impregnated with a thermite compound.

When the sizzling died, the door fell open, exposing a blank brick wall.

Mink sauntered over, and set the door upright against the wall.

He grasped the knob. "It turns! It turns!" He squealed in delight.

Doc slapped him silly and he quieted down.

It was then that they noticed another door at the opposite end of the hall.

They rushed for it like lemmings taking to the water. They just had time to read the legend, Do Not Enter, before they piled on through.

The four-story drop was surprisingly short. So short, in fact, that they barely had time to notice it before they landed amid trash cans and snarling alley cats.

They picked themselves up and wiped their pants and the dumbfounded looks off their faces.

"I don't think I like this town," Mink ventured.

"Me neither," Hem rejoined.

"Let's go home," they cried in disharmonious chorus.

Doc agreed. They collared an unfortunate cab driver and ordered him to take them back to New York City. The driver was less than enthusiastic.

"Hell, I ain't drivin' all you lugs all the way to Noo York," was the first thing he told them. It was also the second, third, and fourth thing he said. It was a rather limited repertoire, and not very effective in the face of the thirsty pistol which Doc introduced to the cabby's sweaty nose, muzzle first.

The cabby then developed a sudden and inexplicable enthusiasm for the journey and they were off.

Passing through Chicago, Doc's face acquired a look commonly associated with lottery ticket winners and schoolboys about to be seduced by older women.

"You don't suppose — ?" he began.

Mink and Hem gave him a hero-worshipful look. "Suppose what?"

"Could he have meant Washington, D.C.?" Doc wondered.

The cabby looked as if he were being forced to eat his left hand. (He was a southpaw.)

"Maybe he meant Washington Carver?" Hem offered. He thought they were doing a crossword puzzle.

They redirected the driver to take them to Washington, D.C.

When they ran out of gas and money, Doc ordered Mink and Hem to get out and push. Inasmuch as that left two empty seats and his men needed the exercise, this enabled Doc to pick up a few hitch-hikers. Not to mention a few spare bucks as he charged exorbitantly for the privilege of riding with the legendary Man of Brass.

All of which got them to the base of the Washington Monument in less than two weeks.

The cabby broke into tears upon their arrival, mostly from exhaustion. Doc handed him one of his business cards which said "M.D." on it and told him, "Call anytime," and they walked away.

Their destination was a brownstone on Pennsylvania Avenue — the D.C. version of it — and they again walked up four flights of stairs.

There was only one door, unmarked. They knocked and entered, and were greeted by a blonde receptionist who was as ugly as original sin.

So naturally, Mink and Hem both fell immediately in love with her, and pounced.

Their approach to seduction was nothing if not original. They each grabbed her

by an arm and, yelling, "She's mine! No, she's mine!" in turn, proceeded to pull in opposite directions. This made quite an impression upon the blonde, who immediately yelled for help.

She got it, too. Before Doc and company could move, they were surrounded by hard-eyed FBI agents who brandished assorted pistols.

Mink and Hem gingerly relinquished the blonde — dumped her unceremoniously to the floor, actually. Mink gave her a surreptitious kick in the ribs by way of remonstrance.

The director of the FBI was there. "You're late," he informed Doc.

"We got your directions mixed up," Doc understated shamelessly.

"I'll come to the point," the director said. "I sent one of my agents to contact you. We both know what happened to him."

"He never reached me," Doc protested. "Besides, I don't read the Bible."

"I do," Mink piped up. Doc dislocated his right kneecap with the toe of his steel-toed boot.

"Our agent's purpose was to set you on the trail of a huge, furry creature who has a taste for eating things."

"Things?" Doc asked.

"Trees, buildings, cars, people..."

"People?" This was news to Doc. "Does he eat rabbits?"

"Find him and throw him one," the director offered.

"I'm already on his trail," Doc lied.

"Good. I want him back within a week."

"Err... I already have a good offer to give him to someone else," Doc's eyes took on a sheen of unadulterated greed. "Care to try to top it?"

"Easily," the director rejoined pleasantly. "If you don't return the creature to us within a week, we will turn over to the IRS our file on your fortune in Mayan salt mines..."

