

new worlds



No.179/5s.

FICTION ■ ART ■ SCIENCE

ALSO:
Under the
Sea with
Hubert
Humphrey

Fritz
Leiber:
"The Square
Root of
Brain"

AND
MORE

Michael Moorcock
asks: HAS THE
FAD FOR THE BAD
GONE TOO FAR?

BARBARELLA & THE ANXIOUS FRENCHMAN

**Last Exit ↗
to Brooklyn**

BANNED . . .

and now you cannot read one of America's most distinguished modern novels. Hubert Selby has joined James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Norman Douglas, Emile Zola, Henry Miller etaal who were once kept from the British reader. The publishers have gone to High Court to defend the principle of free expression. The proceedings, originally instigated by Sir Cyril Black as a private action, and taken further by the Director of Public Prosecutions, has drastically reversed the previously liberal attitude towards writing that explored and created an understanding of social and sexual problems and violence in comtempor contemporary society. The Defence of Literature and the Arts Fund has been set up to reverse the LAST EXIT decision and to provide a permanent legal fund to protect the serious artist from irresponsible prosecution. Please help by sending a donation to:

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new worlds

Number 179

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Cover from 'Barbarella' (Paramount)

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NEW WORLDS is © February 1968, published monthly at 11 Goodge Street,
London, W.1, with the assistance of the Arts Council of Great Britain. Manuscripts
should be typewritten, double spaced with wide margins on white, quarto
paper and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. No
responsibility is taken for loss or damage to manuscripts or artwork.

Subscriptions 60/- per year (\$10.00) for 12 issues.

LEAD-IN



NO, IT'S NOT another tongue-in-cheek feature on Batman, James Bond and good bad movies. In fact, we're of the opinion that there's no such thing as a good bad film. There are bad films one may enjoy, that's all. We think that James Bond films and the like are *bad* bad movies and **Michael Moorcock**, in the first of a new series beginning page 13, seems to think so, too. **Barbarella and the Anxious Frenchman** is a new kind of feature, aiming at taking an idiosyncratic view of a society that can produce so much "art" that is merely perverse and contains little of real creative merit.

Moorcock says of his feature and its technique: "I've been worried more and more by the increasing tendency to confuse ordinary sensationalism with true artistic vitality.

I've been concerned, too, with the cynical attitudes that exist in painting, film-making and writing of all kinds. The rejection of old aesthetic and moral conventions is necessary to the age we live in, but now we should be entering a period of consolidation, must try to establish new conventions that suit our time. The feature tries to put across my view of why the camp thing is currently so big in France, why one should take a stand against it wherever it exists. We don't need cynicism now—whether it takes the form of cynical academic novels like *Giles Goat Boy*, magazines like *EVERGREEN*, music like Cage's, painting like Warhol's or bored criticism like most of that appearing in bland Sunday newspapers such as *The Observer* and *The Sunday Times*. On the other hand long, reasoned arguments against such trivia become themselves earnest and trivial, and that's why I've chosen this method of presenting my personal opinions. A sense of commitment is fine, so long as one keeps one's sense of humour, too."

MOORCOCK SAYS HE'S bored with the whole trendy bit and, as an sf writer, has perhaps a greater sense of commitment in his writing than others. The same could be said of **Robert Sheckley**, much respected sf writer who will probably be returning to live in London this summer. Passing through London on his way to winter in Spain, Sheckley spoke of his own decisions as a writer when, a few years ago, he sat down and wrote *Journey of Joenes* (published in book form as *Journey Beyond Tomorrow*), a kind of *Candida* of the future. "I finally decided," he said, "to write nothing that bored me—I would leave things out rather than write them." The result was *Journey of Joenes*, his best book to be published in England so far, and two more equally individualistic books are due to be published soon. Sheckley represents the new kind of sf writer who can no longer easily be categorized, a writer who writes for himself and to entertain as broad a public as possible, a writer who resents any kind of label being attached to him, who says, "I write the kind of books I want to write. Call them sf books if you like—I think of them just as

books. . . ." We hope to be featuring some fiction by Sheckley very soon.

Fritz Leiber writes about his story **The Square Root of Brain**: "From late 1937 until the middle of 1941 I worked for Consolidated Book Publishers in Chicago on their 1938 edition of *The Standard American Encyclopaedia* helping expunge some of the wilder articles which are quoted in my story (where I changed the title to *Universal American Encyclopaedia*).

"Checking through several encyclopaedias I discovered that the *Standard American* began, at least in considerable part, as reprints and perhaps pirating of the British *Chambers Encyclopaedia*. (Surely someone in Dickens' London wrote the core of that 'Combustion' article?)"

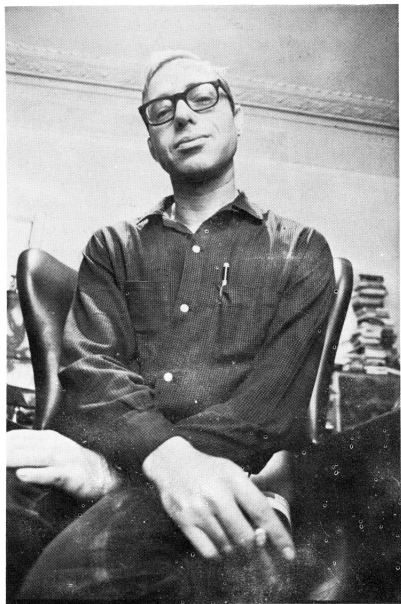
Of himself, Leiber writes: "I had a brief motion picture career in the thirties, playing the brother-in-law of Armand in the Greta Garbo and Robert Taylor *Camille*. Now I am scheduled to play Dr. Karl Klein, a physician seeking a cure for vampires, in *The Curse of the Headless Monster*. The photograph herewith is clearly that of my monster persona."

THE SAME IS true of Norman Spinrad, twenty-six-year-old author of our serial **Bug Jack Barron**. Spinrad decided to write a serious book, using the language and background of California, where he now lives. It is a book with a moral, a book about the state of present U.S. politics, a book about the whole American scene—and it happens to be set a short way in the future. He calls it, in fact, "a synthesis novel written to satisfy the differing—though not necessarily conflicting—demands of serious mainstream avant-garde yessir boy writing, and science fiction: a coherent *Nova Express*, in a way".

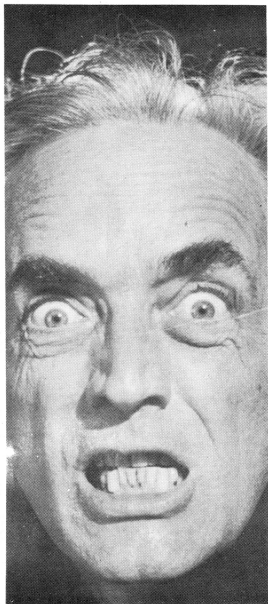
The book certainly satisfies the demands of this magazine, particularly now that we have embarked on a somewhat new approach to our presentation. This new approach does not mean, by the way, any compromise in our basic policy which is to present serious fiction and articles that attempt to make some sense out of today's world and tomorrow's.

The Publishers

Sheckley: "Nothing that bores me"



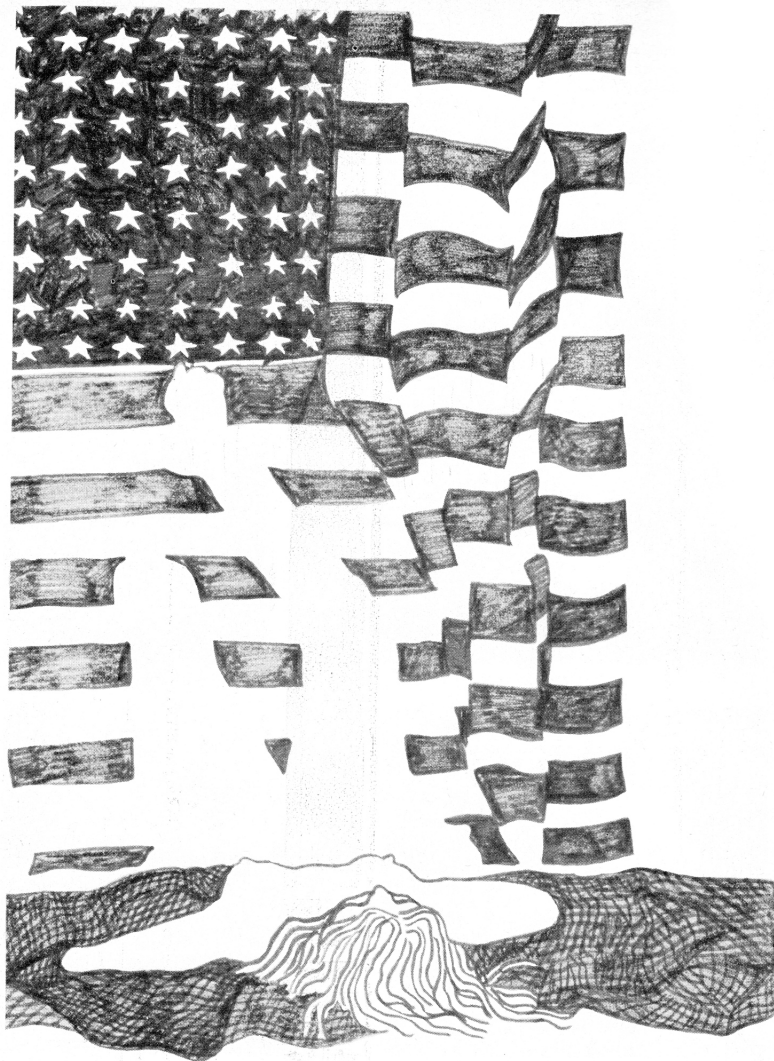
Leiber:
Movie come-back



Moorcock: "We don't need
cynicism now"



Spinrad: "Coherent Nova Express"



Jack Barron, safety-valve tv star of a society on the boil, political cop-out, cynic, Mr. Big in his own bag. Presidential nominations coming soon, the secret of eternal life may be round the corner, the whole of the States ready to blow up—and Barron battles Mr. Bigger. Fast-paced, rich in language, this novel is one of the best to come from the U.S. in recent years. They're saying it's a wonderful combination of Burroughs, Mailer and maybe O'Hara—but it's really all Spinrad's own . . .

BUG JACK BARRON

JACK BARRON—a founder member of the radical Social Justice Coalition which is now about as strong as the super-reactionary Republican Party. But Barron has sold out the SJC and now runs a powerful TV show, 'Bug Jack Barron', where individuals' grievances are given coast-to-coast airing. The show appears fearless, knocking the establishment hard, but actually it never goes far enough really to rock the boat. Barron knows it, is careful. He's estranged from his hippy wife SARA WESTERFIELD who hates to hear his name mentioned, remembers the idealist he once was.

BENEDICT HOWARDS is a man of even greater power than Barron, owns the Foundation for Human Immortality. Leave the Foundation \$50,000, and on death you're frozen and stored, to be resuscitated only when the secret of immortality has been discovered. That moment may be approaching faster than people think. Howards is given a treatment. Maybe Howards has forever. On the day of Howards' greatest triumph, Barron has a run-in with the Foundation. A negro claims (wrongly, as Barron is aware) that the Foundation practises colour prejudice. On the show Barron tries to contact Howards, but this night Howards has no intention of being disturbed and Barron, angry, hits harder than he would have done normally, bringing in people he knows hate Howards, like his old friend and co-founder of the SJC LUKAS GREENE, now the negro Governor of Mississippi. Deciding to put things right for himself with Howards, Barron then decides to give a Howards man a voice and contacts SENATOR TEDDY HENNERING, co-sponsor of the Freezer Utility Bill, which would grant Howards' Foundation a Freezing monopoly. Barron, to even the balance, gives Hennering a chance to speak at length on the show. But Hennering, inexplicably, throws away the chance, appearing strangely agitated. Barron is disconcerted, realises he's made an unwanted enemy in Howards—an enemy he can't afford to have. Little more than a year to go to the Democrat Convention. President Bobby has had his run. Will Teddy the Pretender get the nomination? Howards has his own plans—great big plans he won't let Barron scotch.

JACK BARRON EMERGED from the closed environment of the studio — with its camera, set, vidphones, promptboard, monitor all compressed into a twenty-foot by fifteen by eight pocket universe — like a man suddenly brought down from a drunk or a high or an adrenalin-stress situation: into a different and, for the moment of adjustment, not quite a vivid reality.

Barron knew this, knew it so well that he had constructed a fantasy-image to concretize the essentially non-verbal Wednesday night psychedelic moment into the normal stream of memory: the inside of the studio was actually the inside of a hundred million television sets. There was a creature which bore his name that lived in there (seeing out through monitor-eyes, hearing with vidphone ears, monitoring its internal condition through promptboard kinesthetic senses, ordering, threatening, granting grace all through the circuitry and satellites of that great gestalt of electronic integration, the network, into which he was wired, the master-switch in the circuit) for one hour a week, a creature indeed, designed and built by him like a Frankenstein android, a creature of his will, but only a segment of his total personality.

Emerging from the studio was a birth and a death: kick 'em in the ass plugged-in image of power phos-phordot Jack Barron died then, cut off from his electronic senses and circuitries of power and softflesh, bellyhunger, womanhunger, scratch-itch Jack Barron, the kid, the Boy Desperado, Jack and Sara (cool it!) Jack was born again.

Barron left the studio, walked up the corridor, opened a door and entered the monkey block directly behind the control booth. He nodded to the boys

stretching their muscles and swapping horror stories behind the three tiers of vidphone-packed desks and was about to open the control booth door when Vince Gelardi stepped through it himself.

"Right in the old groove tonight, baby," Gelardi said. "They loved it in Peoria and other traditional show biz flack."

"In the old groove?" Barron snapped with put-on uptightness, knowing it had gone over like gangbusters while avoiding the kamikaze plunge off the cliff. "In the old groove, you crazy guinea, you almost got me knocked off the air, is all! If I weren't brilliant twinkletoes boy wonder Jack Barron, you and me and this whole silly monkey block would be out pounding the pavement tomorrow."

"I was under the impression I was working *Bug Jack Barron*, the show with something to offend everyone, not old *Parish Priest* reruns," Gelardi drawled. "We're supposed to be like controversial, aren't we?"

"You said the word, Vince, and the word is *like* controversial," Barron said, now at least half-serious, he realized. "We pick on cripples, heartless bullies with feet of clay, if we feel real ancy we take on some big-mouthed dum-dum like Shabazz or a Rockwellite. We do not stick flaming swords into the tender hides of tigers with big F.C.C. network sponsor teeth like Bennie Howards. We tweak the tigers' tails every once in a while to collect merit badges, but we don't tie their tails around our waist and beat said tigers with bullwhips."

"Aw horseshit, I knew how you'd play it, knew how it'd come out, and you know I knew," Gelardi said goodnaturally. "Which is to say, with Bennie Howards getting no worse than a mild ulcer twinge, and that's why I fed you Johnson. I knew you'd make points but not bellywound points. You're my idol, Jack, you know that."

Barron laughed. "And I suppose you knew that Teddy Hennering had suddenly contracted brain-rot, I suppose?" he said, immensely pleased with his fancy footwork in retrospect.

Gelardi shrugged. "So even the great Vince Gelardi's not perfect," he said. "Seemed more like an attack of conscience, though, to me."

"There's a difference?" Barron said archly. "If there is, it doesn't matter 'cause the results are always the same — and speaking of results, did Howards' secretary leave her number with you?"

"You've gotta be kidding," Gelardi said, and Barron saw (ah well) that he meant it.

"Vince, m'boy," he said W. C. Fieldswise, "an esteemed acquaintance of mine, upon reading in a learned journal that one out of fifty women propositioned cold on streetcorners was willing, tested this theory on the corner of 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue. He received a severe battering with umbrellas, purses and other painfully rigid objects for his troubles. However, m'boy, he also got laid."

Sycophant laughter drifted to Barron's ears from

the boys in the monkey block. "What?" he huffed, still in the Fields bag. "I hear mockery of my words of wisdom? For shame, for shame; no doubt 'twas louts such as these who forced Socrates to quaff the hemlock."

"I see, as per your usual Wednesday night bag, you're feeling randy," Gelardi said.

"Randy?" Barron replied, unable-unwilling to shuck the Fields schtick. "Who is the wench, and is she *worth* feeling?" Dropping Fields, Barron said, "And so saying, he exits stage left and is off into the night." He nodded to Gelardi, bowed to the boys in the monkey block, and he was off into the night.

"YOU REALLY are Jack Barron," she said, cool honey-blonde Upper East Side 27ish executive secretary with hippy *Lower East Side* past hard-edged style. "I recognized your utter arrogance immediately, Mr. Barron."

"Call me Jack," he said, flashing her a great traveling salesman false smile. "All my enemies do." He saw her grimace, badpunwise, on cue, saw uplift hemibra holding boobs not quite all *that* good, espied little hairs peeping out from shiny black kini (this one wears underwear) telltale phoney-blonde *black* hairs, felt hard hungry legs, knew instantly living colour Jack Barron had it made.

He leaned on one elbow on the bartop, offered her his pack of Acapulco Golds, clocked the tiny little-girl conspiratorial grin as she took one, quickly lighting it with her own lighter — meaning she was pothead from eight years past way back prohibition days when shit had spice of danger from manila envelope furtive earnest small-time neighbourhood dealer. Why, he wondered, do all old-time heads prefer Acapulco (my sponsor) Golds?

"I'll bet you have all kinds of enemies . . . Jack," (two points) she said, inhaling the offering, breathing out sweet smoke sweet breath off the bartop teasing his nostrils. "Powerful enemies, important enemies . . . like Benedict Howards."

"Ah," he said, "gotcha! You caught the show tonight. (Sharp chick but not *that* sharp.) Don't tell me, you're an old and loyal fan of mine."

Tiny flicker of annoyance told him she (would never admit it) was, as she said, taking another drag, "I'm no fan of yours, I just dig . . ."

"The smell of blood?" he suggested. She favoured him with a wee bit feral smile as the grass began to hit, began to loosen thighs, loosen centres of hunger reality hunger nitty-gritty hunger make it hunger grab a piece of the action hunger ersatz power hunger fuck me into mystic circle of power where it's all at hunger make me real with your living colour prick hunger.

"Yeah, we all dig the smell of blood," Barron said, glancing around the carefully musky-dusky room, clean Upper East Side shuck barroom filled with tightly casual aging young we made it we're only one step from the top next thing to being real crowd, chicks no longer

girls and never to be women. "I like a chick with the balls to admit it. (Dig verbal possession of male organs, don't you baby?) As you may've noticed, I'm a wee bit savage myself." He cocked his head, caught chandelier lights off slick bartop in the hollows of his eyes, opened his mouth showing glimpse of lazy tongue behind teeth — conscious *Bug Jack Barron* image-trick.

Caught by his eyes, her eyes glistening flashed moment of girl-caught-looking embarrassment, big brown eyes pools of open hole hunger, shrugged can't fool this cat shrug; her shoulders slumped, elbows fell to the bartop, hands came up to cup her face, eyes still locked on his, she smiled pink tongue wet lips smile.

"I think you're probably a rotten swine," she said softly. "You like to play with people's heads and you're playing with mine and I'd go take a walk if you weren't so damned good at it."

Knowing now he had her definitively made, Jack Barron said: "That's the way I keep food on my table. Want me to split? Or would you rather I told you I loved your mind? Or would you rather let me play with your . . . head? It's not all that bad if you lean back and enjoy it."

"I don't like you at all, Jack Barron," she said. But as she said it, he felt her fingernails through his pants on his thigh.

"But you're pretty sure you're gonna like what I'm gonna do to you, eh?"

"I'm queer for the smell of blood, just like you said," she said (feral lost little-girl smile sending a pang through him, déjà vu pang déjà vu smile déjà vu honey-haired girl, hip-brittle carapace over sweet sigh loser softness) "even if it is my own. A man like you can smell that on a girl, can't he? Okay, monster, lead me to the slaughter."

Easy as that, thought Jack Barron. Better be if you want a piece of the action, baby—dozen others in here hungry as you, dozen other bars, dozen other honey-haired . . . (Cool it!)

"Let's split for you-know-where," he said, taking her dry, cool hand. "I'll give you something to tell your grandchildren about."

PICKING INSTANT PUSSY up off the rack was a sometime thing with Jack Barron, specifically a Wednesday night after the show ritual and Claude, the ordinarily wise-ass doorman didn't even crack a small behind-the-chick's-back smile as he ushered the honey-blond through the door, across the lobby and into the penthouse elevator and that bugged Jack Barron.

Fucker Claude's used to this, not even an in-joke between us anymore, Barron thought as the elevator swept them silently upward. Makes me feel like some goddamned fetishist, how long's this Wednesday night Saras. . . ? (Cool it—too late to cool it, man, who you shucking?)

As the elevator stopped, Barron looked at the name-

less girl clutching his hand, saw honey-blond dyed hair big brown eyes slightly - prosthetic - made - for - balling body saw latest in interminable line of honey-blond big eyed déjà vu Saras, felt pattern enmeshing him like fate, like creature plugged into kismet relay circuitry, felt stronger than lust weaker than love thing for the nameless girl, girl hungry for living colour image-prick of world-famous Jack Barron. Fair deal, he thought, value given for value received like Howards' Freeze contracts: ball me with your image, baby, and I'll ball you with mine.

The elevator door opened and Barron led the girl out into his private entrance foyer, with its bearskin carpeting, kinesthrop mural (great humming retina-reversing, image - after - image instability calculated, yellow on blue spirals) facing the elevator and shepherding her silently forward into the narrow, dark hall womb-tunnel between the closed doors to the office and kitchen and into the inevitable living room stupefaction.

