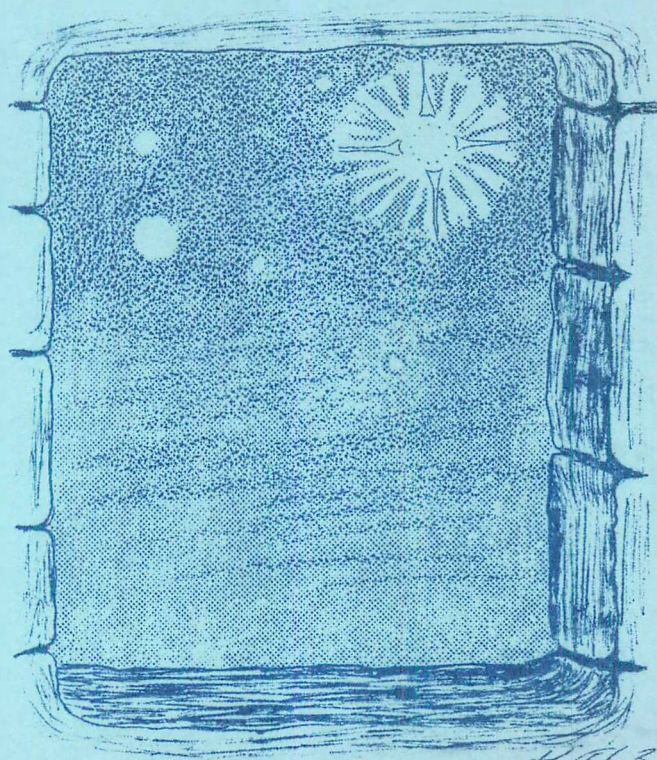


# THE ZED



R463



THE





THE ZED #806 Published for the 67th mailing of the Spectator Amateur Press Society by Karen Anderson, 3 Las Palomas, Orinda, California, 94563

-----  
"You can call it Frisco, but DON'T call it 94501" -Herb Caen?  
-----

### Mailing Comments and Ironing

(Pillowslip with red morning-glories)

DIE WIS, DAILY BITE, WATLING STREET The idea is to read -- glance over, I mean; having read the mailing already) several fanzines, then iron something while trying to think of mailing comments. All I've got on the present mouthful is that the DAILY BITE wasn't legible enough.

(Pillowslip matching the above)

PILLAR OF FIRE, THE DINKY BIRD, SAPTERRANEAN Well, noted at least. Maybe this doesn't work after all. Usually when I'm ironing I carry on long mental discourses in answer to something in a fanzine or recent party or the like.

(Four pillowslips of Astrid's, with flowers and/or kittens)

SPACEWARP, IGNATZ, PILLAR OF FIRE C/W PLONK Yes, I got the Gioconda swiftie. I rather like elephant jokes; they remind me of bop jokes, which I always liked for their surrealist logic. Poul and I invented a related form: bluejay jokes. There are already two elephant-style jokes about bluejays -- no, three, because one is double: Why do elephants jump out of tall trees? The bluejays push them. Why do the bluejays push them? I forget the original answer; our new one is Because they're finks. What is the most dangerous animal? A bluejay with a machinegun. To which we add: Why do bluejays carry machineguns? Because they're finks. We had a lot, but it was late at night and we forgot them the next day. Most of them have the same answer. Why do bluejays carry bubonic plague? Because they're rat finks. Why are bluejays finks? Because they're bluejays.

Then there's the Tom Newsie: I'm Ray, from the Sun; I'm Sentry, from the Post; and so on. Bill Fiset had a paragraph of them in his column, ending with the complaint that you can't do much with a paper named The Tribune. To which a reader responded that every month she got a Bill from the Tribune.