"In a week, yes sir!" Doc snapped to attention. He hadn't bothered to pay taxes on the mines since 1929. "Let's go, sisters."

They went.

They tried for three hours to hail a cab. None would stop.

"Maybe word got around..." Mink offered.

Doc nodded. He walked to a curb and waited. In time, a bus came along. As it drew abreast, Doc stuck out a boot and tripped the vehicle, which somersaulted onto its roof. Doc quickly opened all the doors and windows, picked the bus up at one end, and gave it a vigorous shake.

The driver and passengers tumbled out.

Doc set the bus back on its wheels and yelled, "Board!"

They boarded and took off for New York, hurling fragmentation grenades in their wake in order to discourage pursuing police.

Four hours later, they were crossing the George Washington Bridge in New York.

Halfway across the span, Bunny jumped out in front of their bus waving his furry arms before him.

"That damn' rabbit!" Doc snarled. "I told him never to play in traffic."

Bunny jumped out of the way as Doc applied the brakes too late to prevent them from going off the half-eaten end of the bridge.

As they sailed into the drink, they caught a quick glimpse of the Munching Goblin as it nibbled on a girder.

The river was very wet, a fact that came as a surprise only to Mink, who possessed a rather short memory.

As the river rushed in, Doc whipped out a trio of diving "lungs" and distributed them. These allowed them to breathe for five minutes underwater.

Or would have, if Mink and Hem, in their excitement, hadn't swallowed them. Doc got his working and dragged his men to the surface. When they had crawled to the river bank and got their breathing back to normal, Doc boxed their ears for them.

The sinister sound of munching came then. Doc dropped the bawling Mink and turned. "Gorsh," Hem exclaimed. They all saw the magnificent span of the George Washington Bridge, from which the terrible chomping emanated. Or half of it anyway. For the bridge was slowly disappearing before their glassy little eyes.

Steel supports tore loose and vanished. Massive cables snapped and were slurped from sight. Occasionally, the darksome Goblin paused to pick his teeth with a streetlight. It was a terrifying sight.

Here, Doc realized, was a foe more fearsome than any he had encountered before. "He's more dangerous than the Leaking Goblin," Doc muttered.

"He's more horrifying than the Bore Devil," Mink wailed.

"And the Sniggering Spooks!" Hem chimed in.

"No, he's not," Mink retorted, "the Sniggering Spooks were worse."

"Well, he's worse than the Mold Ogre," Hem countered.

"Don't be stupid! The Mold Ogre was a fake — a dummy filled with penicillin!"

"That was the Moss of Terror, you fool! You're thinking of the Moss of Terror!"

"Yeah," Mink yelled as he kicked Hem's legs out from under him, "well, he's worse than the Odd Elves, isn't he?"

"He's bigger, is all!" Hem loosed his umbrella flame-thrower, which sent a jet of flame past Mink's furry behind.

Mink stuck out his tongue. "He's uglier than the World's Average Goblin, then."

"So what, the Sargasso Pixie had it all over —"

"Cut it, you two!!" Doc screeched. The Brass Man had realized the dread enormity of this new foe, and he had figured out a brave and daring approach to the menace of the Munching Goblin. He pointed toward the vanishing bridge, and yelled "Go fetch!"

Guiltily, Mink and Hem slunk off.

Their attack was something to see.

They crawled up the bridge supports and surrounded the busy Goblin. Mink stripped off his moth-eaten fur coat (he looked no different nude) and tried his favorite tactic: he rammed the coat down the Goblin's throat in an attempt to choke him to death.

The creature swallowed the coat like an aspirin. He burped.

Monk, frustrated at the loss of his only piece of apparel, sat down and cried.

Hem charged in then, umbrella flame-thrower held straight out and spitting flame.

The Munching Goblin opened his mouth to admit half the length of the bumbershoot. His teeth closed into a sneering smile. Hem beat a hasty retreat.

Bunny, off to one side, threw half-eaten carrots at the two and made giggling sounds. He hopped up and down with glee; he hadn't had so much fun since Doc and he terrorized the phone company in "The Men who Dialed no More."