On the twenty-third floor of a New York apartment house in the East Sixties, Jack Barron lived in Southern California. The hall opened on to a narrow breakfast-bar deck that overlooked a vast red-carpeted sunken living room with the entire far wall great glass sliding doors that opened out on to a palmettoed, rubberplant-festooned patio backdrop was the East River lights haze, everdusk of Brooklyn. The ceiling of the penthouse living room was an enormous, clear plexiglass, faceted geodesic dome skylight. Living room furnishings: an entire wall of built-in electronic bric-à-brac—tv screens, videotaperecorder, taperecorder, AM-FM-stereo rig, colour organ complex, blipper, vidphones, yards of interlocking control consoles—couches in orange, rust, blue upholstery, black leather hassocks, redwood benches with half a dozen assorted matching tables, camel saddles, six mounds of varicoloured pillows, oriental style, all arranged around a ten-foot square sunken open-flame tiled firepit (sidedraft automatic gas type) casting tall, flickering, orange-red shadows from the already-kindled-by-switch-in-foyer ersatz bonfire.

Barron threw a switch on a remote-console by the bar (remote switch consoles to all gizmos scattered throughout the apartment) and Barron-edited raga-rock tape music-collage droned electricity into the air, another and the colour-organ scintillated the skylight facets with ever-shifting spectrum-flashes modulated to the music.

The honey-blond gasped, turned eyes big (Berkeley eyes for hipstyle campus hero Baby Bolshevik crusader adore worship eyes always those eyes before she blew him) with wonder on him, surprise-synapses whited out, said dumbly: "Mr. Barron. . ."

Barron blinked away déjà vu tenderness images, hardened, picked up colour organ flickers, firepit warmth, in hair, in half-opened mouth, eyehollows, said measurely sardonic: "And you haven't seen the *bed-room* yet."

"I think I'd like to," she said with hard-little-girl

sweetness. "I have the feeling it's going to be quite an experience."

Barron laughed, found himself suddenly with *this* girl, right here right now, whatever her name was smell of her stronger than lingering déjà vu odour of Sara. Just a good simple fuck, he thought as he led her down the redwood stairs, across the carpet to the bedroom door. Make it with *her*, not with *Sara*.

Feeling like a horny, healthy, mindless phallic animal, he opened the door and they stepped inside to outside.

A balmy late New York May night, and the far wall of the bedroom was open, ceiling to floor, side to side, to the open air rubber trees of the patio against the city-twilight dusky blackness ceiling was a single continuous clear-glass skylightbubble starless citysky blackness wall-to-wall carpet was sensuous green plasticgrass undulating in the breeze off the patio big circular bed elevated in stage centre illuminated in gilded light projected from the semi-circular, living-ivy-covered, weathered-wood headboard (built-in bookshelves, control console) that half encircled it. Taped distant surf-roar, quiet insectsounds tropical nightounds filled the room, replacing the music as Barron adjusted a wall console.

"It's . . . why it's. . ." the girl stammered, looking at him with new eyes, no longer sure eyes looking down into depths she knew (he knew she knew) she could never fathom, knowing flashfashion that *this* (not luck, not accident, not trick) was why she was a reality-hungry executive secretary and he was Jack Barron.

BARRON SMILED A warm, proud, little-boy Berkeley smile, took both her hands in his, paused in ye olde bedroom routine to savour a moment of genuine non-seduction-oriented pride in the way the bedroom softened her eyes, softened his image, her image, made them two simple human beings holding hands before a bed on a warm spring night. The living room was a purposeful tour de force extension of living colour Jack Barron, but the bedroom was Jack, was Berkeley Jack and Sara pad up on hill was little L.A. house in the Canyon warm summer night plant-scent balling was beachouse in Acapulco Sara smelling from surf-body-sweat was outdoors-indoors-outdoors wistful double (New York-California-New York) expatriate image happy science fiction California of the mind.

She broke the moment, fell forward against him flung arms around his neck; he could see her mouth open tongue already hungrily extended in the instant before her lips touched his mouth—open, waiting but sardonically compliant rôle-reversal.

Her tongue live desperation live wanting live make me real live in his mouth, she pressed her body undulating from shoulders down breasts first belly finally hard angular pelvis totally against him pressed hard body hard tongue hard mouth hard his jaws aching stretching against him on all points of him-her interface pathetic frantic attempt to breach interface merge

her vague body-image-self with the hard-edged living colour Coast-to-Coast electric reality of Jack Barron.

Through his open eyes light-years removed, he saw hers tightly shut, felt yawning sucking energy-reality-life vacuum of her leeching hungry against him, mouth inhaling his magic breath reality breath in total desire to be filled, engulfed, permeated, transfigured (in his skin body image, inside looking out to share electric circuit satellite network public property hyperexistence) by him.

Repulsion-attraction oscillating, he pressed against her, began to move his tongue drifting her back to the bed felt her go soft-sigh totally yielding live limp as she felt him at last as an active principal—softwomanflesh feast wanting only to be devoured, digested, incorporated in his flesh-image-power.

Slipping off his sportjacc, he eased she drew him down on the bed nailed fingers clawing away his shirt digging into bare backflesh as he unzipped she slid out snakewise from discarded-skin sheathdress fumbling his pants as he pulled-kicked them away with his loafers on to the plastigrass floor reached down left-handed flipped off socks unhooked uplift hemibra glided down red silk kini (curled hairs dyed-blond black as predicted) and they were naked together, breeze moving over skin.

Suddenly a strange moment of pause (full beat) as bedroom ripping clothes passion image hungers shifted by flesh-to-flesh in virgin breeze to new style of perception-reality: naked bodies elemental reality. Barron looked down eyes slow hands soft and still, saw nipples-breasts-belly-navel-crotch simple right here right now woman's body, warm, soft, well-turned woman body, is all. The girl held her breath, smiled simple human smile up at him eyes smouldering pure ball-me eyes simple you-Tarzan-me-Jane anygirl smile. He smiled back at *her*. Happy sweet shift-gears moment's pause before. . . .

She clamped legs-vice around him moved under him sucked him welcome in her eyes closed little grunts fingernails in buttocks he moaned moved over her into around with hands chestmuscles mouth organ his consciousness in skin in hands in muscles in slowly-thrusting organ, tactile kinesthetic rhythmic he-she pleasure interface rippling itself wildly, independent of either of them.

He closed his eyes opened himself felt pleasure-waves crescendoing through organs skin thighs of perception muscles in cresting rhythm wave rising, rising rising felt her riding half-beat ahead of him—*me* you, *me*-you—with eachother meshing liquid-smoothly-functioning, pleasure-pump organic mechanism to one beat from his own pain-pleasure her-him synapse-white-out reversal spasm and she—

Came. Moaned screamed dug nails "Jack Jack Jack" cries mouth enveloped his ear tongue inside flicked him over the edge into timeless moment rushing orgasm: pleasure whiting out into reversal unbearable delicious déjà vu harmonic spasm touch-see-her-remember



ecstasy-images—

Tongue in ear “Jack Jack Jack” cries of Berkeley L.A. California houses Acapulco beach her hair lips body sea-salty wet moving Sara tongue of Jack and Sara ears bodies shared breath sighs smells sweats coming face to face (he opened eyes saw big blonde brown eyes ecstasy grimace) together coming together coming coming coming. Together.

“Sara Sara Sara,” he cried, spending himself spending seed pleasure images flashing through him leaving him moment of reflex warm tenderness-emptiness; lips tender, he moved towards her mouth, stopped all at once was back New York '87 Wednesday night back revulsion-remorse and the wind blowing in from the patio turned cool, real cool cool.

“The name is Elaine,” the blonde said from continental long-distance operator hip-hard carapace 27ish executive secretary pickup distance.

“No shit?” said Jack Barron.

“BENEDICT HOWARDS?” Jack Barron repeated into his office intercom as if disbelief might make the wraith vanish in a puff of ectoplasm. Oughta stay away from this goddamned office, he thought, let network have me for one hour a week then lie doggo in the pad rest of the time, trouble like Howards comes looking for me at least it'd be on my own turf. But the powers that be, are, insist I warm dumb chair under network noses Fridays to deal with screams of anguish after cooling-off Thursdays, Mondays to plot new Wednesday screams of wounded vips to soothe again next Friday—sado-masochistic daisy-chain.

“Send Howards in,” Barron half-groaned, hoping Carrie had the intercom volume up so Bennie would know how pleased he was to see him, but knowing she ran tight ship under network orders (try to keep Barron from devouring vips, for chrissakes, Miss Donaldson) cool, competent Carrie, efficient and distant even in bed (network orders there, too? he often wondered).

The office door opened, held by willowy, dark, suppressing her distaste for sloth's den (I sit here on sufferance) décor of inner office Carrie's as '70s-elegant (black buttonless silk suit white ascot over red ruff-collared shirt) tall, pink-skinned, thin-hair-worn-long, semi-chubby Benedict Howards bustled by her, stood wordlessly in front of the randomly-littered desk.

“Split, Carrie,” Barron said, knowing it would bug Howards, who wouldn't publicly first-name secretary he had been balling for five years. (Wonder if he is balling that iceberg of his?) As Carrie left, Barron motioned Howards to the mouldy ancient leather-covered chair in front of the desk, grinned as Howards gingerly planted his ass on the edge of the chair like a man thoroughly convinced you *could too* get clap from a toilet seat.

“Well, Howards?” Barron said. “To what do I owe the somewhat dubious pleasure of your company?”

“You're not on camera, Barron, so you're wasting your smart-ass cleverness on me,” Howards said, “and

you know goddamned well why I'm here. I don't like knives in my back, and I warn you, no one does it three times to Benedict Howards. First time you get a warning, second time you get squashed like a bug.”

“If you weren't so fucking charming, Howards, I'd take that as a threat,” Barron said. “Fortunately for you, I've got an easy-going disposition. Because I don't like threats, man; they bug me. And this Wednesday you got a small taste of what happens when you bug Jack Barron. But it was just a taste, Howards, nobody got really hurt and we both know it. I made some points because that's the name of the game, but I gave you a chance to get out from under. It wasn't my fault you didn't take me up on it—I hope you got yourself a big one.”

Barron smiled as he saw Howards' face go blank for a moment. (Mr. Howards is on a hunting and fishing trip in Canada, Mr. Barron.) “I thought so,” Barron said. “I don't know why you thought it was a smart move to be out to me when I was on the air, but I didn't like it. You got cut up, it was strictly your own fault. You had your chance to make points for your goddamned Freezer bill, and you blew it. I run a simple show, Howards—you make me look dumb, I return the favour. Which is why I cut up Yarbrough and gave Luke Greene the floor.”

“I seem to remember that you and Greene were pretty tight at one time,” Howards said. “For all I know, you're still involved with the Social Justice Coalition. . . . The way you made Yarbrough look like an asshole and then letting that goddamned coon spout his Communistic—”

“Let's get a couple things straight,” Barron snapped. “One: John Yarbrough is a *self-made* asshole. Two: I'm in show business, Mr. Howards, I'm not a politician. I kissed the S.J.C. goodbye when I got this show and I consider it good riddance. I'm interested in my ratings and selling cars and dope and nothing else. You don't like me, fine, but give me credit for being a cut above an imbecile. I use the show to roll any party's little red wagon, I get stomped by the F.C.C. quicker than you can pass the word to your two tame commissioners and then I can *really* go back to waving picket-signs. But you know something, man, there's mighty little bread in that line of work, and I like the way I'm living now a lot better than I liked scrounging around Berkeley and L.A.

“And finally, Howards, while I don't give a shit about Luke's politics, he is an old friend of mine, and if you call him a coon or a nigger to my face again, I'll kick your ass all around this office.”

“Do you know who you're talking to?” Howards shouted. “No one gives lip to Benedict Howards! I'll squeeze your sponsors and the network and put pressure on the F.C.C. and I've got more than enough muscle to do it. Cross me, and I'll cut you to dogmeat and feed you to the fishes.”

“And how long do you think that'd take?” Barron said mildly.

"I can have you off the air in a month, and you better believe it," Howards said.

"Four weeks, four shows," said Jack Barron. "Think about that. Think about what I could do to you if I had nothing to lose because you were killing my show anyway. Four weeks worth of sheer spite, four hours in front of a hundred million people and me with nothing better left to do than take revenge on you and your Foundation. Sure you can destroy me if you want to commit hara kiri—and for that matter, I can always kamikaze you. We're both big boys, Bennie, too big for either of us to do in the other without making it a Samsón-smash. I don't like you and you don't like me, but you've got nothing to worry about from me unless you back me into a corner. But if I go, you go, too, and don't you forget it."

SUDDENLY, UNPREDICTABLY, HOWARDS went smooth. "Look," he said, with jarring reasonableness, "I didn't come here to trade threats with you. You hurt my Freezer bill, cost me a few votes, but—"

"Don't blame me," Barron said. "Blame that schmuck Hennering. He's your boy and that's why I put him on, to let your side make points and even things out. It's not my fault if the dum-dum—"

"That's all ancient history, Barron," Howards said. "I'm interested in the future. Man like me's gotta take the long view. (Howards smiled a weird beatific smile—what the hell's *that*?) Barron thought. The *real* long view. . . . And the Freezer Utility Bill's mighty important to my future, to the future of the human—"

"Aw, spare me that crap, will you. . . ." Barron drawled. "You want a bill passed to give you a Freezer monopoly, that's your bag, but don't try to bullshit me about the future of the human race. You're looking out for Number One, period. Keep it on that level and maybe I'll listen."

"All right, Barron, I'll lay it on the line. You've got something I need—*Bug Jack Barron*. You've got a pipeline to a hundred million Americans and what they think about the bill can swing some votes in Congress, not as many votes as they'd like to think, maybe, but some. I want those votes. I want you to do the kind of shows that will get me those votes—not every week, we can't be too obvious, but just the right touches here and there. You've got the following and know-how to pull it off. That's what you can do for me, Barron, and in return—"

"You're crazy, you know that?" said Jack Barron. "You expect me to risk the show by grinding your private axe? Where's the percentage, Howards? I knock down four hundred thou in a good year, maybe I got thirty years left, who knows. That's like twelve million dollars, enough money to let me live exactly the way I want to, and I *dig* doing the show. Forget it, man, you can't buy me the way you buy loxes like Teddy Hennering. You just don't have anything I want that bad."

Benedict Howards smiled a smug smile. "Don't I?"

he said, "I've got something everyone wants, something you can't buy with money—*life*, Barron, *life* itself. Immortality. Think about it, man, a life that goes on and on, not for a lousy century but millenium after millenium, young and strong and healthy forever. Think about what that means every morning when you wake up knowing it's all there forever—the way food tastes the way a woman's body feels the smell of the air, all of it yours, and all of it forever. Wouldn't you sell your soul for that? Wouldn't anyone? Because you wouldn't need a soul to go somewhere and play a harp when you croak, you'd have it all, right here on terra firma. Forever. . . . Forever. . . ."

"You sound like you're about to breathe fire and brimstone and ask me to sign a contract in blood," Barron said dryly.

Howards seemed to start; his hot eyes suddenly contracted to cold boar-shrewdness as if he were talking about something he suddenly realized he shouldn't—or, Barron thought, as if old Bennie just realized how loopy he sounds.

"I'm talking about a Freeze contract," Howards said. "A *free* Freeze, no assignments of assets. I got tentacles, Barron, and I know you spend money as fast as you make it. You'll never hold on to enough to buy a Freeze. And just between you and me, even if you did, I'd never let you buy it now. *Because* I don't want your money when you die, I want you, Barron, live, right now. That's the deal—you play ball with me and have your chance at immortality or when you die, you're wormfood. Forever is a long time to be dead, Barron."

What goes? thought Barron. Bennie's bill's a ten votes to spare in the Senate thirty in the House shoo-in, all over but the shouting, why's he so hot for *my* bod? Free Freeze is fat cat Senator-Cabinet-Supreme-Court-Justice level bribe, way out of line for purchasing kick 'em in the ass Jack Barron. He's popping cookies all over the lot—admitting to me Freezes can be bought or withheld for other than money. What's the schtick what's he know I don't why's got-it-in-the-bag Bennie Howards running so scared? Scared of *me*. . . .

But shit, a Freeze beats a fancy funeral any day. Immortality . . . who knows what the next century can bring? Live forever, young, healthy, strong. . . . ? Nothing to lose in a free Freeze, worst thing can happen it's all a shuck, and, baby, you're dead then either way. Could I pull it off? Play Howards' game but subtle enough to keep the show? No sweet anyway, once Freeze contract is signed in triplicate Bennie *can't* welch. . . . But honest Jack Barron'd have nothing to hold legal water on paper, could cop-out on Bennie any time. Got Bennie by the balls, it seems. But why? why? Fun and games out of my league? Play it cool, Jack baby!

"I CAN SMELL the wood burning," Howards said. "You can taste it, can't you, Barron? Forever, a million years of life, for at most a few months of playing ball. Every man's got his price, old saying, eh? But I'm

something new; the coin I can pay, *everyone's* selling."

"Not so fast, Bennie-boy," Barron said. "This smells like a dead flounder. Okay, so I admit a Freeze sounds interesting, buying my flesh at top dollar, and maybe, just *maybe*, I might like to take you up on it. But why're you going so high to get me? You've got your Freezer bill in the bag; you got the muscle and grease to put it over in Congress and we both know it. And besides, if you're willing to offer Freezes as bribes, why bribe *me*, why not deal with the Foghorns direct? Jeez, I'm only thirty-eight and the idea of a Freeze interests me, Senator or Congressman carrying around another thirty years should *really* be interested. It *appears* that I need you more than you need me, and you're just being generous. But I just don't figure you for the philanthropist type. Beware of Greeks and freaks bearing gifts, I always say, 'cause *gift* means poison in German. You're holding out on me, Howards, and you're playing in the big leagues. I find that a paranoid situation. You're scared, don't try to con *me*. You're uptight about your Freezer bill's chances, and from what I know you shouldn't be. Therefore, I don't know everything. And I damn well will before I even think about talking turkey."

"It's the race angle your goddamned show stirred up," Howards said, with an obviously-put-on vehemence that put Barron uptight on guard. "All that crap from Greene and the rest of it turning every coon in the country against—"

"Hold it, Howards!" Barron snapped, bugged, but at the same time coldly calculating. "For openers, I told you I don't like the word 'coon', and besides that's all bullshit. Eighty per cent of the Negroes in the country vote S.J.C. anyway, and the S.J.C. is dead set against your bill, so how can you claim I cost you votes you never had in the first place? So you got the S.J.C. and the Republicans against you for separate reasons, but that shouldn't be uptighting you with Teddy Hennering your front man and even Teddy the Pretender forced to cool it with the weight you swing in the Democratic party. Democrats control what, nearly two-thirds of Congress, and you got the Kennedy faction too spooked to make waves and Hennering & Co. in your hip pocket. So what's—"

"You mean you haven't heard?" Howards said.

"Heard what?"

"About Hennering," Howards said, reaching into his inside breast pocket, tossing a ragged clipping across the desk Barron read:

TED HENNERING DIES IN AIR DISASTER

Private plane destroyed in mid-air explosion.

"Happened late last night," Howards said. "Now you see why I'm a little nervous. Hennering was our big front-man on the bill, and with him dead we're not exactly in trouble, but we've lost a piece of the edge we had, and I don't believe in taking chances. You can get that edge back for me and cool it with the coo—er, Negroes. That's why I'm offering you a

Freeze, Barron. Without you, the bill is still almost certain of passage, but I don't like *almosts*. I want it locked up. I want certainty."

Hennering dead, thought Barron, so that's it, Bennie-boy, you lost your chief Presidential-puppet stooge means next President is Teddy the Pretender for sure and he's not quite in the old hip pocket. Yeah, that sure would uptight you, but. . . .

But not about the Freezer bill! he suddenly realized. Nothing really lost there but Hennering's one lousy vote, and you got plenty of votes to spare. So why—

CHILL DANGER SIGNALS from somewhere from years of reflex-reaction to gambits of men of power flashed to Barron's mind from gut-nerve endings, saying: big! big! big! All too pat too many loose ends *not* loose ends: Hennering acting like walking corpse Wednesday night dead for real Friday morning, prepared clipping, prepared chain of answers from Howards each one more nitty-gritty *seeming* as if extracted under pressure. But Jack Barron to make shoe-in triple certain? Don't add up, adds up to something bigger offstage that scares even Howards. . . .

Play your cards right, Jack baby! Gambler's instinct: you're holding the high ones, Bennie knows it, knows what they are, you don't, so raise, raise, don't call till you know how many aces you're holding.

"Look Howards," he said. "I haven't had lunch yet and I'm getting tired of being waltzed around the block. You're holding out on me, I don't know what you're sitting on, but you're sure as hell sitting on something. Hennering or no Hennering, you've got that Freezer bill locked up and don't waste both our time by telling me otherwise. Let's say I am interested in playing ball with you, why not, a free Freeze you don't throw away because your heart is pure. But I don't go into *anything* blind, and that's what you're asking."

Howards hesitated, pursed his lips, breathed heavily, picked at his nose, opened his mouth, closed it, paused, opened it again and said: 'I want you to do a job for me, I don't want a goddamn partner. You're asking partner-type questions that're none of your business. I'm paying you more than the job deserves and I'm doing it only because I can easily afford it. Make it something other than easy and you've blown it. I'm way out of your league, Barron, don't push your luck.'

That's exactly where it's at, thought Barron. Bennie wants to buy himself another flunky, wants it real bad. *Too* bad. So I'm out of my league, Bennie-boy? Bread-wise, power-wise, maybe. Keep thinking that way, Howards, and you go home in a barrel. Maybe I'm in the wrong league, but you're in the wrong game. Too much power too long to play bluff with me—three yards and a cloud of dust's where you're at, can't match fancy footwork with good old Jack Barron's been thinking immelmans around fatter cats too long, Mr. Howards.

"Don't push *yours*, Howards," he said. "You can't buy me, only maybe rent me as a free agent; you don't

Continued on page 43

BARBARELLA



AND THE ANXIOUS FRENCHMAN

VOTRE HOROSCOPE

Nous avons demandé à une équipe de spécialistes, découvreurs des sciences planétaires. Nous l'avons ignoré, dont les résultats nous ont étonnés. Nous et Blanc » est véritablement, semaine après semaine.