(Lavender tablecloth)

POT POURRI, AN OPEN LETTER TO LEE HOFFMAN What is the marriage that's breaking up? Well, I imagine I can find out from Ellick or somebody Saturday night. Two busloads (that's micro-bus of course) are supposed to come up



from Los Angeles for the Little Men's masquerade. I wish I could have gone to the Discon with my Phoenix Guard costume, if what you say about the slack competition is true. I'll get to wear it at Saturday's party, and then probably not until I can invent an occasion when wearing it will be plausible. Like producing a play at the Pacificon. Or talking Jerry Knight into a movie to show at the Pacificon. I like that costume best of any I've done. I think; it's sexy, comfortable, and thoroughly eye-catching -- with that neon-orange crest six feet off the floor!

(Green tablecloth)

SPY RAY You imply that you've given up the idea of writing professionally. I wouldn't urge anybody to take it up for a living, but why not as an avocation? You have a remarkably clear prose style and a knack of explaining things briefly and comprehensibly. I'd like to see you do something like a popular book on the military arts, including history of weapons, what different types of combat unit are good for, what economic and social backgrounds are needed for wars of different types -- that kind of thing. And maybe a few imaginary battles: what if the English at Agincourt had faced light Mongol horse-archers instead of heavy cavalry? Or Harold Godwinsson met Caesar instead of Harald Hardrede at Stamford Bridge?

A quarterstaff would probably be good against a sword, from what I hear of its capabilities. But I don't suppose there are many writers who could handle one convincingly.

(Four tablecloths: brown, white/yellow/gray, pink, white/blue/green)  
THE ZED, ENZYME Welcome back, Phil. ## Why does a utopia have to be static by definition? And I mean socially, not just technologically and artistically. If it moves from one state to another, must one of those be Better or Worse? Why not several possible setups as needed? The one I've been working on has a built-in basis for this in the Four Dynasties. Take a Phoenix Dynasty period, for example. The associated element is Fire. Inventiveness is at a premium. Plays written in this period are fairly routine stuff, but there are great classics from earlier periods, and stagecraft is at a high technical level. After some seven or eight generations of this -- maybe longer, I haven't decided -- the impetus has run out, the Phoenix King has no successor, and there's a short interregnum. A Unicorn King arises and a new dynasty begins. The associated element is Earth. There's much emphasis on agriculture: domestication of wild varieties, improvement of standard domestic strains, and so on. Also much clearing of new land, road-building, and the like. The Unicorn gives way to the Dragon, associated with Air -- this is the time when the great plays are written, the great pictures are painted. Next comes the Leviathan dynasty and the element of Water. There is exploration, increased contact with old colonies and founding of new ones, a great deal of overseas trade. After that, a new Phoenix dynasty -- back to gadgeteering and devising fancy new systems of mathematics . . . and so it goes. For the literarily



inclined individual in a period other than the Dragon, there's all the fun he likes in talking about or writing essays on or just generally grokking the classics. My impression of Alexander Pope is that he'd do well in such a scene. Genuine literary genius, though, is only called up by competitive stimulation and snowballing. If you're Marlowe you don't compete with Sophocles, but you do compete with Webster and Jonson.

So I've got four sorts of renaissance that succeed each other in regular order. It would be strange if there weren't different social arrangements for each. In a Leviathan period you'd find merchant princes; under the Unicorn there would be land-barons. Artisans' guilds would be very powerful in Phoenix periods. As true science increased, later Phoenix dynasties would see independent universities gaining in importance. A Dragon King's wealthiest retainers would be playwrights owning production companies, novelists who were their own publishers, artists with personal sales galleries, and so on.

No, I won't pretend I had all these details worked out ahead of time. But it does follow logically from the Four Dynasties as I'd already defined them and their elemental associations four years ago. Thanks for the stimulus to carry it this much further. And watch for the Coming of the Dragon. . .