Doc, back on the river bank, made a mental note to dock everyone a month's pay, especially Bunny. He put his tiny brain to work on the problem. His brain, such as it was, kept struggling with thoughts of wealth — golden pomegranates, Chinese tea, ...

An idea hit him, and he fell on his ass with the impact. He hot-footed his way

to the nearest store, where he stole a shovel, 500 jars of honey and a grass-green garbage bag.

Doc got to work.

When he had finished, Doc Salvage scaled the bridge and ominously strode down the span toward the Goblin, who was unconcernedly sucking the rivets out of a girder.

Twenty feet away, Doc stopped like a Wild West gunfighter about to draw.

The Goblin turned to look.

Doc stuck out his brass tongue.

The Goblin dropped the girder, spat out an unripe rivet and gave chase.

Doc ran like a pickaninny being chased by a hooty owl. He paused only to box Mink and Hem's ears as he passed them.

Doc ran to a point on the river bank where he had laid the green plastic trash bag down. It didn't exactly blend in with the grass, but then the Munching Goblin wasn't exactly looking where he was going, either.

Doc whirled at the edge of the bag. He again stuck out his tongue. He stuck his thumbs in his ears and wiggled his fingers for maximum effect.

The Goblin lunged. He lunged onto the trash bag and then he lunged into the pit under the bag. That was more lunge than he had intended. The Goblin was surprised. No more surprised than he was when he landed with a colossal glop! in the honey that Doc had poured into the pit.

Doc looked down at the bewildered face of the Goblin as it peered up from the honey. He laughed like a hyena.

The Goblin spit in his face.

Doc spit back.

They fought in this fashion for a half-hour until they ran dry.

The Goblin had the last spit. He drew his head back, pursed his lips and went huckatoo!

Doc tried to dodge, but he tripped over a honey jar.

Then the Goblin stuck out his tongue — it was long and the color of tar — to drive the point home. Then he indulged in a sneering cat-grin.

Doc went to a water fountain and came back with full cheeks.

The Goblin's grin got very wet and he stopped smiling. He was also still stuck in the honey — worse, he was attracting bees.

Mink and Hem stumbled over honey jars and into view just then.

"Good work, Doc!" they enthused.

"Go chase a brick," Doc enthused right back at them. Doc was vacillating between the horns of a dilemma. He had the Goblin. The question was, who would get it? Doc thought about the current penalties for tax evasion. Then he thought about all the tea in China.

"The hell," he said at length. "I can always bomb Washington."

But before he could put his noggin to the task of transporting the Goblin to Chinatown, a man walked up to them.

The man was well dressed and chubby. He possessed a big bright smile. He had the biggest gun in his right hand that Doc had ever seen. He also had the biggest rabbit (Bunny, of course) in his left.

"Hi, Doc!" Bunny said. He waved to make sure Doc noticed him. Rabbits are insecure that way.

The man in question also had a big, joyful voice which he used to say, "Well, well, now — GOOD job! But I'm taking the Goblin to Wing Ding."

"Competition?" Doc asked aghast.

"Nah," the chubby man informed him, "you're not even in my league, Brass Man."

He gestured with his big, shiny gun, and shook Bunny furiously for good measure. "Put up your hands and turn your backs — all of you!" he ordered.

"Simon didn't say," Hem pointed out.

"Oh all right! Simon says 'Put up your hands and turn your backs.'"

They complied to a man.

One by one, Doc, Mink, and Hem were konked into insensibility by the big shiny gun.

When they awoke, the man and the Goblin were gone, and their bodies were covered with painful bee stings.

Doc stood up and walked around in a circle while his face turned an exquisite purple-blue. Then he vented a scream of frustrated rage and greed.

Doc set out and found a taxi waiting at a red light. He stuck his head in the driver's window. "Hey, buddy, you've got a flat here," he informed the Jehu.

The cabby got out and Doc promptly knocked him flat. Doc didn't like to lie; it took up too much time in the confessional.

He took over the cab. His men piled in. They drove to Chinatown.

Mink, looking about at all the garish Chinese neon and slant-eyed Orientals saw fit to inquire, "Are we in Chinatown are we are we?"

"Nah, this is Japan. I took a wrong turn somewhere."