VOTRE VIE



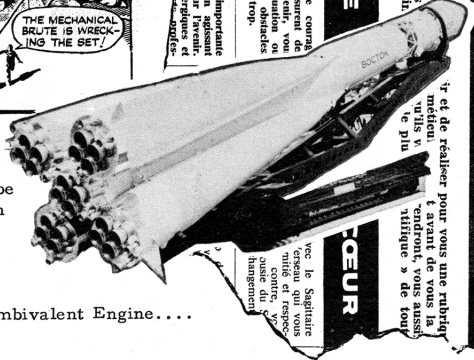
BÉLIER
du 21-m au 20-iv



TAUREAU
du 21-iv au 19-v

Vous discuterez d'une affaire très importante et vous vous montrerez exigeant. En agissant ainsi, vous serez sûr de vous. Vous ne devez pas hésiter à prendre plusieurs décisions. Cependant, si vous travaillez dans un domaine où les décisions sont prises à l'aveugle, vous serez en danger.

Vous travaillerez avec beaucoup de courage et d'effort. Le 8 mars, vous recevrez des résultats concrets, qui serviront l'aventure, vous permettront de consolider votre situation ou d'affronter de façon positive certains obstacles. Vous avez intérêt à ne pas dépasser trop.



et de réaliser pour vous une rubrique. Avant de vous la remettre, vous aurez la chance de vous la voir. Vous aurez la chance de vous la voir. Vous aurez la chance de vous la voir.

COEUR

avec le Sagittaire. Vous serez en mesure de vous en sortir. Vous serez en mesure de vous en sortir. Vous serez en mesure de vous en sortir.



What's wrong with current French culture? Has the fad for the bad gone too far? Maybe it's a hard time for the French psyche as the country changes from agricultural to industrial based economy and moves fast into the future. Representing all disaster, all delight, the ambivalent Engine....

SECRETLY, DR. DON BLAKE HOBLES INTO THE WOODS, AND THEN...

IF THOSE CHINESE TANKS AREN'T STOPPED THEY'LL PULVERIZE THIS HOSPITAL BASE! I MUST SWITCH FROM DR. DON BLAKE TO... THE MIGHTY THOR!



INSTANTLY, BOTH DR. BLAKE AND AND HIS ANCIENT CANE CHANGE SHAPE!

NOW I CAN HALT THE REDS DEAD IN THEIR TRACKS!



AS THOR SOARS SKYWARD AT FANTASTIC SPEED...

MY HAMMER CAN DO THE WORK OF MANY ANTI-MISSILE MISSILES!!



Lord of The Green Planet

EMIL PETAJA



Galaxy
SCIENCE FICTION

December 1967

60¢

Galaxie

Déc. 1967

N 44

3 F

OUTPOST C
EMPIRE

by POUL
ANDERSON

VANCE LE PALAIS DE L'AMOUR
LEIBER LES LENDEMAINS QUI CHANTENT
McINTOSH / BLISH / STUART

King of
The Golden
World

A Complete
Short Novel

by ROBERT
SILVERBERG

HANDICAP

by LARRY
NIVEN



2

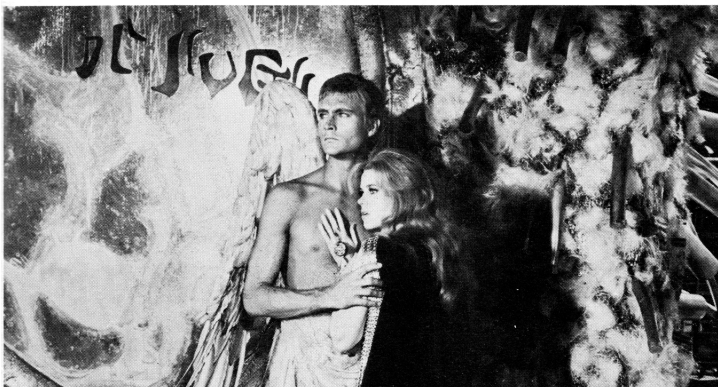
What has
happened
to pre-war
France?
The poor
French
intellectual

discovers pop. Can he
possibly find understanding
in U.S. kitsch -- can
he find a key to his future
in pinball machines,
comic strips, science
fiction, yeh, yeh..?



4

Another way of looking at it: one can say that these film directors are so lacking in original creative invention that they fall back on trying to imitate the crude vitality of a cheap comic strip. Even in this they can fail. Visually, *ALPHAVILLE*, for instance, was not even minimally interesting in the way that perhaps a *FLASH GORDON* serial was.



5

Vadim will probably succeed in producing a piece of decently done sensationalism, so long as he doesn't get delusions of grandeur and lose control.

Nonetheless, having no true creative talent, these people will opt for the grotesque and perverse, the paradoxical and sensational, thus failing to create even as simple a piece of good cathartic film making as, say, *BONNIE AND CLYDE*. The appeal of films like *BAR-BARELLA* is to the regressive impulses and as such they could be deemed unhealthy. Why are they running away? Because the world seems too tough. It is tough. But that should make it worth exploring.



AUG.
NO. 164

WONDER WOMAN

12



WHAT TURNS THE
MIGHTY AMAZON AGAINST
HER OWN COUNTRY?
WILL YOU CURSE OR CRY FOR--
**"WONDER WOMAN--
TRAITOR!"**

LA FIEVRE CHARNELLE PARAÎT
SAGNER L'UNIVERS ÉTYMIOLOGIQUE : UN RUT
COSMIQUE FAIT SE MURER LES MONDES
SUR LES MONDES, ET LA VOIE LACTÉE
N'EST PLUS QU'UNE TRACÉE
SEMENCE DE LA COPULATION
UNIVERSELLE. (X)



6

Nobody benefits. There's a story about the Comic Strip Convention held in the South of France a couple of years back. We heard that the man who's been doing the MANDRAKE AND THE MAGICIAN strip for years was last seen wandering around Paris saying that now he'd been told about the social and psychological significance of his strip he couldn't think of another idea. He was ruined....

LA SAGA D'ELRIC

TEXTE : MARC ZAVATONEKI D'ARRÊT MICHAEL MOORE

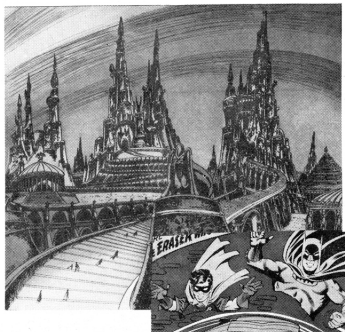
DÉSIGN : PHILIPPE "JANUARY"

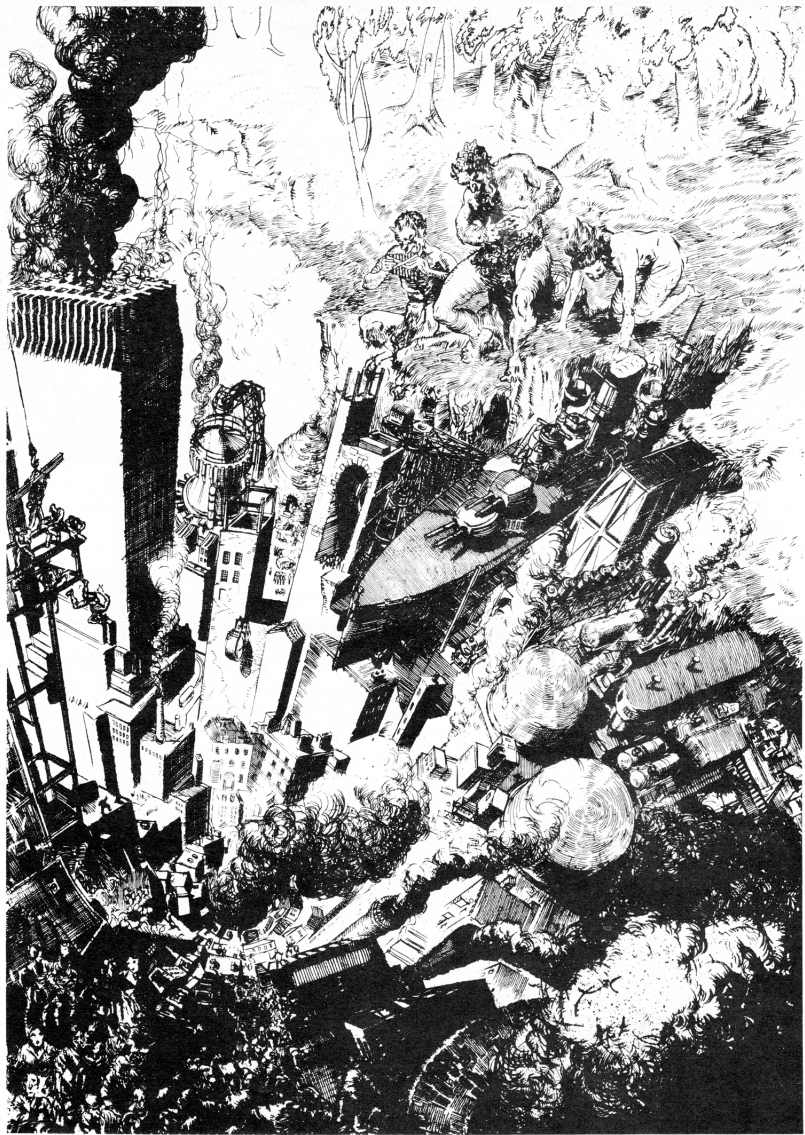
AVANT QUE LE TITRE "DE DÉLIRIUM" (L'ÉPISODE "DE DÉLIRIUM")
DEVIENT UN TITRE AUCUN "DE DÉLIRIUM" (L'ÉPISODE "DE DÉLIRIUM")
C'EST-À-DIRE, UN TITRE "DE DÉLIRIUM" (L'ÉPISODE "DE DÉLIRIUM")
L'ÉPISODE "DE DÉLIRIUM" (L'ÉPISODE "DE DÉLIRIUM")

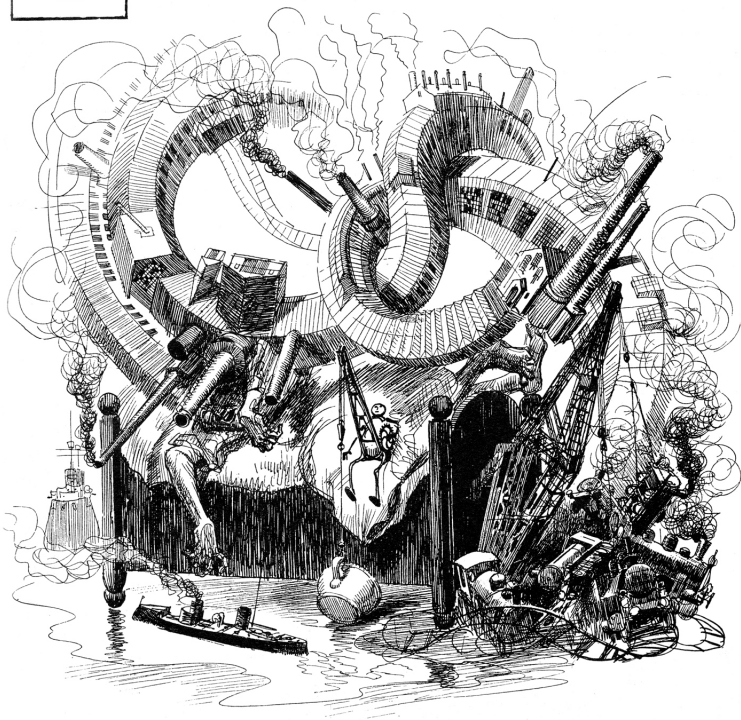
7

Comic strips
are for kids.
So are zowie
SF movies.
Okay, they
reflect a mood.

So we glance at
them from time to time. Soci-
ologists and psychologists
write about them. That's as
it should be. But writers
and film makers are not in
business to provide extra
raw material for sociol-
ogists and psychologists.
They are supposed to
make something better
of the raw material.



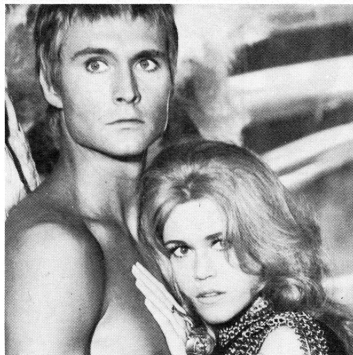




Again: Why are they running away? What's the appeal of juvenile novels like LORD OF THE RINGS, comic books and old BATMAN serials? What was the appeal of THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO when the industrial revolution was making its full impact? Could it be that the strain of transition from one kind of society to another is just too much for many people? In France they are just beginning to get the full impact of industrialisation. In the U.S. they are in the middle of an economic revolution as great in significance as the revolution of the late 18th century. The Germans had a similar problem sixty or seventy years ago and gave us the sordid Kley and a hundred like him. Machine fear is one common symptom in such disturbed societies. One notes, too, the bathos in these German graphic artists, in modern French films (PIERROT LE FOU, for instance), in hippy art and writing.

Such undercurrent always exist, there are always people who will enthuse about H.P. Lovecraft, buy fetish magazines, watch horror films obsessively. But BARBAR-ELLA represents vast expenditure, presumes a vast audience. Does this mean the stresses of society in transition are too much for the mass of people? Or does it merely mean that the mass of people are of a much younger age group than heretofore? Whatever the reason, something is going on. Something quite similar to what went on in pre-Hitler Germany. It is the scale that is alarming.

9



PROCESS

Four

UK 3/6
USA 75c

SEX

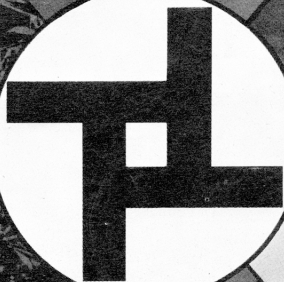
LUCIFER

JEHOVAH

SATAN

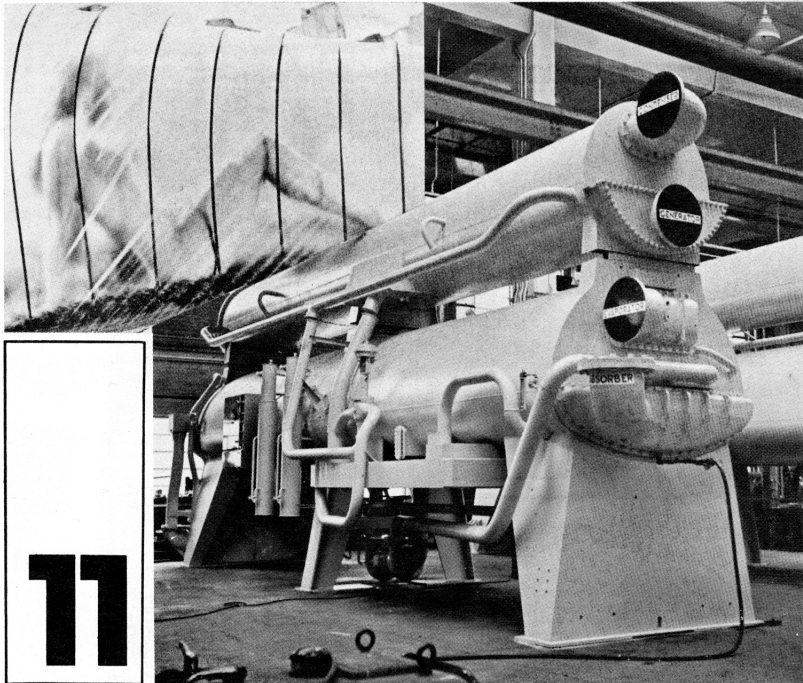
& THE GREY FORCES

Three Paths and
a Quagmire



10

Anxious people turn away from the world, turn to mysticism, simplistic philosophies, quasi-intellectual fads, disturbed sex symbolism. Perhaps it will not last. But it could be fair to say that all good artists should not concern themselves too much with all this. Such things are substitutes for true ideas, true answers, real imagination.



11

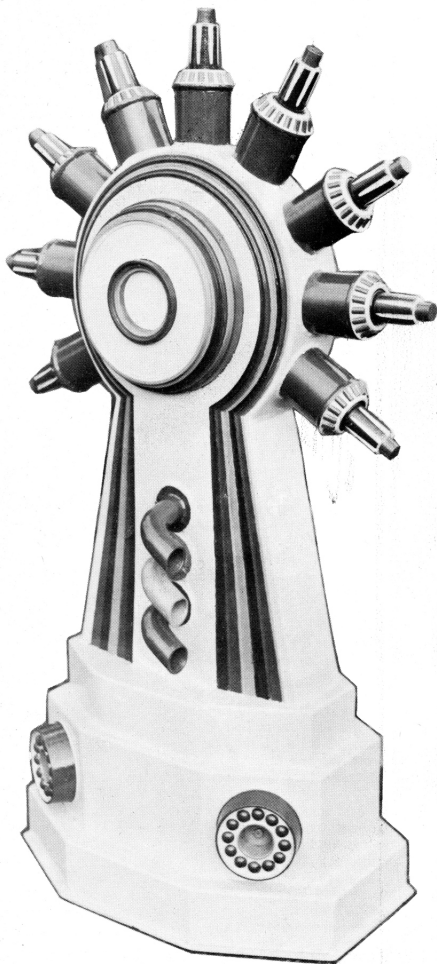
We need to understand the machine, learn to accept it and use it. But people hold back. The future has got on top of them. They fear the final catharsis that will plunge them into tomorrow, make them slave-masters of the machine as they are now slave-masters of the elements. Can reason flourish or can we only accept the ambivalent machine by inventing new codes, new superstitions, new myths, electing new witchdoctors like Marshall 'Merlin' McLuhan? Can we only survive in confusion?



12

Thus, all modern fantasies involve the machine. Paolozzi's DIANA AS

AN ENGINE is one of the greatest single symbols of our dilemma. If all modern fantasies are science fiction, we must ensure that the quality of the fantasy is outstanding. We must not confuse the meritricious with the meritorious.



TITLE PAGE: Jane Fonda and John Philip Law from *BARBARELLA*, a Paramount release.

FRAME TWO: Extract from *THOR* comic strip, Marvel comics group; book cover from Ace Books; covers of *GALAXY* magazine, French and British editions; extract from *FANTASTIC FOUR* Comic strip.

FRAME THREE: pictures from *BARBARELLA* and *LONE SLOANE* French comic strips

FRAME FOUR: from *ALPHAVILLE*

FRAME FIVE: from *BARBARELLA*

FRAME SIX: *WONDER WOMAN* (DC Comics) and extract from *LONE SLOANE*

FRAME NINE: from *BARBARELLA*

FRAME ELEVEN: Still from *GOLD-FINGER* featuring Sean Connery. United Artists release.

FRAME TWELVE: *DIANA AS AN ENGINE* by Eduardo Paolozzi, 1963, in painted aluminium.



THE SERPENT OF KUNDALINI

BY BRIAN ALDISS
AND C.C. SHACKLETON

Another story in the popular Charteris series. Multi-value logic/language. Aldiss's vision of an Acid future . . .

AFTER HIS LONG drive across Europe, from south to north, Charteris was tired. On the ferry going across to England, he slept.

When he woke, the ship had already moored in Dover harbour and was absolutely deserted except for him. Even the sailors had gone ashore. White cliffs loomed over the boat. The quays and the sea were empty. The entire desolation was the more bare because it was covered in flawless early spring sunshine.

Just inside one of the customs sheds on the quay stood a man in a blue sweater with his arms folded. Charteris saw the man just as he was descending the gangplank, and paused with his hand on the rail. The man would hardly have been noticeable; after all, he was perhaps thirty yards away; but, by a curious trick of acoustics played by the empty shed and the great slope of cliff, the man's every sound was carried to Charteris and magnified.

He halted between ship and land, hearing the rasp of the waiting man's wrists as he re-folded his arms, hearing the tidal flow of his breath in his lungs, hearing the infinitesimal movement of his feet in his boots, hearing his watch tick through the loaded seconds of the day.

Very slowly, Charteris descended to the quay and began to walk towards the distant barriers, still water lying pallidly on his left, marching over great yellow-painted arrows and letters meaningless to him which reduced him to a cipher in a diagram. His course would take him close to the waiting man.

The new vision of the universe which Charteris had

been granted in France was with him still. He knew that all other human beings were symbols. This waiting man symbol could be death. He had come to England to find other things.

"This deadness that I feel will pass," he said aloud. The waiting man breathed by way of reply: a cunning and lying answer, thought Charteris. There was danger. A flock of seagulls, white with black heads that swivelled like ball-bearings, sailed down from the cliff-top, scudding in front of Charteris, and landed on the sea. They sank like stones. A cloud slid over the sun and the water was immediately the brown nearest black.

He reached the barrier. As he swung it wide and passed through, the noises of the waiting man died. To stand here was the ambition of years. Charteris knelt to kiss the ground; as his knees buckled, he glanced back and saw, crumpling over one of the yellow arrows, his own body. He jerked upright and went on. He recalled what Gurdjieff had said: attachment to things keeps alive a thousand useless I's in a man; these I's must die so that the big I can be born. The dead images were peeling from him. Soon he himself would be born.

He was trembling. Nobody wants to change.

The town was large and grand. The windows and the paintwork, Charteris thought, were very English. The spaces formed by the buildings were also alien to him. He believed that architecture was a kinetic thing essentially: and that photography had killed that true spirit because people had grown used to studying buildings on pages rather than by walking through them and

round them and seeing them in relationship to other urban objects. In the same way, the true human spirit had been killed. It could only be seen in and by movement.

Conscious of the drama of the moment, he paused, clutching his chest, whispering to himself, *Zbogom!* For the thought was revelation. A philosophy of movement. . . . Sciences like photography must be used to a different purpose, and motion must be an expression of stillness.