As long as I'm talking about the Fourfold World, I might as well mention some of the rules I'm setting out to do it under. It's to take place in a completely original fantasy world. The Fourfold World itself is one half of the Double Reality, the other half of which I don't have a satisfactory name for yet. It's possible to transfer from one to the other under certain conditions. I hope to write THE COMING OF THE DRAGON with no author-intrusion for exposition. It's to be told in the first person, as if to someone who already knows how the Double Reality works, leaving the reader to figure it out for himself. The physical characteristics of both parts of the Double Reality are to be similar to this planet, but neither could ever take place here. I'm having a certain amount of fun inventing names for plants, animals, and so on, that give a definite impression of a particular thing without referring to any terrestrial species. Example: the buzz of blue-throated honeybirds among the cream-trumpets. Or in the Other Half of Reality: a leathery sailback drowsing on the shady side of a russetwood grove. (They haven't evolved at the same overall rate.)

But all this is for the reader to discover for himself. The Succession of Dynasties, the nature of Dragonhood, the interrelation and basic dichotomy of the Two Realities -- what can be reasonably presented in conversation will be there (how often do you talk about the Trinity? and when you do, how much of the matter do you explain to the person you're talking to?) and the rest will be left for the reader to infer.

The technical problem interests me almost as much as the story. I don't think anyone has ever done a complete fantasy (by which I mean one in which the reader is assumed to have no possible knowledge of the cosmogony assumed) without expository passages by the



Omniscient Author. And don't say GLORY ROAD, because both Oscar and Rufol--now I think of it Star herself -- they all give lectures. This (but I love you anyway, Bob) is not what I'm talking about. Even MAGIC INCORPORATED, though in its treatment it is a noble example of the principle of implication rather than exposition (at least, as I remember it) depends on the reader's understanding of magic and the already existing twentieth century. What I want to do is more like a novel by Fletcher Pratt, I think the title was THE BLUE STAR, which takes place in a world of its own. At least, I remember it so. Tolkien's Middle-Earth differs from the kind of thing I intend in two ways: the Omniscient Author speaks at times, and his Middle-Earth has very nearly the same flora and fauna as the world we know.

Lord Dunsany did from time to time accomplish Total Fantasy. But even he never wrote a novel in this manner. I would be glad if anyone could tell me of a novel set entirely in a fantasy world (not a re-geographized Earth, like the MISTRESS OF MISTRESSES locale) with no intrusion by the author. I'd like to know more about how it's done.

NOTE OF EGOBOO: I finished my First Novel (except for the putty-and-sandpaper work, and the Final Typescript with carbon paper) three days ago. One or two of you may know the basic premise that originated the work. I enjoin you not to mention that premise.

Granting, though, that the premise was borrowed, I think I've made a creditable novel of it. Nothing like the Fourfold World and the Double Reality, of course. But it is by-Phthalo my First Novel and I'm proud of it. Especially the poems at the heads of chapters I, II, VII, VIII, VIII, IX, and X. I think the one I like best is the one for Chapter X:

Sing Muse of the terrible wrath of Achilles Peleus's son  
That caused the Achaians uncountable woes, and sent ere their  
time

Many brave souls of heroes to Hades, and made them a prey

To dogs and to flesh-eating birds . . .

This being my own metrical translation from the original text. With the aid of an interlineated literal translation, to be sure.

I wasn't taking the easy way out, either. The warlord's private feud was just the thing for Chapter X.

The heading for Chapter VII also has its interesting points, but I'll pass them by for now.

This is Thursday now, and I'm not going to try to get anything done between mailing comments. Also I won't be batch-commenting as I did last night; that was pointless, because I'd put a fmz into a batch heading and then say nothing about it.

FLABBERGASTING You refer to MISTRESS OF MISTRESSES as the "sequel" to THE WORM OUROBOROS. Don't you know the others of the series? They are A FISH DINNER AT MEMISON and THE MEZENTIAN



GATE. The latter was unfortunately not completed before the author's death, and has been published as he left it: a complete outline with the most important chapters already written. If you think you know who Lessingham is and what relationship exists between him and Duke Barganax, not to mention the relation between this world and the world of Zimiamvia, you've got some surprises coming. And if you want to see where Eddison got his style, read the plays of John Webster.