Mink settled back in his seat to gawk; he'd never been to Japan. Hem, beside him, silently admired this new proof of the wizard-like driving skill of the Brass Man.

Doc, at a loss to locate the location of Wing Ding's residence, ordered his men to shout "Wing Ding" at the top of their lungs as they rode.

As a result, several hundred Chinese followed their cab in benign expectation of an imminent party. Mink and Hem likewise licked their lips in anticipation and wondered whose birthday it was.

This would have led to no result had Doc not whipped around a corner in an effort to shake off the pursuing horde and rammed a wandering Sumo wrestler.

The cab crumpled.

The Sumo stepped back a pace, examined the ruined front of his brocaded tunic, and broke into tears. He ran home crying.

Doc recognized the Sumo. "Follow me, you goobers," he yelled.

They followed. What else?

The lumbering Sumo led them to a Chinese restaurant, where they crashed through the spirit screen at the door and ruined the miens of about three dozen Occidentals. The Sumo disappeared past a green glass screen on which were painted what looked like Chinese ideographs but were really transistors.

Doc, Mink, and Hem took about five minutes to make through the dining tables. They were well fed by the time they reached the screen, but they knew they would be hungry again before the adventure was over with.

They found themselves in Wing Ding's parlor after they got past the screen. The big, honey-filled Buddha was still there.

So was Wing Ding, who was busy comforting the giant Sumo. The jolly guy with the big grin and the bigger gun was there, too. He was holding the gun on the Munching Goblin, who was standing in a corner with his dejected puss to the wall and his furry arms raised.

Doc and his men, barging in, made no little commotion. The man with the gun turned right around.

That was his first mistake. The Munching Goblin turned around, too.

The man looked back and discovered that his gun hand was in the Goblin's mouth

up to his elbow and the Goblin was smiling.

The man slowly drew his hand out without the gun in it. He did not look at all well.

The Goblin gave a very satisfied burp.

The man then stepped back. His face acquired an embarrassed smile. "Well, well, well," he said.

When that didn't perceptibly alter circumstances, he said "well, well, well" in a softer voice.

Doc and his men produced thirsty pistols at that juncture. They were smart enough not to mention that their weapons were little more than souped-up water pistols.

"Now — " Doc began.

"Now nothing!" The head of the FBI said when he marched in with a platoon of grim agents at his heels. "The Goblin is ours!"

"Not so," Wing Ding interjected. He pointed to the Goblin who was casting big black hungry eyes at the many Oriental statuary which adorned the room. "Is Honorable Chinga Sa, Chinese idol," Wing Ding pointed out. "Must return to temple, please."

"This Goblin is the property of the United States Government," the FBI head honcho said in his most domineering voice.

"How come?" Doc asked, not unreasonably.

The FBI man turned to Doc and shook his jowls. "You've heard of the Abominable Snowman?"

"Uh-huh," Doc uh-huhed.

"Well, this is his cousin, the Abominable Snowfink."

Doc looked at the Goblin. The Goblin gave him back a broad, toothy smile. Then Doc looked at Wing Ding.

Wing Ding shrugged in true fatalistic fashion. "I lied."

The FBI head resumed his explanation. "The Snowfink was captured in the Himalayas by a government expedition. We brought him back for study, but we couldn't do a thing with him; he's as dense as a dwarf star. We ended up using him in marijuana research..."

"AND?" everyone said in chorus.

"He got the munchies, what do you dunderheads think? Ate two of our best scientists, a laboratory, and escaped."

"Ohhh..." everyone said this time.

There was a lot of silence for a long time.

Doc looked at Mink; Mink looked at Hem; Hem looked at Bunny, who was staring off into space and obviously out of it entirely, so Hem looked back at Doc. They all nodded.

Doc hit the lights and the spread themselves about the room. They began yelling "Grunt, grunt, grunt!" in loud voices.

Wing Ding, the FBI man and all the rest of the zany bunch got suspicious and began yelling "Grunt, grunt, grunt" too.

No one could see a thing in the darkness.

Then, Doc and his men stopped yelling "Grunt, grunt, grunt" and switched to "Quango, quango, quango" instead.