In his mind, a flaring vision: a stony continental city in the grey prodigal European tradition, of wide avenues and little crooked alleys—a German city perhaps, perhaps Geneva, perhaps Brussels. And he was arriving in a motor cavalcade, leading them, talking an incomprehensible language, letting them worship him. And a sullen English chick parting her white thighs.

Then it was gone.

Simultaneously, all the people in the Dover street began to move. Till now, they had been stationary, frozen, one-dimensional. Now, motion gave them life and they went about their various business.

As he walked through them, he saw how miscellaneous they were. He had imagined the English as essentially a fair northern race with the dark-haired among them as startling contrast. But these were people less sharp than that, their features blunted by long intermarriage, many stunted with blurred gestures, and many Jews and dark people among them. Their dress also presented a more tremendous and ragged variety than he had encountered in other countries, even his own Montenegro.

Although these people were doing nothing out of the ordinary, Charteris knew that the insane breath of war had blown here too. Psychochemical bombs had splashed down from England's grey clouds; and the liquid eyes that turned towards him had a frightening glimpse of madness. He thought he could still hear the breathing of the waiting man; but as he listened to it more closely, he realized that the people near him were whispering his name—and more than that.

"Charteris! Colin Charteris—funny name for a Jug!"

"Charteris is pretending that he swam the Channel to get here."

"What's Charteris doing here? I thought he was going to Scotland!"

"Did you see Charteris kiss the ground, cheeky devil?"

"Why didn't you stay in France, Charteris—didn't you know it's neutral?"

A woman took her small girl by the hand and led her hurriedly into a butcher's shop, saying, "Come away, darling, Charteris raped a girl in France!" The butcher leant across the counter with a huge crimson leg in his hands and brought it down savagely on the little girl's—Charteris looked round hastily and saw that the butcher was merely hanging a red boloney sausage on a hook. His eyes were betraying him. His hearing was

probably not to be trusted, either.

Anxious to get away from the whispering, whether real or imaginary, he hurried up a shopping street that climbed uphill. Three young girls walked before him in very short skirts. By slowing his pace, he could study their legs, all of which were extremely shapely. The girl on the outside of the pavement, in particular, had beautiful limbs. He admired the ankles, the calves, the dimpling popliteal hinges, the thighs, following the logic of them in imagination up to the sensuously jolting buttocks. Motion, again, he thought: without that élan vital, they would be no more interesting than the butcher's meat. An overpowering urge to exhibit himself to the girls rose within him. He could fight it only by turning aside into a shop; it was another butcher's shop; he himself hung naked and stiff on a hook, white, and pink-trottered. He looked directly and saw it was a pig's carcass.

But as he left the shop, he saw another of his discarded I's was peeling off and crumpling over the counter, lifeless.

HE HURRIED ON to the top of the hill. The girls had gone. Like a moth, the state of the world fluttered in his left ear, and he wept for it. The West had delivered itself to the butchers.

A view of the sea offered itself at the top of the hill. Breathing as hard as the waiting man, Charteris grasped some railings and looked over the cliff at the sea. One of those hateful phantom voices down in the town had suggested he was going to Scotland; he saw now that he was indeed about to do that; at least, he would head north. He hoped his new-found mental state would enable him to see the future with increasing clarity; but, when he made the effort, as if, it might be, his eyesight misted over at any attempt to read small print, the endeavour seemed bafflingly self-defeating: the small print of the future bled and ran—indeed, all he could distinguish was a notice reading something like LOVE BURROW which would not resolve into GLASGOW, some sort of plant with crimson blooms and . . . a road accident?—until, trying to grapple with the muddled images, he finally even lost the *direction* in which his mind was trying, myopically and illiterately, to peer.

Clinging to the railings, he tried to sort out his random images. LOVE BURROW was no doubt some sort of Freudian nonsense; he dismissed the crimson Christmas blooms; his anxiety clustered round the accident—all he could see was a great perspective of crashing and clanging cars, aligned down the beaches of triple-carriageways like a tournament. The images could be past or future. Or merely fears. Always the thought of crashing.

But he had left his car on the ship. What was ahead was unknown, even to him with the budding powers—powers so far away from what the sane accepted that he realized in a breathless moment like a ducking that he must yield to madness—and the sea was grey. Clutch-

ing the railings, Charteris felt the ground rock slightly. The deck. The deck rocked. The sea narrowed like a Chinese eye. The ship bumped the quay.

He stood at the rail, trying to adjust, as the passengers left the ship and the cars were driven away from the underdeck. He looked up at the cliffs; gulls swooped down from them: and floated on the oily sea. He listened and heard only his own breathing, the rasp of his own body in his clothes. In or out of trance, he stood: and the quay emptied of people.

"Is the red car yours, sir?"

"You are Mr. Charteris, sir?"

Slowly he turned towards the English voice. He extended a hand and touched the fabric of the man's tunic. Nodding without speaking, he made his way slowly below deck. Slowly, he walked down the echoing belly-perspective of the car deck to where his Banshee stood. He climbed in, searched in his pocket for the ignition key, slowly realized it was already in the ignition, started up, and drove slowly over the ramp on to English concrete.

He looked across to the customs shed. A man stood there half in shadow, in a blue sweater, arms folded. He beckoned. Charteris drove forward and found it was a customs man. A small rain began to fall as the man looked laconically through Charteris' grip.

"This is England, but my dream was more true," he said.

"That's as maybe," said the man, in surly fashion. "We had a war here, you know, sir, not like you lot in France. You'd expect a bit of dislocation, sort of, wouldn't you?"

"Dislocation, my God, yes!"

"Well, then. . ."

He drove away, enormously slow, and the slimy yellow arrows licked their way under his bonnet. TENEZ LA GAUCHE. LINKS FAHREN. DRIVE ON THE LEFT. WATNEY'S BEER. The enormous gate swung open and he felt only love. He waved at the man who opened the gate; the man stared back suspiciously. England!

The great white lumphish buildings along the front seemed to hesitate. He turned and looked back in fear at the ship—where—what was he? In the wet road, crumpled over one of the arrows, lay one of his I's, just as in the vision, discarded.

Only now did he clearly recall the details of the vision.

To what extent was a vision an illusion, to what extent a clearer sort of truth?

HE RECOLLECTED THE England of his imagination, culled from dozens of Saint books. A sleazy place of cockneys, nursemaids, policemen, slums, misty wharves, large houses full of the vulnerable jewellery of beautiful women. That place was not this. Well, like the guy said, there had been a war, a dislocation. He looked at these people in these streets. The few women who were about moved fast and furtive, poorly and shabbily

dressed, keeping close to walls. The men did not move. A curse of alternate inertia had been visited upon the English sexes. Men stood waiting and smoking in little groups, unspeaking; women scurried lonely. In their eyes, he saw the animal glints of madness. Their pupils flashed towards him like animal headlights, feral with guanin, the women's green, the men's red like wolf-hounds or a new animal.

A little fear clung to Charteris.

"I'll drive up to Scotland," he said. Bombardment of images. He was confusing his destiny; he would never get there. Something happened to him . . . would happen. Had happened—and he here and now was but a past image of himself, perhaps a dead image, perhaps one of the cast-off I's that Gurdjieff said must be discarded before a man could awaken to true consciousness.

He came to the junction where, in his vision, he had turned and walked up the steep shopping street. With determination, Charteris wrenched the wheel and accelerated up the hill. Under sudden prompting, he glanced over his shoulder. A red Banshee with himself driving had split away and was taking the other turning. Did that way lead to Scotland or to . . . Love Burrow? His other I caught his gaze just momentarily, pupils flashing blank guanin red, teeth bright in a wolf snarl.

That's one I I'm happy to lose. . .

As he climbed up the hill, he looked for three girls in mini-skirts, for a butcher's shop. But the people were the shabby post-catastrophe crowd, and most of the shops were shuttered: all infinitely sadder than the vision, however frightening it had been. Had he been frightened? He knew he embraced the new strangeness. Materialism had a silver psychedelic bullet through its heart; the incalculable took vampire-flight.

Already, he felt a cooler knowledge of himself. Down in the south of Italy, that was where this new phase of life had festered for him, in the rehabilitation camp for thousands of Slav victims of the war. There he had been forced to wander in the mazed caverns of their derangements: and had learnt there in a hidden part of himself that sanity had many alternatives.

Now, unbecaverned, he could see that his forte was action directed by philosophy. He was not the introspective; on the other hand, he was not the simple doer. He was rarely conscious of himself, yet rarely unfeeling for others. As a good (lapsed) Communist, he had little time for soul-searching; yet he had always spared a moment for inquiring into his own motives. Psychoanalysis was anathema to him—yet he could detect the many forms that self-gratification took.

And where did these thoughts lead? Something impelled him: perhaps only the demon chemicals; but he needed to know where he was going. It would help if he could examine one of his cast-off I's. As he reached the top of the hill, he saw that he still stood gripping the railings and staring out to sea. He stopped the car.

As he walked towards the figure, monstrous things

wheeled in the firmament, sank like stones.

His hearing became preternaturally acute. Although his own footsteps sounded distant, very near at hand was the tidal flow of his breathing, the tick of his watch, the stealthy rustle of his body inside its clothing. Like the man said, there had been a war, a dislocation.

As his hand came up to touch the shoulder of the Gurdjieffian I, it was arrested in mid-air; for his glance caught the sight of something moving on the sea. For a moment, he mistook it for some sort of a new machine or animal, until it resolved itself under his startled focus into a ship, a car ferry, moving close in to the harbour. On the promenade deck, he saw himself standing remote and still.

The figure before him turned.

It had broken teeth set in an indefinite mouth, and dark brown pupils of eyes gripped between baggy lids. Its nose was brief and snouty, its skin puffed and discoloured, its hair as short and tufted as fur. It was the waiting man. It smiled.

"I was waiting for you, Charteris!"

"So they were hinting down in the town."

"You don't have any children, do you?"

"Well, no, but my ancestry goes right back to Early Man."

"You'll tell me if you aren't at ease with me? Your answer reveals, I think, that you are a follower of Gurdjieff?"

"Clever guess! Ouspensky, really. The two are one—but Gurdjieff talks such nonsense."

"You read him in the original, I suppose?"

"The original what?"

"Then you will realize that the very times we live in are somewhat Gurdjieffian, eh? The times themselves, I mean, talk nonsense—but the sort of nonsense that makes us simultaneously very sceptical about the old rules of sanity."

Charteris was feeling almost no apprehension now, although his pulse beat rapidly. Far below on the quay, he could see himself climbing into the car and driving towards the customs shed.

"I must be getting along," he said formally. "As the Saint would say, I have a date with destiny. I'm looking for a place called. . . ." He had forgotten the name; that image had been self-cancelling.

"My house is hard by here."

"I prefer a softer kind."

"It is softer inside, and my daughter would like to meet you. Do come and rest a moment and feel yourself welcome in Britain."

He hesitated. The time would come, might even be close, when all the gates of the farmyard would be closed to him; he would fall dead and be forgotten; and continue to stare for ever out through the window at the blackness of the garden. With a simple gesture of assent—how simple it yet remained to turn the wrist in the lubricated body—he helped the waiting man into the car and allowed him to direct the way to his house.

THIS WAS a middle-class area, and unlike anywhere he had visited before. Roads of small neat houses and bungalows stretched away on all sides, crescents curved off and rejoined the road, and all neatly labelled with sylvan names: Sherwood Forest Road, Dingley Dell Road, Herbivore Drive, Placenta Place, Honey-suckle Avenue, Cowpat Avenue, Geranium Gardens, Clematis Close, Creosote Crescent, Laurustinus Lane. Each dwelling had a neat little piece of garden, often with rustic work and gnomes on the front lawn. Even the smallest bungalows had grand names, linking them with a mythical green nature once supposed to have existed: Tall Trees, Rolling Stones, Ocean View, Neptune Tiles, The Bushes, Shaggy Shutters, Jasmine Cottage, My Wilderness, Solitude, The Laurustinuses, Our Oleanders, Florabunda.

Charteris grew angry and said, "What sort of a fantasy are these people living in?"

"If you're asking seriously, I'd say, Security masquerading as a little danger."

"We aren't allowed this sort of private property! It's an offence against the state."

"Don't worry! It's all dead—the war has killed it. The values on which this . . . civilization has been built have been swept away—not that most of the inhabitants realize it yet. I keep up the pretence because of my daughter."

The waiting man began to breathe in a certain way. Charteris regarded him curiously out of the corner of his eye, because he fancied that the man was accomplishing rather an accurate parody of his daughter's breathing. So good was it that the girl was virtually conjured up between them; she proved to be, to Charteris' delight, the one of the three girls in a mini-skirt he had most admired while walking up the hill. The illusion lasted only a split second, and then the waiting man was breathing naturally again.

"All pretence must be broken! I think that is the quest on which I came to this country. Although we are strangers and should perhaps talk formally together, I must say that I believe very deeply that there is a strange force latent in man which can be awakened."

"Kundalini! Turn left here, down Petunia Park Road."

"What?"

"Turn left."

"What else did you say? You were swearing at me, I believe?"

"Kundalini. You don't know your Gurdjieff as well as you pretend, my friend! So-called occult literature speaks of Kundalini, or the serpent of Kundalini. A strange force in man which can be awakened."

"That's it, then, yes! I want to awaken it. What are all these people doing in the rain?"

As they drove down Petunia Park Road, Charteris realized that the middle classes were standing neatly and attentively in their gardens; some were performing

characteristic actions such as adjusting ties and reading big newspapers, but most were simply staring into the road.

"Left here, into Brontosaurus Broadway. Listen, my boy, Kundalini, that serpent, should be left sleeping. *It's nothing desirable!* Repulsive though you may find these people here, their lives have at least been dedicated—and successfully, on the whole—to keeping the serpent sleeping. I mean, security masquerading as a little danger is only a small safe aberration, whereas Kundalini—"

He went into some long rigmarole which Charteris was unable to follow; he had just seen a red Banshee, driven by another Gurdjieffian I, slide past the top of the road, and was disturbed by it. Although there was much he wanted to learn from the waiting man, he must not be deflected from his main north-bound intention, or he might find himself in the position of a discarded I. On the other hand, it was possible that going north might bring him into discardment. For the first time in his life, he was aware of all life's rich or dessicating alternatives; and an urge within him—but that might be Kundalini—prompted him to go and talk to people, preach to them, about cultivating the multi-valued.

"Here's the house," said the waiting man. "Pear Tree Palace. Come in and have a cup of tea. You must meet my daughter."

At the neat little front gate, barred with a sunset pattern, Charteris hesitated. "You are hospitable, but I hope you won't mind my asking—I seem myself to be slightly affected by the PCA bombs—hallucinations, you know—I wondered—aren't you also a bit—touched—"

The waiting man laughed, making his ugly face look a lot uglier. "Everyone's touched! Don't be taken in by appearances here. Believe me, the old world has gone, but its shell remains in place. One day soon, there will come a breath of wind, a new messiah, the shell will crumple, and the kids will run streaming, screaming, bare foot in the head, through the lush new hallucinatory meadows. Come on, I'll put the kettle on! Wipe your feet!"

"It's as bad as that?—"

The waiting man had opened the front door and gone inside. Uneasy, Charteris paused and looked about. Kinetic architecture here had spiked the viewpoint with a crazy barricade of pergolas, patios, bay windows, arches, extensions, all manner of dinky garages and out-houses, set among fancy trees. Watertight world. All hushed under the fine mist of rain. Neighbourhood of evil for him, small squares of anaemic fancy, wrought-iron propriety.

HE FOUND HIMSELF at the porch, where the gaunt rambler canes already bore snouts of fresh growth. There'd be a fine show of New Dawn in four more months. An enchantment waited here. He went in, leaving the door open. He wanted to hear more about Kundalini.



At the back of the house, the waiting man was in a small kitchen, all painted green and cream, every surface covered with patterned stuff and, on a calendar, a picture of two people tarrying in a field. Behind the two frozen people, sheep broke from their enclosure and went on the rampage among wheat ripening towards harvest.

Perhaps instinctively, the waiting man had switched on a small dumpy streamlined radio. The disc jockey's voice said, "And now for the great all-time sound of one of the great bands of all time. We're spinning this one for Auntie Betty and all the boys at 'Nostalgia Vista', 2 Armoury Cottages, The Tip, Coalville, in Leicestershire—the great great sound of the Glenn Miller band with the immortal 'Moonlight Serenade'."

With his mouth slightly open, the waiting man beat time in the air, watching the treacly music as it rose in a foetid breath from the kettle spout and curled across the ceiling.

"My daughter isn't in. I expect she'll be back soon. Why don't you settle down here with us for a bit? There's a nice little spare room upstairs—a bit small but cosy. You never know—you might fall in love with her."

He remembered his first fear of the waiting man: that he would detain Charteris in the customs shed. Now, more subtly, the attempt at detention was again being made.

"And you're a follower of Gurdjieff, are you?" Charteris asked.

"He was rather an unpleasant customer, wasn't he? But a magician, a good guide through these hallucinatory times."

"I want to waken a strange force that I feel inside me, but you say that is Kundalini, and Gurdjieff warns against waking it?"

"Very definitely! Most definitely! G says *man* must awake, but the snake, the serpent, must be left sleeping." He made the tea meticulously, using milk from a tube which was lettered Ideal. "We've all got serpents in us, you know!" He laughed.

"What is this serpent of Kundalini then? Come on, out with it, or I could pretty easily brain you with this kettle!"

"It's an electric kettle!"

"I don't care!"

At this proof of Charteris's recklessness, the waiting man backed away, helped himself to a saccharine pill, and said, "Enjoy your tea while it's hot!"

"Yes, siree, one of the great ones! And now for a welcome change of pace—"

Charteris was conscious of a mounting pressure inside him. Something was breathing close to his left ear and stealing away.

"Answer my question!" he said.

"Well, according to G, the serpent is the power of the imagination—the power of fantasy—which takes the place of a real function. You take my meaning? When a man dreams instead of acting, when he imagines himself to be a great eagle or a great magician . . . that's the force of Kundalini acting in him. . . ."

"Cannot one act and dream?"

The waiting man appeared to double up, sniggering in repulsive fashion with his fists to his mouth. Love Burrow—that was the sign, and a pale-thighed wife beside him. . . . His place was there, wherever that was. This Pear Tree Palace was a trap, a dead end, the waiting man himself an ambiguous either/or/both/and sign, deluding yet warning him: perhaps a manifestation of Kundalini itself. He had got his tasks in the wrong order; clearly, this was a dead end with no new alternative, a corner of extinction. What he wanted was a new tribe!

Now the waiting man's sniggers were choking him. Above their bubbling din, he heard the sound of a car engine outside, and dropped his teacup. The tea sent a dozen fingers across the cubist lino. Over his fists, the little doubled figure glared blankly red at him. Charteris turned and ran.

Through the open door. Birds leaped from the lawn to the eaves of the bungalow, leaden, from motionlessness to instant motionlessness.

Down the path. The rain had lured out a huge black slug which crawled like a torn watch-strap before him.

Through the gate. The sun, set for ever with its last rays caught in mottled iron.

To the road. But he was a discarded alternative. A red Banshee was pulling away, with one of his glittering I's at the wheel, puissant, full of potential, multi-valued, saviour-shaped.

He ran after it, calling from the asphalt heart of Brontosaurus Broadway, leaping over the gigantic yellow arrows. They were becoming more difficult to negotiate. His own powers, he knew, were failing. He had chosen wrongly, become a useless I, dallying with an old order instead of seeking new patterns.

Now the arrows were almost vertical. LINKS FAHREN. The red car was far away, just a blur moving through the barrier, speeding unimpeded for. . . .

He still heard breathing, movements of clothes, the writhing of toes inside shoe-caps. But these were not his. They belonged to the Charteris in the car, the undiscarded I. He no longer breathed.

As he huddled over the arrow, gulls tumbled from the cliff and sank into the water. Over the sea, the ship came. Up the hill, motors sounded. In the head, barefoot, a new age.

There had been a war, a dislocation.

THE SQUARE FOOT OF ERATION

Fritz Leiber, of whom too little has been seen in recent years, once worked on the original of the UNIVERSAL AMERICAN ENCYCLOPEDIA and the quotations in this sharply-observed story about nuts are, he assures us, absolutely authentic . . .

"SO YOU'VE OFTEN gone for rides in flying saucers, Mr. Satanelli," the Modest Young Man

DODGSON, CHARLES LUTWIDGE. *See* Lewis Carroll.—
Universal American Encyclopedia

stated politely, raising his voice only enough to make

himself intelligible through the din of a Hollywood party resonated by a gleaming ceiling twenty feet overhead and by the huge sound-boxes of five surrounding rooms, four brightly lit, across which the party sprawled. The heavy drapes were variedly psychedelic between the vast expanses of glass letting in the night (and letting out the party for an audience of black trees and what-

ever or whoever else), while the furniture with its chrome and brass and trapeziums of blonde wood and tubular cushions varicoloured as barbiturate pills, looked more like elegant machines for rapture-treatments or time-travel than couches and chairs. Here and there in bright mini-sheaths were stationed like statues, or like receptionists at a thick-factory PR meeting, starlet-looking girls with intelligent, beautiful, blank, faintly worried expressions, as if they had just begun to wonder whether they were still also flesh and blood as well as décor.

The Modest Young Man had that slim, dark, silver-touched Manhattan look which registers as efficient and even aggressive in New York City, but merely a bit drab and sissy in Los Angeles, where gold is the metal. He looked earnestly after his question.