The Josephine Tey title refers to the line -- from what source I don't know; the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations doesn't list it -- "Truth is the daughter of time." I can't help you with the feminine face on the cover, except to doubt that it represents Tey. The only Berkley edition of a Tey book that I have is TO LOVE AND BE WISE, also with a feminine face but one that can be accounted for in the story. I suspect that in the other case they just thought it would be a good idea to have a girl on the cover.

THE UNNAMABLE Another Queen of Spades fan. I saw a Russian movie of it a year or so ago. Tony Boucher is taking me to see the San Francisco Opera production of it this coming Sunday, goodygoody. It's amazing how few people seem ever to have heard of it.

NIFLHEIM Why should I tell you I'm glad you like California in cold mimeo when I can say so the evening after next? Well, maybe you can't come to the masquerade for some reason. I'm glad you like California.

About Burroughs and disbelief, who was it who said "Disbelief should be suspended, not hanged by the neck until dead"?

GRIGNOLINO First -drafting mailing comments? Ugh. They're (as one of my pet inventions used to say) a wart-raising nuisance to write at all, but they do fill minac requirements. I do about half my fanning directly on stencil; the story in the next to last issue of The Zed, for instance. Last issue, I included a hatful of scrap material that I didn't even try to re-write. And so on. I don't see why fanzines shouldn't be casual if the publisher feels like it.

MISTILY MEANDERING Would Ovid's METAMORPHOSES count as fantasy poetry? Then there's the "ways to get to the moon" speech in the third act of CYRANO DE BERGERAC, which is a sort of science-fantasy. Depending on how strict your definition was, you might include a great deal of Lear -- such as "The Jumb-lies" and "The Table and the Chair." Since Marlowe's FAUSTUS is in verse, you might want to include that; it's a basic fantasy plot, after all. But if I start mentioning Elizabethan verse drama with fantasy content I'll be going on all night: HAMLET, MACBETH, JULIUS CAESAR, MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, THE TEMPEST -- Still, I don't suppose this is what you want at all.

By the way, do you know THE SPACE-CHILD'S MOTHER GOOSE?



MEST Wasn't that trick of using the camera as the narrator's eyes also done in an Orson Welles film? HEART OF DARKNESS, I believe it was; and he invented a technique called "featherwipe" to replace the cut or pan as a way of looking in another direction. It was a very quick pan, slowing as the point aimed at was approached. No, I never saw the film, I only read about it.

Is your new typer a Son of Thunders, or is there another reason? I don't really appreciate your nostalgia over your old typer. I had mine longer than you did, also wrote my first pro material on it, and so on. But as soon as I got enough money to buy this sweet purring Smith-Corona I turned the old Remington over to Astrid without a qualm. She may learn to type before she actually wrecks it.

Your trouble with comment-format in connection with Armistead's Animals could be solved easily by breaking the title into two lines.

STUMPING I sure like that cover.

A CONCORDANCE TO THE LORD OF THE RINGS This goes even further than Al haLevy's project in its way. Al was only going to identify all proper nouns. He was of course also going to define all words in languages of Middle-Earth and the Elven Lands as well. Why am I saying, GOING to? He's done it, and looking for a publisher; he wants it to be a book rather than a fanzine.

SPELEOBEM The poem by Moyes that you're thinking of does, I believe, quote the one by Newbolt. It describes how the drum was beaten and Drake did return -- as Nelson. "The fishes had taken an eye and an arm, but we knew him just the same."

I'll be hanged if I can tell what Chesterton meant by WHO GOES HOME. Let me know if you find out.

Six by-Phthallo pages of mailing comments. Or as near as makes no difference, anyway. That's more than I generally manage in a year or more. Obviously, I was turned on by my favorite subject, Utopia and How I'll Write One, but it wasn't all due to that. Could be I'm getting the knack of writing the things. And just when I swore I'd go minac and concentrate on writing for Money. Still, this has taken me two evenings, and "Arzan Honey" was finished in one. Besides giving me much-needed practice at scene setting.