Everyone else, caught off guard, was still yelling "Grunt, grunt, grunt" and Doc, Mink, and Hem proceeded to pound into submission everyone who wasn't yelling "Quango, quango, quango".

This brilliant maneuver worked to perfection, as everyone realized when the light came back on. Doc and his men had the drop on the whole bunch, thirsty pistols

at the ready.

"Vely crever, Blass Man," Wing Ding said.

"Wait a minute, Doc!" Hem interjected. "Where's that chubby guy?"

The Munching Goblin burped in answer. They all noticed that his stomach was perceptibly bigger.

Doc pointed a thumb at the Goblin. "Who was he," Doc asked.

Wing Ding shrugged. "Minor clook. Had hired him earlier to steal Gobrin. Him fail; hire you."

"Just why did you want the Goblin in the first place?"

"Gobrin rook good in living room."

"He'd eat you out of house and pagoda," Doc scoffed.

Wing Ding smiled. "Not if him stuffed."

"Got a point there." Doc admitted. "But now I've got the goblin and all of you to boot. I think there was a little matter of my income taxes and all the tea in China..."

Just then the Goblin put out the lights. He swallowed the jade chandelier, not wanting to bother with the light switch. Then he feasted on the FBI men and its director.

In the confusion, Wing Ding made a grab for the Goblin, caught a furry paw and blackjacked the furry skull that was attached to that paw through the medium of a furry body. He stole out the back with his catch and set out for China by rickshaw.

Wing Ding got half-way across the Aleutians before he realized that he had kidnapped Bunny by accident.

Meanwhile, Doc and his men were left with the Goblin and no one to sell him to. Not to mention with the blame for several FBI deaths if they were caught, Doc realized.

They stood around wondering what to do next.

An hour later, Doc got an idea. He picked himself up and ordered "Come on, you sisters!" They left the Goblin munching on a jade fortune cookie.

Doc commandeered a sightseeing bus and emptied it in his usual fashion. They clambered aboard. At Doc's instruction, Mink and Hem again yelled "Wing Ding, Wing Ding!" as they raced through the Chinatown byways.

Chinese by the hundreds crowded about the moving bus and followed. By the time they got out of Chinatown, there were Celestials hanging from the bumpers, the spare tire, everywhere.

"Bumper crop," Doc noted with satisfaction.

They drove toward their hangar-warehouse where Doc inflated his Zeppelin with a handy bicycle pump.

He loaded the Orientals aboard. "Wing Ding, Wing Ding," they crowed.

Doc took off after sending Mink and Hem out for a paper.

By the time Doc reached his Fortress of Ineptitude in the Arctic, the Chinese had all stopped shouting, having turned into golden pomegranates.

True, Doc couldn't very well spend them, but they were gold and that satisfied the Man of Brass....

End

WANT-LIST

AMERICAN MAGAZINES:

AMAZING STORIES - 1927: Jan 1978: Jan, May
 AMAZING STORIES ANNUAL - 1927
 ANALOG - 1970: Apr, Jun 1973: Sep 1975: May 1976: Jan, Apr, May
 1977: Jan, Mar, Apr, May, Jul 1978: Jan, Feb, Jun, Oct, Nov
 FANTASTIC - 1972: Jun 1975: Oct 1976: Feb, Aug, Nov 1977: Feb, Sep,
 Dec 1978: Apr, Jul
 FANTASTIC ADVENTURES - 1939: May
 GALAXY - 1969: Jul, Aug 1972: Jan/Feb 1973: Nov 1974: Jun, Nov, Dec
 1975: Jan, Jun, Sep 1976: Oct 1978: Jan, Apr, May, Jun
 GHOST STORIES - 1926: all 1927: all 1928: Jan, Feb, Apr, Jul-Dec
 1929: all 1930: Jan-Jul, Sep, Oct 1931: all
 IF - 1969: Sep 1970: Apr, Jul/Aug 1972: Jan/Feb 1973: Jan/Feb,
 Jul/Aug, Nov/Dec 1974: Jan/Feb, May/Jun
 ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE - 1978: Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/Jun, Jul/Aug,
 Sep/Oct 1979: Jun
 MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION - 1973: Mar, Dec 1974: Jan, Apr,
 Jun, Jul, Sep 1975: Feb, Nov
 1976: Jun 1977: Feb, Sep, Oct,
 Nov, Dec 1978: Feb, May, Jun,
 Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov 1979: Feb
 MONSTER PARADE - 1958/1959: all
 SCIENTIFIC DETECTIVE MONTHLY - 1930: Feb, Mar, Apr, May
 SKY WORLDS - 1978: Aug
 STARTLING MYSTERY STORIES - 1967: Winter (#7)
 STRANGE STORIES - 1939: Feb, Jun 1940: Feb
 STRANGE TALES - 1933: Jan
 WEIRD TALES - 1923: Apr-Nov 1924: all 1925: Jan-Oct, Dec 1926: Jan,
 Mar, Apr, Jun-Sep, Dec
 THE WITCH'S TALES - 1936: Dec
 WHISPERS - #1
 WONDER STORIES - 1930: Aug 1931: Jul, Oct 1933: Dec
 AMAZING DETECTIVE TALES - 1930: all
 ARKHAM SAMPLER - 1948: Autumn
 DOCTOR DEATH - all
 DUSTY AYRES AND HIS BATTLE BIRDS - 1934: all 1935: Feb-Jul/Aug
 GIRL FROM UNCLE MAGAZINE - 1967: Feb
 MARVEL TALES - 1934: May (#1)
 MIND MAGIC - 1931: all
 MY SELF - 1931: all
 OTHER WORLDS - 1957: May

BRITISH MAGAZINES

AMAZING SCIENCE STORIES - #1
BRITISH SPACE SCIENCE FICTION - Vol 2 #1, 3, 4
FANTASY - 1939: #2
FUTURISTIC SCIENCE STORIES - #11, 14, 15
MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION - 1954: Apr
NEW WORDS - 1960: Jul (#96)
OUT OF THIS WORLD - #2
(OUT OF THIS WORLD) - #13, 15, 17
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SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES - 1958: Jul (#3)
SCOOPS - 1934: #2--20
SUPERNATURAL STORIES - #5-12, 16, 20, 21, 24, 29--34, 37-42, 45, 101
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TALES OF WONDER - #1, 3, 13
VARGO STATTEN SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE - Vol 1 #5
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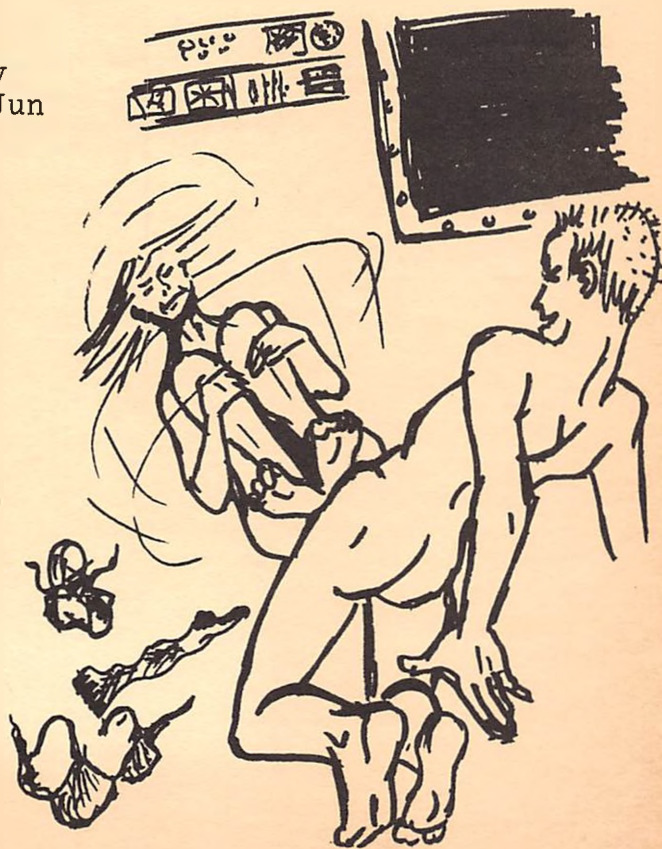
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