Morpheo Satanelli deftly juggled his martini inside its goblet so that it wasn't spilled by the gentle double bump he'd just got from two beautiful but non-starlet women (i.e., 20-years-plus, not 20-years-minus), clad respectively in blue and gold. He replied smoothly, "Like others, you are interested in the material aspect of my saucer experiences and spacefolk contacts—which you will find well-treated in that compendium of wisdom, the *Universal American Encyclopedia*—but for me the spiritual

DUAL PERSONALITY, the supposed distinction and potentially independent action of each of the cerebral hemispheres; from one of which, the left, arise all the good and ennobling aims of life, while from the other come all the malevolent influences.—*Universal American Encyclopedia*

has the great significance. 'Morpheo, lift yourself to a higher plane,' my ruby-auraed Guide called to me. 'We have granted you this infinite glimpse so you may open the eyes of the purblind earthlings around you. Morpheo, do you remember the moonlight on Venus? The rippling seas of Mercury splashed by soft rains? Morpheo, Morpheo—'

A dark raptorial hand gleaming with pearls gripped the Modest Young Man's arm. "This is Friday, Morphy," the Hostess interrupted, swinging him towards a white dress stiff with rhinestones and in it a platinum-haired girl with Hispano-Hibernian features. "Friday remembers all her past lives. We're getting them on my little old tape recorder—spools and spools."

Friday smiled gravely. "Ay haf lift ant re-lift many lives. Yoost now, Sway-dish, Seventeenth Century," she said in a musical monotone.

"That sounds a bit like time-travel—

MANLIUS, MARCUS CAPITOLINUS, the saviour of Rome during the invasion of the Gauls in 309 B.C. He incurred the displeasure of the patricians and was put to death in 384 B.C. by being thrown down the Tarpeian rock.—*Universal American Encyclopedia*

you know, science fiction," remarked an Undistinguished Old Man, turning towards them as he spoke. He was fat and seemed unobtrusively cheerful.

"Yoost so," said Friday.

The Modest Young Man threw a quick friendly smile at the newcomer and then asked Friday courteously, "You speak Swedish, I suppose? Seventeenth Century, that is."

Friday shook her head sadly. "Ay nefer remember lang-wages. Yoost accents."

"The universal intelligibility tropism," Morpheo Satanelli explained. "Every message trends towards an audience-understood language, almost always English. Else the fruits of mediumship would be dissipated in translation, aside from the expense of the latter."

"I declare," the Hostess remarked shrilly with little bells, "there's more secret wisdom on the fly in these rooms than in that big underground library Helena--Helena Blavatsky--visited in Tibet."

Simultaneously the Undistinguished Old Man murmured privately to the Modest Young Man, "Really, you do meet some pretty queer fish

GOOSEBERRY, the fruit of *Ribes grosularia*, also the bush itself. The fruit is a succulent berry, very wholesome and agreeable, of various colours—whitish, yellow, green and red. An American species has fine white flowers and is cultivated as an ornamental shrub, species of *Lophius*, grows to a length of 4 to 5 feet and weighs from 15 to 170 pounds. It is dark brown above and dirty white below, is hideous in appearance (being also known as "wide gab" and "devilfish"), and has a most voracious appetite, preying indifferently on all kinds of fish, and eating occasional fowls, such as gulls and ducks. The goosefish is practically useless for any purpose.—*Universal American Encyclopedia*

here."

Although the Modest Young Man seemed momentarily cheered by this remark, which showed he had a companion in suffering, there was still some strain in his voice as he ploughed on dutifully, "Miss Morphy—and sir—Mr. Morpheo here has been telling me about his flying saucer trips. I was about to ask him what makes the saucers go."

"Morpheo Satanelli. To many planets," the man addressed amended.

"That's right, Satanelli. Any relative of the chap who runs the First Church of Christ Satanist up in San Francisco?" asked the Modest Young Man, made bold by the sympathetic presence of the Undistinguished Old Man at his side.

"None whatever," Morpheo answered sharply. "Anton follows another path." He went on, "As for the saucer-drive, it works by the colour of the rays: green for attraction, red for repulsion, yellow sunward, blue

starward, violet—"

"So Ya-cob Boeh-me tell New-ton," Friday confirmed, "As Quayne Christina's secret po-lis discover."

Morpheo nodded curtly. "But I am not interested in technics. That is more the area of Gloriana Grant." He indicated the non-starlet-looking woman in gold, then dropped his voice to inform them, "She has offered the Air Force the plans for the spaceship sent her by her man on Saturn, asking only two million—"

"Three million, but I'd consider two and a half," Gloriana Grant corrected gayly, as waving she came towards them. Either her hearing was extraordinary, or it was true what they said about her clairaudience, especially for money-words. "And that two and a half million's already earmarked for a Survival Centre when the weight of the icecaps tumble the world in 1985."

"Your . . . man?—if I understood correctly . . . on Saturn—yes?—sent the spaceship plans by spaceship?" The Modest Young Man inquired with a mildness his taut lips and corded neck denied.

She answered briskly, "No, by telepathy—it's far surer, swifter, surveillance-free, and also in its telekinetic mode the master secret weapon of the universe." Then her voice went low in turn as she revealed (squeezing the arm of the non-starlet-woman in blue, who lowered her eyes in pretty confusion): "Linda Lee's Psionic Assault Group of the Jack Hemlock Society has during the past month disintegrated by beamed thought-power

NEURASTHENIA, a functional nervous disorder resulting from debility or exhaustion of the nerve centres. Among the common symptoms are lack of energy, weakness, irritability, insomnia, marked pessimism, headaches, pressure on the top of the head, pain in the back, impaired memory, menstrual disturbances in women, sexual disturbances in men and gastro-intestinal disturbances. The chief predisposing factor is masturbation.—*Universal American Encyclopedia*

seven Russian spy-satellites. Their destruction is certain because the tracking stations keep getting *ghost* blips of them on their screens."

"Good old Linda!" a strong maudlin voice called from halfway across the room.

"Really?" the Modest Young Man questioned a bit stridently while the Undistinguished Old Man tugged surreptitiously at his sleeve. Footsteps clumped behind. He continued, "In that case—"

A big uniformed arm came curling around his shoulder from one side and a stream of alcohol-saturated breath from the other. Turning, he found his face inches from a craggy, dewlapped, genial one with silver thatch above and a collar with three stars below.

"Linda baby," this one said, "you'd already have seventeen Congressional medals of honour if I bossed the Army. Gloriana darling, when are you going to get

Tolstoy, Lev (English Leo) Nivich, Russian novelist of the 19th and 20th centuries, born in the province of Tula, Russia 1828. He served in the Crimean War and afterward traveled extensively.



LEO TOLSTOY

Tagore Sir Rabindranath, an Indian author, poet, and philosopher; born in 1861. He quickly became internationally known after his travels in Asia, Europe, and America and after the translation of his literary works into various languages. Tagore



RABINDRANATH TAGORE

realistic about your price?" Then he swung the Modest Young Man about, face with him and said with gruff confidingness, "Been watching you, son, and I can tell you don't know your way around here yet. Would you excuse a friendly hint? Never question the word of interesting people

ANNENBERG, MOSES LOUIS, was born in Germany and came to the United States at an early age. He began his career as a newsboy in Chicago, was later employed in the circulation department of the Chicago *Examiner* and in 1904 had risen to the office of circulation manager of that paper. In 1926 he resigned from the Hearst organization so that he might devote his entire time to his publishing enterprises, which included the *Daily Racing Form* and the *Nation-Wide News Service*, as well as his extensive realty holdings and many other forms of investment. Some time later Annenberg established the *Miami Tribune*, *Radio Guide*, *Screen Guide* and *Official Detective Stories*. In 1936 he surprised the newspaper world by paying the reported sum of \$15,000,000 in cash to Mme. Eleanor Elverson Patenotre for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. This great publishing venture reflected the able and progressive policy and management of Moe Annenberg, as he is popularly known. The self-educated Annenberg, who passed his 59th birthday on February 11, 1937, is indeed an inspiration to the youth of America. Annenberg has for many years been interested in art, has a fine collection of old masterpieces, and is also an ardent fisherman. His estate at Great Neck, Long Island, is a popular show-place, and he has in addition a winter home at Miami Beach, a ranch in Wyoming and maintains residences in New York and Philadelphia. Somewhat later he passed away quietly in a federal penitentiary, whither he had been sent for income tax evasions.—*Universal American Encyclopedia*

who say they're working for the good of America. No matter how whacky the things they say, they might be true. Do the Space People have observers among us? Envoys in the White House? Liaison officers in the

SHANTAR ISLANDS, an archipelago in the Aegean Sea, separated from the mainland of Siberia by a narrow channel; area, about 1,100 sq. miles. The largest of the ten big islands is Shantar. These islands are not inhabited, but are visited by regular traders.—*Universal American Encyclopedia*

Pentagon? Even I couldn't tell you for sure—and wouldn't if I could. But I do know this" (his gaze rocked back and forth between the Modest Young Man and the Undistinguished Old Man, who had also about-faced, to lap up military wisdom), "wipe skepticism out of your minds and faintness from your hearts. All the way from Foggy Bottom to Smog Angeles we got research and development groups working on all the problems in the universe—and if there were big breakthroughs on all of them tomorrow, I wouldn't be surprised. Spacewarp-drive, antigravity power, Dean-drive, ionic-shmionic, even Morpheo's colour-drive—we got brain boys workin' on 'em all."

"General, if you expect your brain boys to accomplish anything, you better tell them to turn off their heads and tune in their guts," interrupted a haggard man against whose solar plexus, in lieu of a necktie, a cluster of gold-looking bells hung, and whose glittering eyes had their whites and irises glazed respectively with ruby threads and golden flecks. "The genetic ladder which I teach my acolytes to climb, firm-footing the infinite rungs of the DNA code, leads from gut-level to God, both ways. As of today, we've only climbed down to the proton explosion that begins this universe and up to the head-death—I mean heat-death—that ends it, but who knows how far we may have gone tomorrow? Only to stay safe from Kali's daughters and the death by fire,

COMBUSTION, the act of burning, the state of being burned. Spontaneous Combustion is Combustion occurring without any means taken on the part of man to produce it. A Combustion of the human body produced by occult internal causes, which is alleged to have occurred several times, most of the cases being females given to indulging largely in alcohol, and either very fat or very lean. Set on fire accidentally by a coal or candle, or even a spark, their trunk is stated to have burnt with great rapidity, leaving behind a residuum of fat, oily, fetid ashes, smelling unpleasantly, and containing a very penetrating soot. The alcohol with which it is assumed their organs were saturated, electricity, phosphuretted hydrogen, or other inflammable gas set free by the decomposition of the structures have been assigned as possible causes, but the subject

requires well-ascertained modern facts and fresh scientific elucidation. Most chemists believe the Combustion of the human body in the way described an impossibility.—*Universal American Encyclopedia*

you've got to keep centring." He peered down cross-eyed and touched the golden bells so that they chinked mutedly against his torso's centre. "Gold's best for centring. Next to diamonds," he added as he wove off rhythmically.

"Y'know, O'Leary may have something there, I'll memo my boys on it," the General observed with wise-eyed tolerance.

"In Haight-Ashbury . . ." a voice drifted, past shoulders.

"All the Hashbury's moved to Topanga Canyon," another voice counter-drifted.

"Very interesting," the Undistinguished Old Man observed.

The Modest Young Man nodded with considerable tension in his neck.

A small, intense, karate-muscled man, Playboy-clad, marched in like a meteor, absently running interference for his retinue of one wolf-faced and two Frankenstein-visaged monsters and four micro-skirted slenderly-lovelies fresh from some sound stage by the testimony of their panchromatic make-up.

"That secrets-of-the-universe crap may be the ass-fundamental nitty-gritty," he machine-gunned in staccato pronouncement, "but it stays crap until you pitchfork it across the globe by film or tape." He flashed his dark eyes around under his thick, black, side-swept forehead fringe. "They call me the Infant Prodigy

BONAPARTE, JEROME, born in 1784, became a naval officer and while cruising at the beginning of the war with England was forced to take refuge in New York, where he married an American girl, Elizabeth Patterson, and lived for two years (1785-1789).

BOYER, JEAN PIERRE, President of the Republic of Haiti, was a mulatto, born in Port-au-Prince in 1776. He was educated in France and in 1796 entered the military service.—*Universal American Encyclopedia*

of Sunset Strip, so listen hard to my prophetic da-da for tonight: When it comes, the Great American Movie will be a three-hour commercial that's taken creative hold of its makers and driven them out of their skulls. All our modern Shakespeares are ad-writers. When that golden shit

ELECTRIC DEATH, death resulting from electricity discharged through the animal system. When electricity is applied to the execution of criminals (electrocution), the victim is seated in a chair and

strapped thereto. One electrode with wet padded surface is placed against his head or some adjacent part. Another electrode is placed against some of the lower parts, and a current from an alternating dynamo passed for fifteen seconds or more. The potential difference applied to the electrodes is usually about 2200 volts, this high voltage being necessary to overcome the resistance of the body, which varies from 20,000 to 60,000 ohms. A current of three-hundredths (.03) of an ampere is usually fatal, although not always. — *Universal American Encyclopedia*

hits the fan, there'll be cosmic wisdom spattered over the walls of the Kremlin and the Forbidden City." With a massive facial tic instantly mastered, he marched off at right-angle left, his cinematic retinue wheeling.

"He comes only to steal for films our best ideas," Morpheo commented waspishly, then instantly corrected himself, his voice becoming bland with the fine Freemasonry of all occultists as he said, "yet if our ideas are spread, what matter the vessel?"

"Left hand helps right hand. The orgiastic Tantric, the meditative Tantric," the Hostess approved, moving sideways a bepearled dark claw in underplayed benediction.

"Quayne Christina would hap-proof," Friday agreed. "Reincarnation. . . . Gina Cerminara. . . ."

"The Satanic Passion. . . . Stations of

EVIL, the subject of an appalling quantity of barren speculation.—*Universal American Encyclopedia*

the Inverted Cross. . . . Anton LaVey. . . ." floated a voice.

"Wilhelm Reich. . . . The radiant organ substance of sex, blue like a boy baby. Or is that pink?" "Ron Hubbard. . . . Have you paid your \$1,500 for *Excalibur*?" "Roger Babson. . . . The Foundation rejected Gloriana's essay because she proved gravity was an illusion." "Symmes, Teed, Burroughs . . . our hollow earth." "Ignatius Donnelly, Hans Hoerbiger, Hans Schindler Bellamy, Immanuel Velikovsky . . . our world many times battered by comets, moons, planets—you'd think if it were hollow it couldn't take it, but I suppose —"

While these other voices floated, the Modest Young Man and the Undistinguished Old Man wandered off into the unlighted room.

The Hostess said, briefly gazing after them, "I must say, those two seem out of place here."

"Two," Gloriana Grant said, "the number of discord. Numbers are mysterious."

LOUISIANA, a state in the south central division of the United States; bounded by Arkansas, Mississippi, the Gulf of Mexico and Texas; admitted to the Union, April, 30, 1812. In the entire state in

1936 were 1,318 whites, 4,552 Mexicans, 776,326 Negroes, 1,536 Indians, 522 Chinese and 52 Japanese.—*Universal American Encyclopedia*

"Skeptics!" Morpheo pronounced. "You can always tell by the soothing way they agree with you."

"Obvious as if they were whiteheads, that it's their first day in Bootcamp Pacifico," the General observed.

"Oh well, they're nobodies," Linda Lee summed up.

Among glinting shadowy furniture, the Modest Young Man seated himself in a complexly tubular chair facing the open glass view-door and a faintly reddish star gleaming steadily close to the horizon. He searched the gloom rather carefully, but there were no quiet meditators, no lovers hiding in corners. To seek the shadows, for any reason, is not the Hollywood custom. Everything is done under bright lights, for maximum impact.

He complained, "It's a very irritating place. Often, to hear them talk, you'd swear they couldn't belong to a race having spaceflight

ARMADILLO, the Spanish-American name, now imported into English, of various mammalia belonging to the order *Edentata*, the family *Dasypodidae*, and its typical genus *Dasyurus*. The name implies that they are in armor. The animal, when it sees danger, can extemporize a hole and vanish into it with wonderful rapidity.—*Universal American Encyclopedia*

and atomic power."

"But they do," observed the Undistinguished Old Man. "And they are on the verge of sub-space and the stardrive." He seated himself in a chair of padded curves that clasped him snugly.

"I'll write an honest report, but they'll have me on the carpet for it," the first said dolefully. "They did the first time. And as for my article for the *Galactic Encyclopedia* . . ."

"My masters are as exasperatingly incredulous too," the other agreed with a chuckle, "and *Galactic's* editors only more so. Good that our paths crossed. Perhaps another time. . . ."

"Yes, good—" the first began, turning towards the other. With only a muted *pop*, the chair of padded curves and its occupant had vanished, leaving behind nothing but a momentary chilly draught as air rushed in to fill the vacuum.

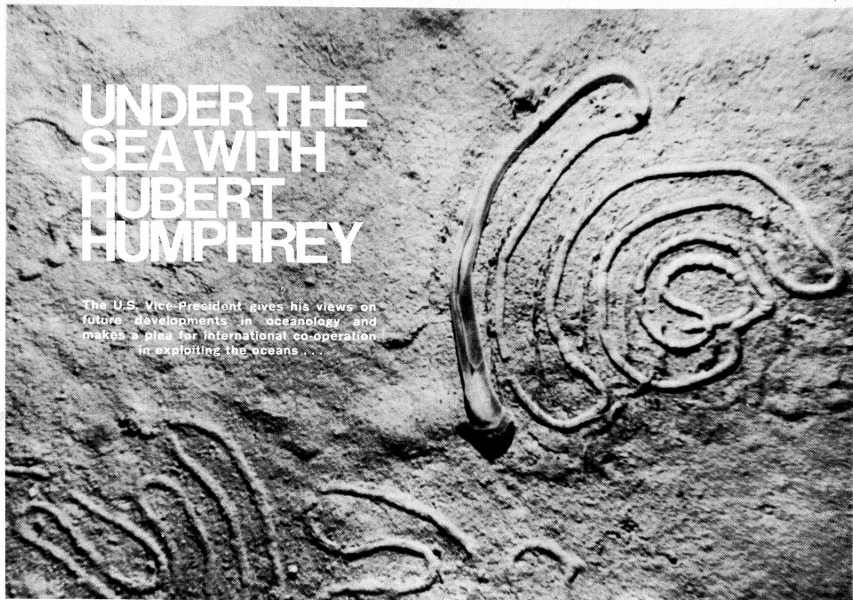
The Modest Young Man smiled wryly and murmured to himself, ". . . space." The tubes of his chair began

CARROLL, LEWIS. See Dodgson, Charles Lutwidge. — *Universal American Encyclopedia*

to glow faintly. Rising only a fraction of an inch a second, but swiftly gathering speed, the chair sped noiselessly through the doorway, aimed straight at Mars.

UNDER THE SEA WITH HUBERT HUMPHREY

The U.S. Vice-President gives his views on future developments in oceanology and makes a plea for international co-operation in exploiting the oceans...



Abyssal acorn worm at nearly 13,000 feet below sea level

A YEAR AGO the U.S. Congress enacted and the President approved legislation which established as the policy of the United States the development of a co-ordinated, comprehensive and long-range national programme in marine science for the benefit of mankind.

Responding to this mandate, the United States has established a unified programme; begun to establish national goals; selected major oceanic programmes requiring priority attention.

I have the privilege of serving as chairman of the National Council on Marine Resources and Engineering Development which was established last year to bring together the Cabinet-level officials responsible for marine science policies. The Council quickly realized that oceanography is in a state of transition. No longer is it a purely scientific pursuit; it must now serve concrete national and international needs.

This new oceanography faces many challenges:

1.—The challenge of using the vast food reserves of the sea to help end the tragic cycle of famine and despair which haunts much of the world today.

2.—The challenge of pollution and erosion on sea-shores, bays and estuaries, which threaten the health of

the American people and destroy the resources of the sea.

3.—The challenge of understanding the effects of the oceans on the weather, so as to improve the long-term forecasting of storms and sea conditions, protect life and property in coastal areas, and improve the prediction of rainfall in the interior.

4.—The challenge of gathering mineral wealth from the ocean floor.

5.—The challenge of international understanding and co-operation in marine affairs.

The oceans provide important opportunities for peaceful international co-operation and development. They wash the coasts of many nations from East to West. The phenomena of the oceans are universal. Many nations are intensifying their use of the sea's resources.

Therefore, it is essential that the United States work with all countries, including the Soviet Union, bilaterally and through international organizations in exploring, understanding and using the seas and their abundant resources.

During the past several months President Johnson



Refrigerated library of ocean floor cores

and I have discussed co-operation in marine science with many leading government officials in Western Europe, Asia and Latin America. Without exception, they are as enthusiastic as we are about the unlimited potential for working together for the benefit of all.

The United States can work with the advanced nations to jointly explore and develop ocean resources; It can assist the less developed countries to promote coastal development, open new waterways and strengthen food economies; and it can work with all nations to establish a framework of laws which will encourage an accelerated use of the oceans and their resources by all nations.

In brief, through co-operative international efforts, the United States can foster economic development; help raise the level of scientific competence; promote regional co-operation; and strengthen the bonds of understanding throughout the world.

At the top of America's list of priorities, it must help tap the abundant unused food potential which the oceans hold. More than one-half the world's population is hungry—more than 1,500 million people. Yet the world's food supply stretches thinner and thinner in the

face of a spiralling population.

The oceans can help alleviate this problem, and the United States is determined that they will.