I wonder if I mightn't do better writing plays? I know I'm good at dialog. But there is virtually no market for s-f plays (DON'T say "write for TV!"). So, after I've written something that I intend to sell, I have to go over it again and insert descriptions of places, clothing, physical movement, and all that. Also I'm weak on plotting. I tend to call my characters onto a bare stage and let them chit-chat. There again fan-fiction can give me useful exercise. I have more damn projects that keep having to be sent back to the drawing board because the blueprint had too many Black Boxes and not enough specs.



The following is a sort of five-finger-exercise, which I will describe by the long unused and hence stealable title of

### SEEMINGLY POINTLESS STORY

You might say a martlet had guided me, or that I'd passed by the brushwood pile; at any rate, there I was, riding at an urgent sort of trot down a twilit road. It wasn't by any means evening, but heavy clouds had eaten most of the sky, leaving a desperate sickly band of light on the eastern horizon, the wind was blowing the Charge and the whole world smelled of the coming rain.

I came over a swell of grassland and there was a valley under me, all snug from the yellow light of a tavern. I couldn't make out the sign at this distance but why ask at a time like this? It had a roof and that was what I needed. I urged my gelding to a gallop: that rain was too close to guess about. Ho! and into the valley we went; hoof-thrum, slap of sword, creak of boots on stirrup leather. I wanted that roof.

And then it was The Old Ship. If I'd asked I couldn't have named better. I pulled the gelding to a halt in the courtyard (he'd have crashed the wall if I'd let him; that horse was as stupid as any I've seen, and that's saying some) and shouted for an ostler.

It would take a fool or a dullard to step into The Old Ship and not shake a bit at the rataplan of his heart. But it's not well to stop and look about like a gowk, either; so I went straight up to the bar and asked Master Humphrey for a tot of his justly famed rum. As I did so the rain I'd raced pounded onto that much-desired roof like cavalry.

"Here's a happy deliverance indeed, Master Humphrey," I said, "and will you drink with me to the fortune that brought me dry and safe to your door?" Which he would, and with the best of will.

I found me a seat then, close enough to the fire that I was in the group of those about it, but back far enough that I could survey them and bring their names to mind. First, over to my right and near the hearth, I saw the duke's grace of Zayana; very ruddy indeed with the firelight on his red mustachios and hair, to speak little of his rich vesture touched here and there with gold. Next him sat Strider the ranger, somewhat backward from the hearth, and fading into the shadows as though habitual from long concealment in the marches of Arnor. Next him I recognized Fafhrd of the fair hair and great thews, and between Fafhrd and myself lithe grey-clad Mouser.

Glancing then to the left (though all the while maintaining pretense that I looked only at the fire in that noble great hearth) I noted Gonfal the mathematical reasoner, whom gladly I would have questioned concerning many matters; but then my eye passed to those two who sat beyond him, they being well known to me from days of much rejoicing in long-ago springtimes. I greeted them, Gilgamesh and Tammuz, in the names of all the drinks we had shared. Then one by one all that company joined us in drinking and merriment; and I believe verily that such is nearly as marvellous strange a thing as man may ever do.



Not another Seemingly Pointless Story, though it's set in the same locale; I just had so much fun with it that I'm going to use The Old Ship as a general setting for five-finger exercises.

## SWORD MISSING

I stop in for a drink at The Old Ship wherever I can. That's not a slip, by the way: I mean where, not whenever. Those who're familiar with the inn will know what I mean.

I went in one night and saw my friend Gervase Perrot standing at the bar talking to Master Humphrey. "Well, Pankard-Marshall!" I greeted him. "Is the Assize of Cwrw Dda to be moved here from The Greyhound?"