The United States has embarked on an intensified, long-range programme to exploit the oceans as a source of food to help feed the undernourished people of the world—a programme which includes:

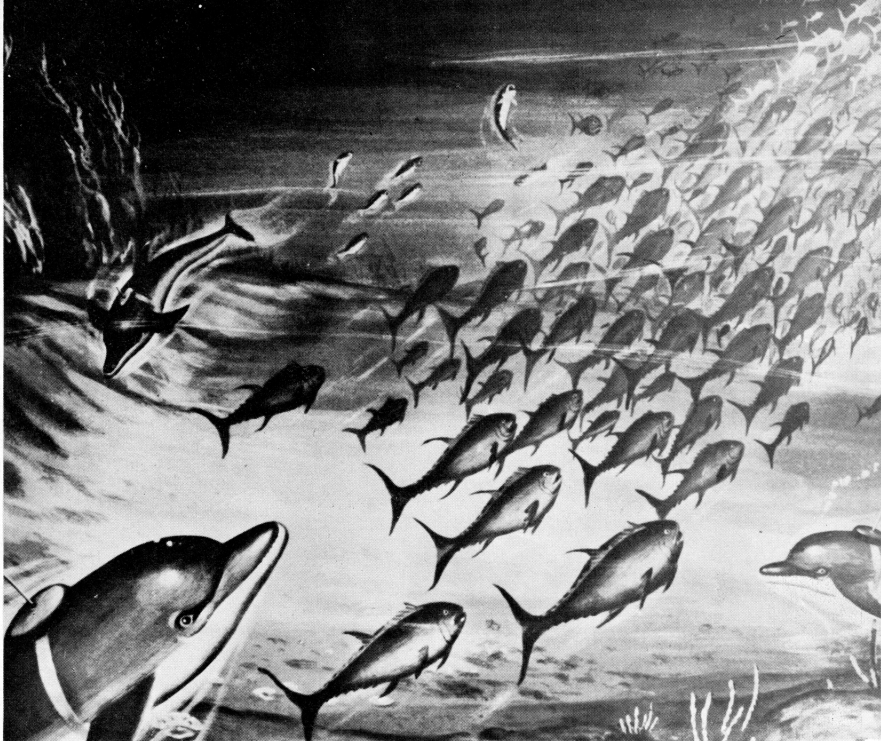
- 1.—Multiplying five-fold the present use of food resources from the oceans.

- 2.—Developing more effective regulatory policies to maximize world-wide fishing yields and improve fishing efficiency.

- 3.—Encouraging expanded participation by private enterprise in harvesting the oceans' food resources.

To fulfil this pledge, the United States is vigorously developing technologies for the production of fish protein concentrate and for mapping the living resources of the sea. It calls on the other advanced nations of the world to join, through the agencies of the United Nations and bilaterally, in this humanitarian endeavour.

The dimensions of world hunger are too great to be solved by any one country alone. Only through a co-operative sharing of the burden by all people and



Radio controlled trained porpoises herding schools of fish

nations can man's very survival on this planet be ensured.

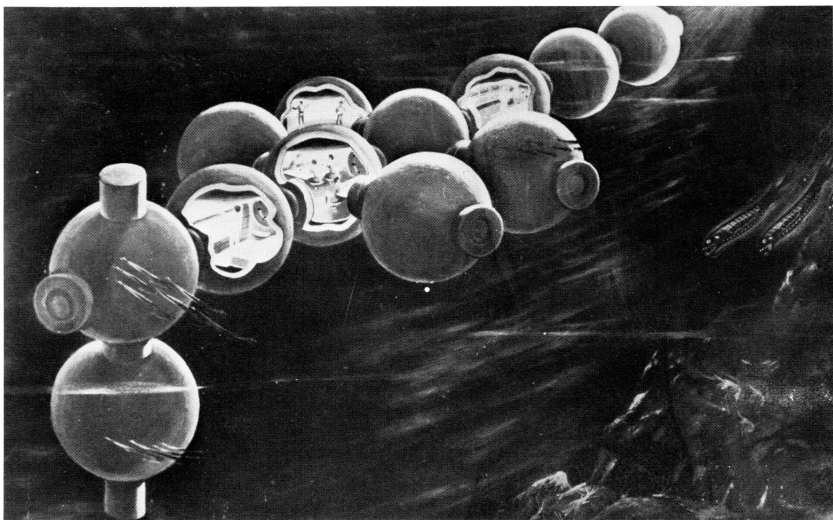
The United States also anticipates developments in other areas of marine technology which will provide new opportunities for strengthening maritime ties and contributing to a peaceful and stable world. For example, it is examining the international aspects of mining in the oceans, and the environmental data of benefit to many nations.

Accurate navigation is fundamental to the advancement of these oceanic endeavours. Therefore, I am pleased to announce another step in America's navigational aids for civilian use. This step, which will couple the technological achievements of the space programme to endeavours in the ocean, is doubly rewarding for me since I also serve as chairman of the National Space Council.

Late in July, the President approved a recommendation that the Navy's Navigation Satellite System be made available for use by U.S. civilian ships, and that commercial manufacture of the required shipboard receivers be encouraged. This recommendation was developed by the Department of the Navy in support of the initiatives of the Marine Sciences Council to strengthen world-wide navigational aids for civilian use.

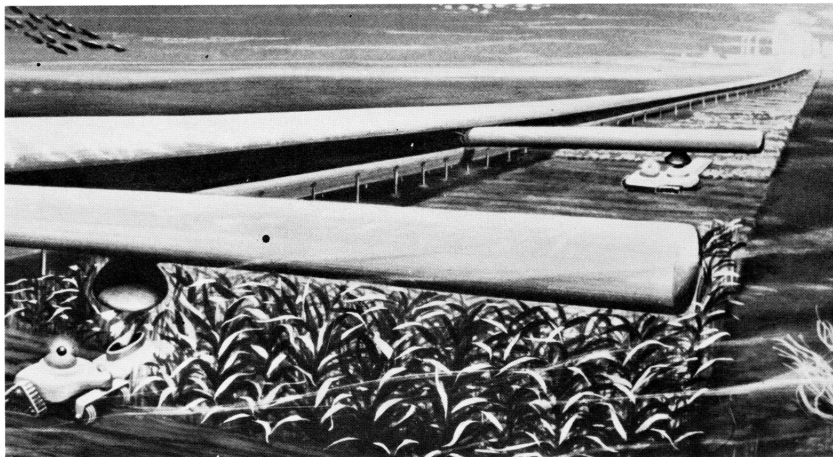
America's all-weather satellite system has been in use since 1964 by the Navy and has enabled fleet units to pinpoint their positions anywhere on the earth. The same degree of navigational accuracy will now be available to U.S. non-military ships.

For the past year, there has been an increasing interest in this system in the oceanographic community, among offshore oil exploration companies, and among other segments of U.S. industry which require extremely



A work colony designed by G.E.C. for the mid-Atlantic by 1980. Men are housed in glass spheres, 9,000 feet deep.

Below: An automated farm would grow hybrid plants adapted to water. Overhanging harvesters would transport crops to processing plants.





There is, of course, no commitment by the Navy to maintain the system indefinitely for non-military use. However, recognizing the need for strengthening America's world-wide navigational capabilities, the Marine Sciences Council has requested the Department of Transportation to prepare a plan for meeting future non-military navigational requirements, giving consideration to the role of land-based radio systems and navigation satellites.

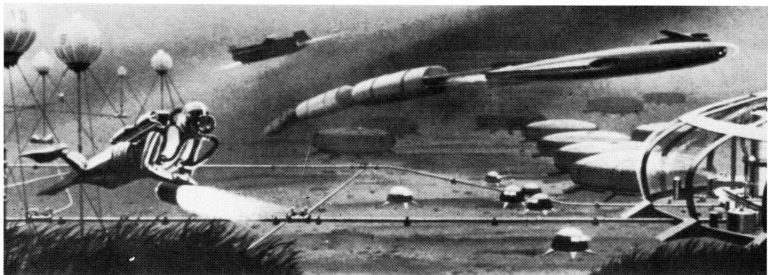
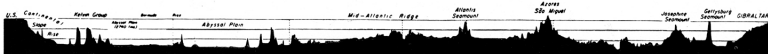
The fabric of peace must be woven to stretch unbroken from the outermost reaches of the solar system to the bottom of the oceans.

During the past year, the United States has made a good beginning at the United Nations towards preventing warlike activities in outer space and creating conditions favourable to co-operation among nations for the exploration and use of outer space.

The "Deep Diver": an underwater taxi for transporting commercial divers to the sea bed.

Below: Profile of the bottom of the Atlantic.

Bottom: Underwater oil field of the future.



Continued from page 12

buy me as a flunky or no deal. You tell me the truth, the whole truth, and maybe you rent yourself an ally. You mickey mouse me much longer and you've got yourself an enemy. I don't think you can afford me as an enemy—if you could, you wouldn't be so hot for my bod."

"Take my word for it, you don't want to know what you think you do," Howards said. "I'm not peddling cars or dope and I'm not an entertainer. I play for the . . . for blood. Let it go, Barron, you've out of your depth. This is so big . . . it's none of your business. You got a chance to live forever, don't blow it by trying to stick your nose in a meatgrinder. Yes or no, Barron, right here, right now, no more fencing."

"You've had my final word," Barron said, "and you can take it or leave it."

"Look, let's not be hasty," Howards said—again with a weird shift of verbal gears to incomprehensible sweet reason. "I'll give you a week, think about it, think about wormfood—and think about living forever."

Schmuck, Barron thought. Bennie-boy, you blew it Bennie Howards doesn't back down from take it or leave it unless he thinks answer will be leave it and knows he can't afford a leave it from Jack Barron. You're hot for my bod, baby, and before you get it, do I put you through changes!

"Okay," he said. "A week. For both of us to think about it." And will you get something to think about next Wednesday, Mr. Benedict Howards!

"THAT'S WHAT I want, Vince," Jack Barron said as Gelardi's grey basilisk image did a double take on the vidphone screen. 'That's what I want, and it's my show, and that's what I'll get.'

"I don't get it," Gelardi said. "This week you give me static for feeding you a call that just played footsie too hard with Howards and now you want to aim a boot at his testes. What happened between Wednesday and today, man?"

Barron paused, considered, felt vidphone-camera circuitry carrying his image words to Gelardi camera to camera screen to screen phosphordot patterns talking to each other, in control cool, keep it cool. Big stakes, Jack baby, with free Freeze maybe just for openers, got to see what Howards has in the hole, how many cards he takes on draw. Play your own hand in *this* game, sorry, Vince, no kibitzers allowed.

"Bennie Howards happened," Barron said. "He happened all over this office about an hour ago."

"So the show *did* put him uptight?"

"Uptight!" said Barron. "Bennie was uptight like Shabazz is a Negro. I'm going to have to have the rug replaced and there are still toothmarks on my throat. Howards blew his gourd. He threatened to strong-arm the network, lean on the sponsors and get his flunkies on the F.C.C. to put me on the shit list, is all."

"Did you cool him?" Gelardi asked nervously. Directing show and monkey block's best gravy train

you ever rode, eh, Vince? Barron thought. Get connip-tion when I make waves.

"Cool him?" Barron said. "*Cool him?* I cooled him all right, I told him to go take a flying fuck."

Gelardi made a rude headshaking bellynoise, rolled his eyes upward. Barron smiled calculatignly inward. Need a good wrong reason to do the right thing, he thought, make Vince think highest all-time stakes still the show. Need *Bug Jack Barron*-oriented reason to knee Bennie in the groin.

"You're crazy, you know that, Jack?" Gelardi said, dead earnest. "You keep telling me we don't twist tigers' tails, and now what do you do, you get Bennie Howards uptight and then instead of cooling it, you tell him to go fuck himself, and now we don't have enough tsouris, you want a whole show aimed at Howards' jugular. You on something stronger than our sponsor's grass?"

"In words of one syllable, Vince," Barron said. "We are in trouble. Howards was convinced I'm out to get him and I couldn't unconvince him. Therefore he informed me that he was going to get me, and we both know he can do it, given the time. At which point, knowing sweet reason would do no good, I told Bennie to fuck off, and I threatened *him*. I told him that what happened this week was just good clean fun compared to what would happen to him if he got ancy with me. Which is why we go after his ass on the next show—to give proof positive that I mean what I say, that there's no percentage in *really* bugging Jack Barron, even if you've got the muscle Howards got. We give Howards a taste of the fire next time, and he'll back off. He thinks he's got his Freezer bill all locked up; I want to show him I can put it in doubt if he gives me reason enough to run the risk. We show him our claws, and he'll suck in his, comprehend, *paisan*?"

"Oh my bleeding ulcer!" Gelardi said. "I dig the necessity now, but the network will have a shiftfit."

"Screw the network," Barron said. "There's three other networks would love to have *Bug Jack Barron*, and they know it. As long as we scare Howards off our backs they'll rant and rave but they won't do squat. And that goes in spades for the sponsors. For the bread the show makes for all concerned, they can afford the milk to baby their ulcers. Question is, what kind of call can we count on getting next week that I can use against Howards? We can concoct a put-up job if we have to, but I don't like that idea very much. If Howards or the network or the F.C.C. found out we were faking calls. . . ."

"How about a deathbed scene?" Gelardi suggested instantly. Good old Vince, Barron thought, give him an angle he can buy and he's off to the races.

"Deathbed scene?" Barron said.

"Sure," said Gelardi. "We get at least half a dozen every week, crank stuff, I get standing orders with the monkey block not to let 'em past the first screen. Some cat's croaking from something slow, usually cancer, usually on Social Security or Guaranteed Annual

Wage, you know, like broke, and the whole goddamn family gathers 'round the vidphone with the prospective corpse as a prop and wants you to get the Foundation to give the old man a free Freeze. Tear-jerker stuff. Chances are we'll even get one where the dying man does some of the talking. And it's a safe bet we can add on the race angle again if we want to."

Yeah, thought Barron, just the right touch. Milk it for maybe ten, fifteen minutes' worth of hot angry tears, then put Bennie on—you *know* he'll be answering his phone this time—for the rest of the show. Give him a taste of the whip, then it's his option, then the knife again, then he makes more points, then another kick in the balls—cat and mouse, show him just where it's at. Show him you can kill him stone cold dead, but back off the coup de grace, leaving the goose bleeding but with one more chance to give with the golden egg—and a fucking good show in the bargain!

"I like, I like," Barron said. "But let's lay off the race schtick this time round—he'll be ready for that and we want to hit him where he ain't. Have the first screen boys feed all deathbed calls directly to you and give me the best lily-white one you get."

"You're the boss, Jack," Gelardi said, "but personally the whole schtick has me shaking. You hurt Howards *too* bad, and you won't scare him off, you'll goad him into a kamikaze. You're gonna really have to walk that line, man—and with both our jobs riding on it."

"That's the name of the game, Vince," Barron said. "You shove me out on the high wire and I walk it. Trust your old uncle Jack."

"Trust you like my brother," Gelardi said.

"I didn't know you had a brother."

"Yeah," Gelardi said, grinning. "He's doing five to ten in Sing Sing for fraud. See you in the frying pan, Jack."

CHAPTER FIVE

"CLEAN?" SAID Benedict Howards, looking past the head of the faceless, bookkeeperish man, out the picture window at the soothing white walls of the main Freezer of the Long Island Freezer Complex, stark monolith of immortality power safe from crawling maggots of incompetence like this Wintergreen random servants of the fading black circle of death like Jack Barron.

"No man's clean, Wintergreen, and certainly not a man with a past as rank as Jack Barron's—a founder of the Social Justice Coalition, ex-Berkeley rabble-rouser, boyhood buddy of every Peking-loving Commie son of a bitch in the country, and you tell me Barron's *clean*? He's about as clean as an open cess-pool."

Wintergreen fondled the fat manila folder he kept shuffling from his lap to the desk and back, worried it like a goddamned nervous kangaroo. "Well, of course, not *that* way, he's not, Mr. Howards," he said. ("Rabbit yes-man bastard," Howards thought.) "But

this is a complete dossier on Barron, and there's nothing in here we can use against him, nothing. I stake my reputation on that, sir."

"You're staking a hell of a lot more than your non-existent reputation on it," Howards said. "Your job's on the line and your place in a Freezer, too. I don't keep a head of 'Personnel Research' to produce a shit-load of useless paper on a man I want nailed to the wall, I pay you to find me a handle I can grab on a man. Every man's got a handle, and you're paid to find it."

"But I can't manufacture something that isn't there," Wintergreen whined. "Barron was never a member of any organization on the old Attorney General's list, even though plenty of his friends were. There's nothing to link him to anything more damaging than technically-illegal demonstrations, and these days that kind of thing makes a man a hero, not a criminal. He isn't even a member of the S.J.C. any more; hasn't been since a year after he got his tv show. He makes large amounts of money, spends it freely, but keeps out of debt. He sleeps with large numbers of unattached women, engages in no illegal perversions and takes no illegal drugs. There's nothing in any of it we can use against him, and in that sense, which I trust is the sense you're interested in, sir, he's totally clean." Wintergreen picked up the folder again, began bending down the edges.

"Stop playing with that damned thing!" Howards snapped. Goddamn cretin, whole country's full of cretins can't find their asses without a roadmap. "So we can't blackmail Barron," he said, saw Wintergreen wince at plain fucking truth-word *blackmail*—imagine *him* living forever clerk forever rabbit coward forever. Immortality's for men with the balls to grab it, fight for it, fight from dry windy Panhandle to circles of power circles of forever, toss the rest to the fading black circle garbage disposal, only what they deserve. Like damn fool coward Henninger.

"So some men can't be blackmailed," Howards said. "But every man can be bought once you know his price. So we buy Jack Barron."

"But you've already offered him the biggest possible bribe, a place in a Freezer," Wintergreen said, "and he hasn't taken it."

"He hasn't turned it down either," Howards said. "I know men, which means I got a nose for their prices, that's why I'm where I am today. Way I know *your* price down to the dollar—more money than you can spend and a place in the Freezers when you croak, and you're mine, simply because I know the price you set on yourself and I can afford to meet it fully. Barron's no different from you or anybody else; he wants that Freeze contract, you can make book on that. He wants it just enough to let me use him on *his* terms. With that coin, I can buy his services just until he thinks he can double-cross me and get away with it. And once those contracts are signed, he *will* be able to get away with it—and a man like Barron, he won't play ball till I

do sign. You don't screw around with a man like that; you've got to own him, down to the soles of his shoes. And a free Freeze just won't buy that. For that fee, he'll play ball as long as I answer all his questions and he likes the answers. But that's not the way Benedict Howards does business. It's easier to buy a Jack Barron than to destroy him, good business, too. What I need from you is something that will let me meet the rest of the price he sets on himself. There's got to be *something* the man's hungry for and can't get for himself."

"Well . . . there's his ex-wife," Wintergreen said hesitantly. "But there's no way we can deliver *her*."

"*Ex-wife?*" Howards hissed. You dumb puffed-up three-score-and-ten, errand-boy-bastard, sitting right in front of you all the time, egomaniac like Barron's got to have some woman means something more to him than a good lay. What they call it, mindfucker, yeah beatnik Bolshevik mindfucker's got to have some woman's head to play with, means *she's* got to be able to screw around with his. . . .

"Well, what about his ex-wife, idiot? What's her name? What's her game? Why'd they break up if Barron still wants her? This is what I was looking for from the beginning, man! Do I have to do *all* the thinking around here?"

"I'm afraid it's hopeless, Mr. Howards," Wintergreen said, again toying with the folder. Howards started to bark, thought, what the hell, forget it, take the long view, patience, patience, easy when you got all the time in creation.

"Her name's Sara Westerfeld. She lives right here in New York, in the Village. Does kinestroph interior effects. Barron met her when he was still a student at Berkeley, they lived together for a couple of years before they were married, they were divorced about two years after he got the show. I anticipated this coming up, Mr. Howards, and had her investigated. It's all bad, sir. She holds a membership card in the Social Justice Coalition, and she's a loud supporter of the Public Freezer League, and you know how *that* kind feels about us. And from what we've been able to learn, she seems to hate Barron as much as she hates us. Seems to have something to do with his being a television star; she actually moved out on him only six months after he got the show."

"Sounds like the last of the red-hot beatniks," Howards said. Dammit, he thought, figures Barron would have the hots for a Foundation-hating artsy-fartsy beatnik hair halfway down her ass Berkeley Bolshevik loser bitch! But she hates him, good, means he can't get her himself, buy her, you've bought Jack Barron. Question is how you buy screwball kook Sara Westerfeld. . . . ?

"And who's she sleeping with?" Howards asked on sudden, shrewd impulse.

"An easier question to answer," Wintergreen said primly, "would be who *isn't* she sleeping with. She seems to have gone to bed with every social misfit in the

Village at one time or another—and without too many repeat performances. Obviously a nymphomaniac."

Click. Howards felt pieces of the pattern come together in his head: Jack Barron screwing everyone in creation, ex-wife doing likewise but they were together a long time not likely they both go for one-night stands for no reason, no one does nothing for no reason. Probably both for the *same* reason, Barron's got the itch for her, can't scratch is why he tries so hard, so she. . . .

"Wintergreen," he said, "it's obvious you don't know shit from shinola about women. She's obviously still got an itch for Barron, whether she hates his guts or not, and that's why she's working overtime trying to scratch it because she can't scratch it without Barron and she wants no part of him. And that's the easiest kind of woman to buy because she's half-bought already. Half-loves Barron, half-hates him, give her an extra reason to go back to him and she'll do it in a minute, because she *wants* an excuse to crawl back into bed with Barron, means she wants to be bought, even if she doesn't know it yet."

Howards smiled because best part is once I get her into bed with Barron, I've bought her all the way because then worst thing in the world for Miss Sara Westerfeld is for Barron to find out I've bought her, she's a whore, my whore, she'll do as she's told, buy her and you've bought Jack Barron.

"I want Sara Westerfeld in this office within five hours," Howards said. "And I don't care how you do it, grab her if you have to. Don't worry, she won't open her mouth and won't be pressing any charges after I get through with her."

"But, Mr. Howards, a woman like that, how can you. . . . ?"

"You let me worry about that. This is obviously a girl with worms where her brains should be, and that kind you can always buy in the bargain basement. Get to it, man—and stop playing with that goddamned folder!"

CHRIST I'M TIRED, Benedict Howards thought. Tired of doing it all myself having to do it all myself tired of dumb-ass politicians with qualms of conscience like Henninger tired of fighting from cold empty plains to oilfields stocks Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Washington circles of power, fighting doctors' heads nodding nurses needs plastic tube up nose down throat life leaking away in plastic bottles, fighting fading black circle with money-fear power of life against death, fighting, fighting all the way alone idiots all the way incompetent phoney sycophants useless fumbling fools lunatics stupidity lies all on the side of death, side of the fading black circle of nothingness closing in, smaller, smaller. . . .