"If the place could be found in Gwent every May-calends, it might," said Perrot with a smile: both of us knowing that no such thing was to be expected.

"Tell me some good news," I invited. "Have you finished your book of the Nine Joyous Journeys?"

"Finished it as well as I can. It will never stand beside the Red Book of Rabanus Jocosus or the Dizain of Queens."

"As to that, what ever could?" I replied. "What are you having?"

Perrot had a pint of mild-and-bitter; I took the inn's famous rum. We moved over to the fireplace to join the small group already there. There was a tall, fair-haired man in a red cloak thrown back over his shoulders and girt with a great curved sword; a smaller man in a sort of hussar's uniform, with curling mustache and audacious eyes; and a young Japanese wearing white clothes like a judo-fighter's gi, with a sword I thought I recognized.

I said to Perrot, loud enough to be heard but softly enough to be ignored if the Japanese chose, "I wonder if that might be Yamato Take."

He chose to hear. "You spoke my name. Have I seen you before?"

"Not until now, Mikoto," I answered, bowing deeply. I hoped I'd given him the right honorific; a sword like his can come out in an almighty hurry. Either I got it right or he didn't care about protocol; probably the latter. One of his birth doesn't visit a public house to insist on etiquette. "May I be permitted to ask whether the Mikoto's sword is the one called the Grass-Cleaver?"

He seemed pleased that I'd heard of it. The big blond looked surprised.

"Have swords names? Surely they'd best be known by the names of their owners," he said, setting his hand on the pommel of his own.

"Many famous swords have had names," said Perrot. "In my own land there was one called Outsteel."

"Yes, and there are Flame-of-the-west, Needful, and the rest," I said. "I remember even a throwing knife with a name: it was called Anna."

The blond man frowned. "Is the custom common, then? And I have



defended Merimna with nameless steel!"

I placed him, then. "No shame, Welleran," I assured him. "Your sword is among the famous ones."

The hussar -- if he was a hussar -- laughed lightly and twisted his mustache. "Swords!" he said. "Those butcher-tools, swords? How could one fence with them?"

Welleran and Prince Yamato looked at him as though he were talking gibberish. I wondered myself who could say such a thing to two renowned conquerors. Perhaps he didn't recognize their names. For that matter, Welleran and Prince Yamato didn't know each other. The difference was that they were willing to. If this fellow wanted to know either of them he was doing a fine job of hiding it.

"Has your sword a history, Welleran?" asked the prince.

"Only the history I've given it, Mikoto." He'd been quick to pick that up. "May I hear the history of the Mikoto's sword?"

For the full tale, you should go to the Kojiki. It's quite a yarn. Prince Yamato gave it fairly briefly, but what it amounts to is this: the God Susano-o found it in the backbone of an eight-headed dragon, it had been kept in the shrine of the Goddess Amaterasu -- Yamato's own direct ancestress -- as one of the Three Treasures of Japan, and his aunt the High Priestess had given it to him to subdue the barbarians with. Welleran was delighted with the story, and so was Perrot; the other man wasn't impressed. He glanced at me and said in a soft, sneering tone: "Gods and dragons! I could think of ten better stories in as many minutes."

Then Prince Yamato was taking out the Grass-Cleaver and showing it to Welleran. The champion of Merimna handled the sword with respect and awe. He hefted it gently to try the balance and turned it sideways to admire the ripple of light on its surface.

"May I see it, Mikoto?" I asked. He nodded assent and Welleran handed it to me. It was a lovely thing to look at, and even finer to handle: it seemed ready to leap like a live thing. Perrot asked to see it after me.

Welleran showed his own sword to the Prince. It was very different from the Grass-Cleaver, and by comparison almost the butcher-tool the stranger had called it. Welleran was the only one of us who could raise it one-handed. We passed it from hand to hand; even Master Humphrey came from behind the bar to try it. When we had all done Welleran sheathed it again.