Won't get Benedict Howards. Push you back, open you up, got you now you motherfucker you, Palacci, Bruce, doctors, endocrinologists, surgeons, internists, Foundation flunkies all against you, all owned by Bene-

dict Howards, say I've got you this time it works endocrine balance stabilized Homeostatic Endocrine Balance, young, strong, healthy—feel it when I get up eat piss touch woman hot strong quick like in Dallas Los Angeles oilfield days all night long and hungry and strong in the morning, forever, Mr. Howards, anabolism balances katabolism, Mr. Howards, immortality, Mr. Howards.

Fight, fight, fight, and now I've got it all, Howards thought defiantly. Got money power, life versus death power, Senators (damn Hennering!), Governors . . . President. . . ? (Fucking goddamn bastard Hennering!), Mr. Howards, got forever, Mr. Howards.

And nobody takes forever away from Benedict Howards!

Not Teddy Hennering not Teddy the Pretender not nigger bastard Bolshevik Greene not smart-ass organ-grinder monkey Jack Barron. . . Buy 'em kill 'em own 'em all, men on the side of death till only two kinds of men left: Foundation men and dead men, wormfood men, Mr. Howards.

One last fight to keep forever safe forever mine forever. Pass Utility Bill, find new funky (son of a bitch Hennering) make him President, control it all, control Congress, White House, Freezers power of life against death, immortality power, all power against fading black circle, hold it back, push it back, open it up forever. . . .

Then rest, rest ten thousand years of smooth cool women in air-cooled arenas of power, young, quick, strong, ten million years, rest spoils of battle forever, my women my power my country my forever. . . .

Smart-ass Bolshevik con-artist Jack Barron thinks he can stand against me, con me, milk me, play power-games threat-games death-games with Benedict Howards no one plays games with Benedict Howards. Out of his league, squash him like a bug, buy him, own him, use him to pass Utility Bill despite coward Hennering, own Barron own private pipeline to hundred million loser slob own them own fears minds votes bodies Congress White House country, safe when they find out, safe, forever, safe. . . .

Last piece of pattern of power, Jack Barron, that's all you are, smart-ass. Just last little piece to fit into pattern of Foundation life against death Senators, Governors, President, safety power, little gear in big forever machine, little tin gear, Barron.

Stomp me, I stomp you, eh Barron? *Clean* Jack Barron, nose question-man bastard, Jack Barron. Think Foundation power money power life against death power can't touch you? No one says no to Benedict Howards. I got the handle on you, Barron, find the handle on everyone sooner or later.

Sara Westerfeld. Howards savoured the name, tasted the syllables with his tongue. Dumb loser beatnik whore, but she's got you by the balls, hasn't she, Barron? Think you're strong, Barron, strong enough to play games with Benedict Howards. . . .

Howards smiled, leaned back in his chair, waited,

waited for Sara Westerfeld. Sara Westerfeld, the handle on Jack Barron. No man's strong who's weak for someone weak, he knew. Chain of command: Benedict Howards to Sara Westerfeld to Jack Barron to hundred million dumb slob to Senators, Congressmen, President.

And all the links were already in place except the first one, the easiest one—Sara Westerfeld. Sara Westerfeld—bargain basement stuff. Hates the Foundation, eh? Member of Public Freezer League. . . ?

"Yeah," Howards breathed aloud. That was it, that had to be it! Public Freezer looks want Federal Freezer Programme so *they* (deadbeat loser beatnik slob) can have place in a Freezer. Offer kook free Freeze, she sells out faster than you can buy. Price-tag on Sara Westerfeld: Jack Barron and forever. And one's her excuse to go get the other!

Barron's in my pocket, good as bought, Howards thought. Sara Westerfeld, price of Jack Barron—lucky Sara Westerfeld!

CURIOSITY, FEAR, FASCINATION and contempt were a knot in her stomach . . . lightheadedness sense of vision bursting out of her head instead of coming in, stoned-electric scalp-tingling, as Sara Westerfeld stepped out of the car, stood before the evil white dying place blankness of the main Freezer of the Long Island Freezer Complex.

Temple, she thought, it's like an Aztec-Egyptian temple with priests sacrificing to gods of ugliness praying for alliances with snake-headed idols to ward off the god with no face, the death god, and all the time worshipping him with their fear. No-faced death-god, like big white building with no windows, and inside mummies in cold cold swaddling sleeping in liquid helium amnion, waiting to be reborn.

She shivered as the balding man touched her elbow silently, priestlike, she thought, shivered as if she could feel the liquid helium space-cold sympathetic magic of the Foundation itself in his touch, the decayed-lizard death-touch of Benedict Howards, waiting for her, there in his bone-white windowless lair. . . . Why? Why?

She followed the man who had come to her apartment with his all-too-polite invitation—politeness of dictators of L.A. cops Berkeley cops sinister Peter Lorre secret police politeness with paddywagons riot-cops cells guns booted feet waiting behind the crocodile smile—across a wide, green, somehow-plastic-seeming lawn, thinking it can't happen here, we've got rights, writ of *habeas corpus*. . . .

Sara shuddered. A corpus abducted into the Freezer could not be freed by all the court writs since the beginning of time. Not until the Foundation found a way to un-freeze bodies. . . . The Foundation, in Benedict Howards' vestigial Tyrannosaur scrabbling hands. . . .

Get ahold of yourself. No one's going to Freeze you, just a little talk, the slimy creature said. With Benedict Howards. A little talk between an ant and an elephant.



I'm afraid, she admitted, I don't know what of, but oh oh I'm afraid. Power, that's what *he'd* say, the arena, where it's really at, nitty-gritty marketplace of power, baby.

That's what *he'd* say, the cop-out bastard. Two of a kind, Jack and Howards. Jack'd know what to say, what not to say, fifteen different ways to tie that slimy lizard in knots. Just Jack's bag.

Jack. . .

Across the lawn, down a path by the side of the Freezer, and into a smaller outbuilding, windowed, cold blue pastel halls with plush red carpeting, walnut doors, smells of secretaries, coffee, soft clickings of muted typewriters, human voices—an office building, no operating theatres gurgling pumps bottled-blood chemical smells of Freezer building feed of layer upon layer of Frozen dead waiting bodies bulging cold graveyard (colder than any graveyard) weight into the air of the corridor. Just as office building, lousy decor office building, Texan industrially-designed tastelessness of Benedict Howards' office building.

But it made her more afraid. Faceless building like windowless faceless Freezer faceless death-god Howards faceless polite message faceless polite messenger facelessness of Jack's damned *real* world, power-world where people are faceless images to each other pawns on chessboard faceless game of life and death.

Never my world, she thought. No happy flashing colours smells *real* Village-Berkeley-Strip City swirling living chaos-colours *real* flesh and blood world. Like overdose bumper style reality bad acid freakout A-head world all sharp cutting edges paranoia. Feel like stiffle creature in metal forest world of knives, cocks like steel pistons.

Jack. . . Jack, you son of a bitch, why aren't you here with me? Jack'd give you yours, Benedict Howards! Warm loving courage to light up the world gauntlets thrown in face of cops Berkeley cops L.A. cops Alabama cops rednecks fists judges, me and my man against the night against all comers balling in open airy spaces feel of his body beside me in bed on one elbow on the phone with Luke setting the world straight our friends listening faces shining to the voice of hope in my bed making it all seem possible *my* cock always ready baby, a *man* is all, Benedict Howards, not perambulating lizard-creature, sweet cylinder of flesh stronger, more enduring than oiled steel piston.

Oh Jack, where did you lose it where is it where are you I need you now, my smirking knight in soft-flesh armour brave inside me arms around my waist facing down shaming howling mob in Meridian with only your voice for a sword, our love for armour. . .

She shuddered as the bald man opened a door, led her through a deserted outer office—half-cup of coffee still on empty secretary's desk as if witness suddenly cleared away from scene of ghastly lizard-human flesh-steel assignation. And she remembered how alone, how totally alone, how separated in time and space she was

from her one and only smirking knight in rusty armour—all that was left of the Jack that was was the smirk.

And she remembered his last words to her, sad lorn words, not even the warmth of anger: "The time of the Children's Crusade is over, baby. It went out with Bobby. Find yourself a nice idealistic *boy* with a nice big dick, and maybe you'll be happy. You can't cut it with my world, you can't cut it with me. I've got my piece of the action, and I don't go back to being a loser, even for you, Sara." And he hadn't even kissed her goodbye.

The chill of the memory forged a kind of steel within her. Holding the memory of the Jack that had been to her for warmth and the image of the Jack that was for anger, anger against the metal men like Howards who shared that Jack's faceless, cold, A-head cutting-edge world, she stepped into the inner office as the bald man stepped aside, holding the door for her, said: "Mr. Howards, this is Sara Westerfeld."

And closed the door behind her.

THE MAN BEHIND the ultra-stark, bare, teakwood desk (not *his* desk, she thought, he doesn't use this office often, desk hasn't been lived on) looked more like someone's rich Uncle Bill, pink, square-dressed loosely-pudgy in old-time-'70s maroon suit and ascot, than Benedict Howards, swimming sharklike in currents of death-madness-power.

Until he motioned her to an expensive, badly-designed, uncomfortable teak and horsehide chair in front of the desk with a soft heavy hand, said: "Miss Westerfeld, I'm Benedict Howards." And looked at her with eyes like black holes, feral rodent eyes kinesthops eyes shiny shifting flashes of power-fear eyes junkie-intensity eyes that said here there are tigers.

"What do you want from *me*?" she said sinking on to the chair which she suddenly realized was purposely uncomfortable, cunningly designed to uptight asses, hotseat interrogation chair, focus of paranoid A-head pattern of power.

Howards smiled a crocodile smile of false-uncle geniality, snapping pink face into a basilisk dead-flesh pattern around his shrewd mad eyes, said: "What I want from you, Miss Westerfeld, is nothing beside what I'm prepared to offer."

"There's nothing I could ever want from you," she said, "and I can't imagine what you could want from me. Unless (could it be as silly-safe as that?) you'd like some kinesthops pieces for this office. Maybe designs for the whole building? I've done office buildings before, and this place could certainly use—"

Howards cut her off with a pseudo-chuckle sound. "I'm much more interested in life than art, aren't *you*, Sara?" he said. "Isn't everyone?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," she said. Then, with little-girl prim petulance: "And I never said you could call me Sara."

Howards ignored it all as if speaking into a one-way vidphone connection. "You're in the kinesthops busi-

ness," he said, "and I'm in the life business. The business of eternal life. Don't you find that the least bit interesting?"

"I don't find you or your horrid Foundation interesting at all," she said. "You're a loathsome man and what you do is sickening and disgusting, setting a price on . . . on life itself. The rich live forever and the poor die, isn't that what your *business* is? The only interesting thing about you, Mr. Howards, is how you manage to look in a mirror without puking. What do you want from me? Why did you drag me here?"

"No one dragged you here," Howards said smoothly. "You came of your own free will, you weren't . . . abducted."

"And if I hadn't come of my own free will, I *would've* been abducted, wouldn't I?" she said, feeling anger burn away fear—what kind of man plays games with human life, they can only kill your body your soul is yours no one can take that away but yourself you can go fuck yourself with your stainless-steel cock, Benedict Howards!

"I'll tell you why you came here of your own free will," said Benedict Howards. "You can't con me with that purity crap; no one cons Benedict Howards. You came here because you're fascinated, like everyone else, you came here to get a whiff of forever. Forget about conning me, I've seen it all, isn't a man or woman on Earth wouldn't like a place in a Freezer ready and waiting when they die, wouldn't want to know that when that black circle closes in, snuffs you out like a candle, it's not forever, blackness isn't forever, they don't fill you with formaldehyde and feed you to the worms and no more Sara Westerfeld, not ever. Better to close your eyes that last time knowing it's *not* the last time, doesn't have to be a last time, in a century or a millenium—doesn't matter 'cause all you feel is a good night's sleep—they'll thaw you out, fix you better than new, and you're young and healthy and beautiful forever. That's why you came here, and no one's twisting your arm, you can leave any time you want to. Go ahead, turn your back on immortality, I dare you."

And all the while, his eyes measuring her like sausage, cold weasel eyes sulphur satan eyes watching his own words bounce back to him off her face, feeding back to his calm, sure, basilisk smile that said he knew it all, knew next words she would say why she would say them knew her insides knew her buttons better than she did, and for reasons of his own which she could never encompass was about to push them.

"I . . . I don't suppose you brought me here to discuss existential philosophy," she said, wanly, gamely—last frail defence before immersion in push-button deterministic A-head paranoia world behind those mad ferret eyes. (Jack! Jack! Jack! her own reflexive mind-scream mocked her.)

"Philosophy?" said Benedict Howards, making the word shit in his mouth. "I'm not giving you some Berkeley academic bullshit, I'm talking hard reality,

RUPERT HART- DAVIS

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woman—death, hardest reality there is. You know anything harder? I don't, and I've looked death square in his fucking ugly face, and you better believe that fading closing circle of black with your life leaking away in tubes and bottles is the ugliest face there is. And that's going to happen to *you*, Sara Westerfeld, and there's nothing you can do about it. Next week or next year or sixty years from now you're gonna be looking down into that pit with no bottom and the last thing you'll ever think is that you're never gonna think anything again. You took *that* in Philosophy at Berkeley, Miss Westerfeld?"

"What're you trying to do to me?" Sara screamed from the rim of a dark ugly crater, bottomless hole being nothingness spume of evil festering lizardman scrawling unspeakable terminal fear images on the shit-house walls of her mind.

"I'm trying to buy you, Miss Westerfeld," he said softly. "And believe me, you'll be selling. No one says no to Benedict Howards. Because I pay good coin; I buy you totally, but I pay totally, too. I buy with what everyone wants."

"You're insane!" Sara said. "I don't want any part of you at any price for any reason at any time."

"Think what it's like to be dead," Benedict Howards said, hypnotically, almost cooing. "Dead . . . nothing but a pile of warm-eaten flesh rotting underground. That's the end of you, Sara, the end of all your god-damned principles, the end of everything you ever were or wanted to be. You don't beat death, Miss Westerfeld; everything else you ever do or don't do adds up to nothing but a pile of garbage sooner or later. And it's always sooner."

"Why . . . why . . ." Sara mumbled. No one talks about things like that, she thought. You live with it by ignoring it, whitening it out, or they peel you screaming off walls. Why don't you scream when you hear yourself, Benedict Howards?

"I'm telling you about death so you'll value your life," Howards said. "Your immortal life. Because you don't have to die, Miss Westerfeld, not permanently, not ever. A place in a Freezer, secure, yours when you die—but you'll never really die, just go to sleep old one day and wake up young the next. Doesn't that beat being dead, Miss Westerfeld?"

"A place in the Freezer? In return for what? I don't have that kind of money. Besides, it's not fair, a few people who have something you want going on and on and everyone else dying and gone forever. That's so horrid about you and your Foundation—people dying by the thousands and a couple million rich bastards like you living forever! A Public Freezer Programme would—"

"Now who's a goddamned philosopher?" sneered Benedict Howards. "Sure, no one should die, but since I can't Freeze everyone, I Freeze those who have something to offer in return. I'm a monster because I can't do favours for everyone? Public Freezer horseshit! I've got the only viable Freezer system that exists or

ever'll be; you do business with me or you're eaten by the worms. You'll feel goddamned virtuous when you die, but it won't make you any less dead. What do you say, you can get up and leave and never hear from me again?"

Aware only of her flesh, lips, blood-filled tongue, as she shaped the words, saliva-taste, tooth-feel of mortality, Sara said: "All right, so I'm still sitting here. Sure I don't want to die, but you don't have me yet. There are still a few things I'd never do, not even to live forever."

She flashed horror images of fates worse than death on the screen of her mind: mutilating Jack's crutch with her teeth devouring living puppy whole rooting in ordure for a thousand years murdering her mother fucking Howards. . . . Hungry hoping search for prices too high to pay to smug, ferret-eyed, all-knowing A-head satan, she felt powerless in cutting-edge monster reality, knowing truth unbearable—death *is* the end, what crime too terrible to make her embrace it? *Please*, she prayed to her mind, let it be something too terrible to stomach!

"Relax," said Benedict Howards. "I don't want you to murder anyone and I'm not hot for your body. You want to live forever, you gotta do just one little thing. You gotta go get your ass in the sack with Jack Barron."

IT HIT HER where she wasn't, through no defences at all to the soft womanflesh of her mind. No unspeakable blood-crime, just Jack's mouth on mine again body hard angles filling me tearing me apart with sweetness laughing tongues together in our secret places mingling of juices—Jack. Jack.

But she saw the cold measuring eyes of Benedict Howards, and it all made hard-edged power-sense. How much does this slimy thing know? she thought, and knew that Howards must know everything, everything that factored into his pattern of power. Jack's an important power-creature now, measurable quantity of A-head-reality power, measured by Howards, wanted by Howards, maybe feared by Howards, too, and I'm just the price Jack sets on delivery, Sara Westerfeld back in bed in love like Berkeley days, but on 1987-Jack cop-out terms. Go back to Jack and live forever with lying ghosts of years-dead Jack slunk so low he sends lizard-man Howards to pimp for him. . . .

"So Jack's slunk *this* low?" she said cynically. "And what's he supposed to do for you when you deliver my body?"

Benedict Howards laughed. "You've got it all wrong," he said. "Barron knows nothing at all about this, and he never will, not from me . . . and not from you either, eh? I'm not selling you to Barron, you're going to get Barron to sell something to me. I want Jack Barron to sign a free Freeze contract, just like the one I'm offering you. And that's the deal—the day you get Barron to sign a Freeze contract with the Foundation, I sign yours. And that's all you'll ever have to do



with me, after that, you and me are even. You can leave Barron or stay with him or even tell him the whole truth, it's no skin off my teeth then. What do you say, isn't it the bargain of a lifetime? A long, long lifetime. . . ."

"But I don't love Jack," she insisted. "I despise him almost as much as I despise you."

"Your love life doesn't concern me," Howards said, "even though I'm reasonably sure you're lying. Let's not kid around, you're not Little Mary Sunshine. You're fucking everyone in creation, tell me you're in love with all of them. So make it with one more man who means . . . *nothing* to you for a couple weeks, long enough to get him to sign that contract, and you've got immortality, and that's more than you get for screwing half the Village. And we both know you can get him to sign, we both know *he* still loves you, eh? And who knows, you may find yourself liking it, we both know that, too, don't we, Miss Westerfeld?"

"You're a foul, slimy man," Sara whined. "I hate you! I hate you!" Turn your back on it, she told herself. Walk away walk away from forever forever walk away from horrid power-reality walk away from Jack from Howards let two lizard-men tear each other to pieces, they deserve each other. . . .

But Jack . . . Jack's in danger, sleepwalking through a forest of hard steel knives poor blind Jack surrounded by—*blind*? Yes! Yes! Blind! Oh you fool, Benedict Howards, you horrid blind fool! And it spread itself out before her like a kinesthrop gestalt vision in her mind: Jack, poor blind cop-out Jack sleepwalking dream of plastic success, faceless death-god Howards, spiderweb trap spun from bone-white lair around him. Me, last thread in web of evil, love my love Jack's love used like spider-spit cable in pattern of power.

Could it really be Benedict Howards was such a fool? Fool, yes. Blind to love, tuned out from love's power—the fatal flaw in the bone-white lizard-plan. Because a turned-on Jack, angry Jack, love-filled Berkeley Jack and Sara Jack (Yes! Yes! Smirking knight in softflesh armour!) would become apocalyptic angel to destroy Howards destroy Foundation lovers strong against the night, against which no faceless lizard-man death-god could stand, against the old Jack Barron that was meant to awaken!

I'll give you Jack Barron! she thought. But I'll give you *my* Jack Barron. Be brave. Yes, yes, take the deal, go to Jack, love him, get him to sign the contract. . . .

"Those contracts," she said, tightly-contained, shrewd, "they'll be the usual contracts, public, irreversible? We both get to keep legal copies?"

Howards smiled a knowing smile. "I'd hardly expect either of you to trust me," he said. "You'll both get standard contracts in triplicate."

"You're a shrewd, ruthless, ugly man," Sara said. "You knew you'd win in the end, and you have. It's a deal."

Yes, she thought, a deal. Dance to your tune till the contracts are signed, Jack and me together again, this time forever. Forever! And not the new-style cop-out Jack, but the old Berkeley Jack and Sara Jack, yes! Yes! Drag Jack down, rub his nose in lizard-man shit, then tell him, tell him every dirty word, how Howards used me used him uses everyone, made me his whore. . . .

Then an angry Jack, apocalyptic angel to destroy you, Benedict Howards, Berkeley knight in softflesh armour brave again inside me, Jack, my Jack, awake and alive again, Jack and Sara back together again the way it was meant to be. And this time, forever. Forever!

"A pleasure doing business with a girl like you," said Benedict Howards, sly smile, flashing ferret-eyes seeing into her belly, sending a cold fear-tremor through her secure have cake and eat it too plans—how much does the lizard-man know, how deep do his weasel-eyes see?

Be brave, be brave, she told herself. Lizard-man death-god's blind to power of love colour wavelength he just can't see, can't factor love into spiderweb of power. What kind of man could suppose he could turn warm soft love into cold steel-edged weapon of paranoid power?

(Continued next month)



a single rose

BY JOHN
DECLES

SILAS FINNEGAN WAS infected with magic, and it was his parents' fault. His mother read him fairy tales, which was bad enough; but his father read him Greek Myths. It was the myths that made his heart a growing vault filled with stars. A swelling place; first in one chamber, then flowing with his blood through excited limbs, throbbing until he thought that *one* life-muscle would break like a happy bag of water dropped from the second floor on Hallowe'en. Gods and devils, heavens and hells, were the companions and places of his childhood. When other boys rode painted ponies on a painted desert, Silas soared over the blue Aegean on a snow-white Pegasus.