I glanced around for the Grass-Cleaver and saw the stranger step down from a bench against the wall. "Are you through waving those meat-cutters around?" he asked. "It's scarcely safe while you do."

Prince Yamato looked about. "Where is my sword?" he asked.

"I gave it to you, Perrot," I said. "Where did you put it?"

"I passed it on to the other gentleman," Perrot said.

"Meaning me?" said the stranger. "I hardly looked at it. I set it on the table there, behind you, and someone else picked it up -- I didn't notice who. Then that other sword was waved about so recklessly that I thought it best to move back." He nodded to the bench I'd seen him standing on.

"I never saw it on that table or any other," Master Humphrey said. "Nor I didn't see anybody with it. We were all looking at the other one."



"You come very near to accusing me of falsehood," said the stranger, with a bubble of laughter in his throat. "What more ridiculous thing could be imagined! A greasy innkeeper disputes the word of a Count of Hentzau." He glanced round at us, sure we were on his side -- he was usually able to talk people around when he set himself to it. But he had the wrong audience. He was plausible and charming now, but he'd sneered a little too obviously at Welleran and Yamato Take and he'd impugned the word of an innkeeper before the Tankard Marshall. And he had told me his name.

"Hentzau, is it!" I retorted. "I didn't see you when I was in Strelsau, Rupert, but I know even better than you how King Rudolf came to be crowned. What have you done with the sword?"

"What would I want with that sword?" he laughed.

"I don't know. Likely enough the idea of the theft itself was what appealed to you," I answered. "Or you thought it might be amusing to have a God's trophy for a knickknack. Where is the sword?"

"The question becomes boring," Rupert said, stroking his curly mustache. "As you see, I have a sword of my own. Would you care to measure its length against yours?"

I'd have refused him in any event -- no matter how right I was, I'd never expect to win trial-by-combat against young Hentzau -- but then Perrot interrupted.

"I am a magistrate of the High Court of Cervisage," he said, "and I claim jurisdiction over these proceedings, inasmuch as all matters pertaining to inns are in our care." Master Humphrey and I were ready enough to concede that. The others looked dubious. I turned to the prince.

"We are not standing upon one of those islands brought forth by the Mikoto's divine progenitors," I told him. "Nor is any man here in his native land, save that a good inn is native to all who resort to it. Considering it thus, Mikoto, the worthy Tankard Marshall is the highest in standing here, and it is right for us to hear his judgment."

I swear if he'd had that sword to hand he'd have mowed the lot of us. But he didn't. After a minute he nodded grudgingly.

"The Count von Hentzau is the last person who admits having had the missing sword," said Perrot. "His account of the following events is unsatisfactory. Count, have you thought of anything further that might help us in locating it?"

"Just this," said Rupert. "If I took it, where could I have put it?"

"By that reasoning, the sword is not missing," Perrot said coldly.

"Wait!" I said. "Hentzau, what were you doing on that bench?"

"Getting away from that blasted overgrown saber of Welleran's, as I told you," he shrugged.

"No. You could simply have gone to the further end of the room. What could you do while standing there?" I stepped up on the same bench. "No, stand back, Hentzau! You could stand here -- and reach up to the crossbeam -- Nobody saw you, because they were all looking at the other sword." I reached up where the beam met the wall and felt the hilt of the sword. Everybody was watching as I brought it down -- and when we took our eyes off the Grass-Cleaver, Rupert was gone. The slam of the door and an instant later the drum of hoofs told us enough. Prince Yamato would have tried to catch him, but I shook my head.

"For him, Strelsau is out there," I said. "But not for us."



# THE NEWEST HERO

1. The flood of condolences from around the world that were broadcast during the first hours after Kennedy's death, one phrase out of all the rest caught my attention. This was Sir Winston Churchill's characterization of Kennedy as "wise and valiant." How very Gandalfish of Churchill, I thought; probably no other statesman alive would have used that phrase.

This set off a chain of thought that has taken a week and a half to complete. First of all I wondered who Gandalf might have called "wise and valiant" and I concluded that, had Aragorn died before the War of the Ring was finished, Gandalf would have spoken of him so.

That made me understand the nature of the sense of utter outrage and wrongness I felt. It was the outrage one would have felt if it had been not Boromir but Aragorn who was slain by the orcs at Parth Galen.

But this is a time of no simple winning or losing, and no Ring to destroy for our secure victory. Aragorn could look forward to peace through Middle Earth, and his kingdom reunited and returned to its old prosperity. There could never have been any such "happily ever after" for Kennedy. He faced a hostile Congress and a quarrelling nation, in a world full of hesitant allies and probable enemies. And no matter what happened he must turn the job over to someone else after a maximum of eight years. What would he do after that?

So I thought again of his life as a story intended to end as it did -- as the legend it will be in the future. Here was a man born to wealth, endowed with wit and intelligence and charm, who won fame as a writer and as a soldier, who had a beautiful and gracious wife and charming children, and who reached the highest office in the nation while still youthfully handsome -- and who never grew old.

He never suffered the slow stages of loss of power, youth, popularity, and the hope of accomplishment. He never became feeble and pathetic. Nor will we see him so; he remains for us as he was at his height, a sun that rose high and never set.

He is like Henry V or Alexander, Lincoln or Caesar: dead in victory and forever safe from defeat.

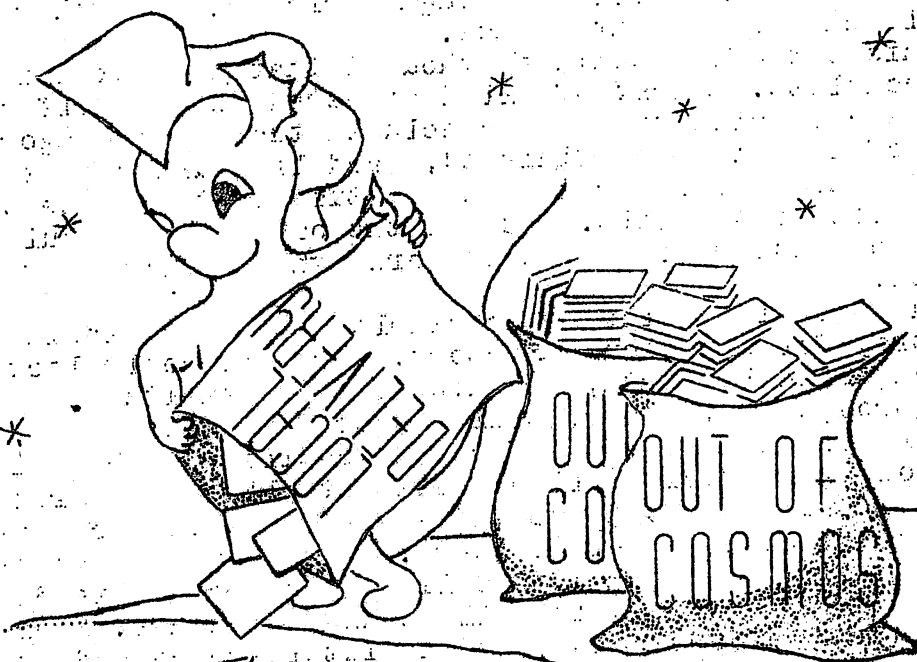
So much for rationalization and the long view. But he is not yet two weeks dead. It is too soon to feel anything but grief and outrage. We have lost one of the great men of our time, and we can ill afford the loss. We try to soothe ourselves with memorials, the Kennedy Platz in Berlin, Cape Kennedy, any number of new schools and streets and suchlike: it only reminds us of how much we have lost. We can conjure as we will with his name; the man is dead.

John Kennedy is dead. God help us all.



CHRISTMAS \* GREETINGS \* FROM \* DOHEUG

OUT OF COSMOS



AND KAREN ANDERSON