And somewhere, maybe inside himself, or maybe outside of the Universe, Silas kept a stallion for special occasions. It was tall, and white: not as the snow is white, but as the sun is white when seen through thick snow clouds. It pranced for him and stamped its golden hooves on the turf with a *click*-resounding thunder. Then he was on its back and they were off! his mount given freedom to follow its spiraled golden horn.

Silvas loved the Unicorn, but the world was not with him. The twentieth century grew up around him. The towers that broke the horizon were of delicately welded steel, not marble, and they transmitted the voices and faces of mortals to all the once-mystic corners of the

world, shrinking it to a small, muddy globe. The atmosphere prevailing in the drawing room of Poetry became so rare that Silas could not find a hassock on which to sit at the poor Muse's feet.

So Silas learned to synthesize. Though captive to a brutal world, he vowed that he would not be beaten. He invented several kinds of synthetic textile dyes. With the money he made, he opened a research foundation, which soon became known for its contributions to the plastics industry. The Finnegan Institute expanded into other fields, and soon made significant contributions to biochemical fabrication. By that time Silas Finnegan was wealthy.

The Institute's Board of Directors found nothing curious about the bill for a computer. Many companies used them, both for research and business. But when bills arrived from various scholars, poets and historians (for services rendered) the Directors became edgy. It was then they learned about the installation of the Univac, not in the company's million-dollar headquarters, but at the country home of Silas Finnegan. When they learned what Finnegan wanted to do, a struggle for power ensued.

It took a long time, but Finnegan lost ground. He had to spend his own money to continue his research, and when that ran out, he had to sell his interests one by one in order to continue the project. In the end he was poor again: but he had his Unicorn.

THE CREATURE was small. No bigger than a pony. It was a pinto with markings of cream and chocolate colour. Its horn and its hooves were bone white. Not quite what he had dreamed of, but. . . Its eyes were black, like polished coal, and light reflected in them like great bright stars in dark sapphires. It was a living, breathing Unicorn, and it spoke in a soft whisper, and only to Silas, its master.

Unfortunately, the Unicorn was synthesized from the tissues of other creatures. It required a very special, and expensive, diet, consisting of precisely balanced synthetic foods. Silas, far from spending his old age contentedly listening to the Unicorn's recitations, was forced to seek a new fortune.

He racked his brain for a week, to no avail. The supply of food his chemists had delivered with the Unicorn was rapidly dwindling. Finnegan mixed himself a *zombi* and went out into the garden to enjoy the slanting rays of the sun as they tinted his pet's single horn with red-gold. The spring song of the insects and the beast's slow, rhythmic recitation lulled him to a pleasant state where he could half-forget his troubles and dally along the borderland of sleep. The Unicorn whispered:

"Red is a Rose,
is a single rose,
is a perfect rose,
the blood of my heart.
Red is the Sun,
is the evening sky,

and must vanish before
Night heralds Tomorrow."

Finnegan sat up, startling the Unicorn to silence. He looked curiously at the beast.

"Of course," he said. "A perfect rose."

Madison Avenue thought it was a wonderful idea. On their advice, the Finnegan Institute advanced its founder a year's supply of Unicorn feed, and enough money to live on for the same length of time.

There was a contest. Not just in the U.S.A., but all over the world. The top half of the entry blank was a space for the entrant's name and address. That would be torn off and put in a huge drum for a drawing. The bottom half had space to list the ten most necessary qualifications for the perfect rose. The information thus obtained would be fed into Finnegan's computer for statistical analysis.

It was over in six months, and a lady from London visited her daughter in Uganda. Three more months were necessary for the scientists to turn statistics into synthetic reality. The day it went on the market, Silas Finnegan brought a sample home to show the Unicorn.

"See," he said, taking it out of the transparent plastic box. "It even smells like a rose. There's a tiny vial of perfume hidden inside the blossom. Not rose perfume, mind you, but something we developed that *really* smells like a fresh rose. It will keep on smelling that way for a hundred years.

"And it's perfectly formed, measurable to a thousandth of an inch to statistical average specifications. Just the way most people want it. And red: the colour most people think of when they think of a rose.

"It feels like a rose, too! Cool and fleshy. We made it from a rare wood pulp. Even the undersides of the leaves are perfectly realistic. They have that characteristic fuzziness.

"And it has a static charge so that it won't gather dust. You can even drop it." He dropped it on the concrete floor. "See, it won't fall apart, the way a real rose does. It will last a lifetime. A young man can give it to his girl and she will keep it always, a symbol of their life together, long after their children are grown and married."

Silas stopped and wondered why there was no woman now at *his* side, to share this triumph of his later years. The Unicorn sniffed at the artificial rose, then snorted and walked away, as if insulted. Silas was puzzled, but his delight with the new product swept away the Unicorn's affectation of displeasure. With the sales from the Perfect Rose, he was sure he would soon be rich again, once again in complete control at the Institute. Then he would not have to fear the loss of his pet, or any of the other pleasures an old man feels he deserves.

THREE MORE MONTHS, and again Silas Finnegan stood facing his Unicorn.

"For three weeks," he said tiredly. "For three weeks it sold. They all wanted it! They *had* to want it, we made it to their own specifications. The Perfect Rose.

NEXT MONTH

The appearance at last of
LANGDON JONES'
controversial trilogy
of stories:

THE EYE OF THE LENS

— full of wit and superb
images and ideas, comprising
THE HALL OF MACHINES,
THE COMING OF THE SUN,
THE EYE OF THE LENS

ALSO

Charles Platt on cybernetic
fun palaces, **Richard**
Whittem's graphics for
"Nova Express", part 3 of "Bug
Jack Barron", poetry by
D. M. Thomas, and more.

And then they stopped buying. Sales dropped, and dropped. A slow, steady decline, until now. . . . Now, I've lost everything. I'm trying to find a zoo where they can afford to keep you. Otherwise, you'll be gone, too."

"Poor Silas," said the Unicorn. "You must not be so sad. I am only alive because it pleased you to create me. What has been can never really cease."

"But it's so foolish!" Silas said in exasperation. "It is not right! It was a perfect rose. Why didn't they buy it?"

"It was not perfect," said the Unicorn.

"It had to be!" said Silas. "We asked the whole world, and the world answered. We asked them what they wanted, and they told us, and then we gave them what they wanted, and they didn't buy it."

"You asked the whole world," said the Unicorn, "but it was not the world that answered. It was only a very small part of the world."

"A cross-section of the population. . . ."

"No! Only the greedy. Only those who wanted to win your contest. Surely *they* are not fit to judge beauty dispassionately. And if it *had* been a cross-section, would they have been any better equipped to understand the things they respond to? You should have asked your Univac where to find an analysis of a perfect rose."

"And where would it have sent me?" asked Silas.

"To a Poet."

"Then tell me," said Silas, "what was wrong?"

"Wait," said the Unicorn. It trotted to a large rose bush at the other side of the garden and gently plucked a flower with its teeth.

Silas saw that the feed trough was almost empty. There would be no more, unless one of the zoo people called before morning. Poor creature! Why was God so unfair as to make it an inhabitant of myths, unable to eat nature's own green things? Why could God not create a world for such beauty? The Unicorn returned and placed the rose in his hand.

"That is a perfect rose," said the Unicorn humbly.

"But look here!" said Silas. "Some insect has eaten at the petals. And it's well past its prime, nearly all the way open. You couldn't sell it in the worst of shops!"

"Give it to me," said the Unicorn.

He took it in his teeth and tossed it into the air. It fell on the concrete and shattered. Silas stared at the ruined blossom at his feet. It was like a pool of blood, dimly blending in the twilight.

"A matter of form," said the Unicorn. "A beginning, a middle and an end. The beauty of a child, of childhood, is in that he is a child, and tomorrow will be a man, and then will be dust. So we love him now, while he is a child, because he passes and too soon is something else. It is only the *now* of us that is beautiful, and only in the fact of our transition. We are all so imminently temporary. We last such a little while, and are lovely in our passing. That was a perfect rose."

In Seclusion

BY HARVEY JACOBS

JASON BRIAR AND Monica Ploy met on the set of *Beowulf* and the hairs on him crackled with healthy electric while she took in air like a vacuum cleaner and held it. He, handsomest and most virile, she, softest and best curved, a vessel of estrogen. "He is the very best," thought she, and "She is the top," thought he. *Beowulf* was being shot outside London "where it really happened" so the climate gave them no encouragement. But they needed none.

They became lovers. **LOVERS! L*O*V*E*R*S*** for themselves, for their fellows, for the director and the producer and the staff, for the press, the public, for you and I. Their waking lives were gorgeous, working together and all that. To think of them at night running over moors where blue-painted Angles and Saxons once ran was overwhelming. It was like looking with naked eyes at a fleshly eclipse of the sun, of the moon, of the entire physical universe.

He was married, she was married and they became unmarried and blended. Their exs gave interviews to the papers wishing them "the best", but theirs were rusty words. Ex Mr. Her and Ex Mrs. Him rattled like empty old scabbards. Who listened? Nobody. Even other empty scabbards turned away. For Jason Briar and Monica Ploy cuddled and fondled and tumbled for everyone. All cells rang like bells.

The trouble was their affair was ill timed. *Beowulf* ran into production problems. (Something about fog.) So the celluloid climax occurred later than the lovers' hottest heat and by the time the movie was ready for selected premiere showcase theatres million of ingrates were thinking of other jangling thighs, of other midnight panting.

The studio sent them into seclusion. It was announced that they were going to be secluded like monks. They were going away to pure isolation, to a place of meditation and cold stone, to a place by the salty sea.

The studio found an abandoned abbey near an ocean. It was fine. There was no furniture even. Not even a bed. **NOT EVEN A BED.** All the windows were broken. The garden was like a crazy man's hair. Ooze made lines on the thick, thick walls. There was, of course, no telephone. Wind from the waters whistled in the halls. You could hear spiders skitter.

The point? The point was peace. The lovers were going to find peace and repose. They were going to discover hidden flavours far from the candy store. With a few cans and bottles, an opener and a busload of photographers Jason Briar and Monica Ploy set out to heal themselves in double solitary.

The concept got banner headlines right away. The story grew. The studio was pleased. Even the exs gave

interviews again. On the fateful day that *Beowulf* opened across the nation the lovers said goodbye to civilization. Their abbey was on a cliff jutting into the brine. There was only one road for access. Guards were placed where the road joined the rest of the American continent and away they went carrying provisions in canvas sacks.

The lovers wandered wistfully. It was late afternoon. A pink cloud covered the sea. The sand was red. Bits of shell reflected sun like broken pieces of an urn. Jason Briar and Monica Ploy retreated into this magnificence. Even they were impressed.

They had never been to the abbey before so first they explored. The old rock house on an ancient hump of land teetered on the edge of Earth. There was a ribbon of sand separating them from the fishes, nothing more. The house itself was a thick cool egg, a ponderous thing with a hundred tiny rooms and one huge cavern downstairs. Jason Briar and Monica Ploy rattled around the premises.

"You know, Jay," Monica said, "I think I actually like it."

Jay looked at her and noticed that her lips were wet. Her lips were always wet. She licked them.

"We might as well, puss cat," he said. "Let's go for a swim."

Monica dropped her clothes where she stood. Jay too. Monica was brown as a nut except for two bikini lines. Jay was brown as she except for one bikini line. Monica ran a finger along his appendix scar. It was a shame, that one flaw. The doctor had shaky hands. The scar rambled. He might just as well have been nibbled by a lion.

Off they went to the ocean. The water was chilly but welcoming. They swam and splashed. Monica, lips wetter than ever, got hungry and thirsty. Jay, dripping puddles, pushed back his hair. He peed.

"Why do you have to do that here?" Monica said.

"Why not?"

"I don't know. You pee in the shower too, don't you?"

Jay slapped her gingerly on the can. Monica yelled. His hand etched on her bottom. She pulled a hair on his chest. They went up to the house.

"This is really fun," Monica said, and made her little noise, a gargled, swallowed purr for which she was justly famous.

IN THE CATHEDRAL of a living-room, if that is what it could be called, Jay rummaged through the provision sacks. He found two cans of beans, a fifth of *Beefeater* and a long spoon. There was a can opener too with a bottle opener on the back. Jay opened the beans. Sitting on canvas bags, he and Monica ate. Then they drank down the gin. Soon both felt a glow.

"Watch yourself," Jay said. "I think I'm in the mood to stimulate a certain party's erogenous zones."

Monica stood up.

"Not on the stone floor," she said.

Jay unrolled their sleeping bags.

"How do you do it in there?" Monica said.

"I don't know," Jay said. "But we can find out. Thousands of people do."

Monica wiggled into a sleeping bag.

"I feel like some kind of product," she said.

Jay got in with her after some difficulty.

"How come your navel is kind of a football shape?" Monica said.

"What makes you say that?"

"It is. Not that it's important. But it is."

Jay could not see his bellybutton in the bag but he wondered about it.

They made love sideways then squirmed out of the bag. Jay checked his button. It was mostly circular, not at all football shaped. Monica was holding a mirror while she put on lipstick.

"A mirror? Cosmetics?" Jay said.

"I smuggled them in."

"Well, the whole point was a kind of enforced austerity," Jay said.

"Who'll know?"

"Nobody. Unless some reporter gets by the guards. It's a matter of keeping faith. Not that that means much to some people."

"Some people are not hypocrites like other people," Monica said.

She put on a sack dress. Jay put on bermudas.

"Where do we wash up around here anyway?"

"Pump outside," Jay said.

Monica went out and found the pump. She worked the handle. A trickle of rusty water dribbled out.

"Is that a pump or an infection?" Jay said. He had come up behind her.

"Help me."

Jay pumped. The rusty brown water turned grey.

"I think that pump is connected to the sky there," Monica said.

A heavy cloud covered the ocean and it was indeed he colour of the water.

A wind blew from out at sea.

"Brrr," Monica said. "I'm starting to freeze."

After the wash Monica and Jay went to get more clothes. A storm was blowing in, no question about it. Jay found some logs and kindling. He made a fire using a copy of *Harlow* to prime the flames.

"Cozy shmozy," he said.

"What shall we do?" Monica said.

"Scrabble," said Jay.

The Scrabble board was set by the fire and the tiles distributed. Jay watched Monica's face change. She loved competitive games. He hated them. But he liked to watch her love competitive games because he fancied that her true self emerged when she played them. Games were a kind of sodium pentothal to Monica. After an hour or so of combat Jay knew he could ask her anything and get a quick, straight, honest and therefore

cruel answer. Her answers always hurt Jay in his middle. They clashed with his convictions about what a woman should be. Despite that, he enjoyed the whole process. Monica knew what he was about but she enjoyed it too. And she actually did get carried away with the old team spirit.

"Strap on your phallus," Jay said. "The game begins. And remember in this one you don't collect \$200 when you pass GO."

"Oooooo, you're going to get it," Monica said and proceeded to give it to him.

Monica could not concentrate on anything for more than a whisper so Jay opened with a spurt. He strained his head from the first gun. Monica came on like thunder too. It was a healthy, absorbing contest. Jay and Monica, huddled over the board, made great shadows as the flames jumped.

Outside the weather congealed to a murky soup. The cloud grew until it covered everything. The water moaned and churned. The wind whiplashed at waves and rocks. There was no more light.

At the root of the road leading to the abbey the guards looked towards the ocean and saw nothing but fog.

"How'd you like to be stuck out there with that broad?" said one.

"Oh yeah, yeah," said the other.

Then they went into a little shack that had been built by the studio for their comfort.

So turbulent evening settled on Jason Briar, Monica Ploy, the old stone castle, the ocean, the beach, the road, the guards and the little shack.

It was at about this time that the creature moved.

THE CREATURE WAS so big that it really had no exact sense of its parts. In fact, it had no sense of anything at all except hunger and wakefulness. It was awake and hungry so it moved.

For breakfast it had eaten a whale. For lunch some dolphins, porpoises and sharks. Fish, fish, fish. The creature was sick of fish. So it moved itself. The thing on its head signalled meat. Somewhere, nearby, meat. Yum, yum. It moved along the ocean floor, tons and tons of it, smacking thousand-pound lips with four whopping tongues. Yum yum. The creature pulled itself towards shore.

"Smart ass is two words," Jay said. "As in the expression nobody loves a smart ass."

"A smartass," said Monica. "You pronounced it yourself. Ha!"

"Negative."

"Positive."

"No. No."

"Churl fink," Monica said, steaming from the ears.

Jay smiled knowingly as Monica came to another moment of truth. He sat nodding his head left to right while she counted up her points for *smartass* and he saw she was consumed with guilt. He sprung.

"Did you think my performance in *Beowulf* was solid class A calibre?" he said.

Monica shivered, wet her lips twice and told him.

"You were like walking constipation."

Jay swallowed dry foam. Tears welled in his eyes. He went for a swig of *Beefeater*.

"You asked me," Monica said. "Who asked you to ask me?"

When Jay came back to the Scrabble arena the tears had dried to an opalescent wax. Monica thought he looked sexy that way, with the eyes of a stuffed moose in a men's bar. She noticed him fasten his wax eyes to a spot on her neck that showed a thin crease and tried not to but couldn't help pulling at the collar of her dress.

A few hundred yards away, still submerged, the creature experienced a sensation of itching in what could be called its nose. It arched, making an island, then rolled, making a wave, then sneezed, bubbling a billion gallons of brine. Inland, one of the studio guards asked the other if he heard a strange sound. The other, absorbed in a magazine, had heard nothing.

The sneeze, a megaton of mucus, refreshed the creature and left it more awake and hungrier. Onward it went flowing forward in slimy progress. The creature thought vaguely about its mate somewhere in the Red Sea. The thoughts waved like theatre curtains, rippling through its head. The creature had not made love in a decade, back in the Straits of Magellan. Its scales practically glowed as memory flared and faded. It felt a bit horny.

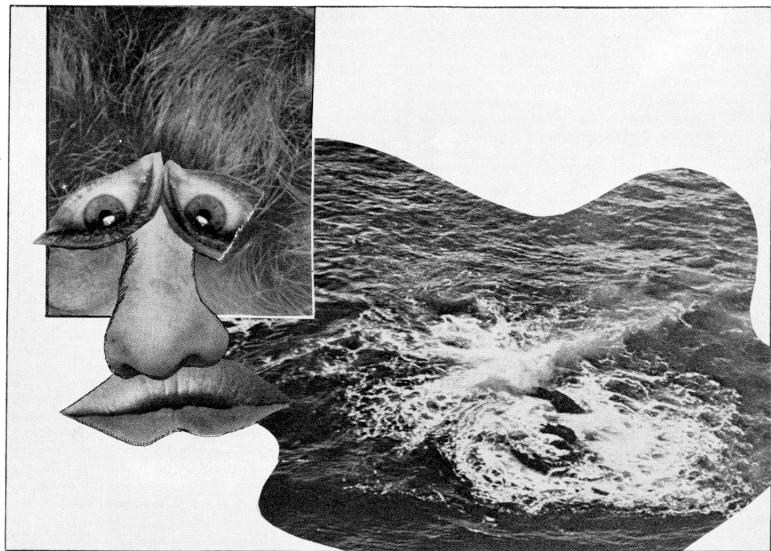
The creature's instinct interrupted its reverie. "Eat first," the instinct commanded. So the creature sniffed for and found tantalizing promise of gratification. It came faintly from the abbey borne on the water-whipping wind. It was Monica's perfume the creature smelled, mingled with Jay's mortification. Mmmmm. Very tasty. Very juicy.

FIFTY MILES INLAND Harold Bipley, the Producer-Director of *Beowulf*, sat beaming behind a massive desk with legs carved like tree roots. Into his office came Harriet Troom on plump legs of her own.

"Pineapple," she said.

"Melon, baby," he said. "Sit down. Rest yourself."

Thirty years before a famous philosopher had gasped and died between the pudgy legs which Harriet Troom crossed neatly. He had just completed his worst book. Her legs were famous in intellectual circles just as her column was beloved by millions of readers on many sides of the Atlantic. Harriet Troom was big on both ends of the IQ spectrum. Her heart held many secrets involving the living and the departed. Her body had shared heat with a variety of types ranging from old child stars to the famous philosopher. The residue of all that experience gave her terrific poise. Harold Bipley was impressed. But that very morning he had had a warning from his doctor. He went to the doctor because



his arms felt tired, like heavy salamis. The doctor took Harold off sex and cufflinks. Harold liked both. Without sex he felt restless and sleepless. Without big cufflinks he felt as if his arms would fly out of the floppy sleeves of his silk shirt and hit a total stranger.

"There better be a story," Harriet was saying. "This is my bridge night and I gave it up for you."

"There is a story," Harold said. "As God is my witness."

"Continue."

"Word follows word, darling. Word follows word. You know about Monnie and Jay in seclusion?"

"Of course."

"That's where they are right now. In seclusion."

"So?"

"In a fat old church-house by the water. Desolate. Bare. Empty."

"And?"

"Nobody around. Death to intruders. Get the picture?"

"Sure."

"So everybody is thinking of what's going on *inside* that seclusion, is that accurate?"

"Proceed."

"So one person emerges from the horizon to tell them. You."

"Ah."

"And it's spontaneous, Harriet. Not even Monnie and Jay have inkblings. You go out there with a camera and pad. Top secret. Peep a little. Bust in on them. Do what you want. It's all yours."

"I like it. I buy it."

"I was so sure you would," Harold said, "I called Hertz. My Rolls is waiting outside."

"I go alone."

"Any way you wish it is the way it will be."

"Where?"

"I happen to have a map."

"When?"

"Better soon. You know what a honey bucket Monnie can be. And Jay has no concentration either. How long will they last without electricity?"

"Tonight."

"It does me good to hear you say that, Harriet. Your readers are a hundred per cent lucky to have somebody like you."

Harriet Troom took the map and went for the car. Harold Bipley watched her behind sway while she

walked. His son was a navy pilot who landed on aircraft carriers. He felt sorry for the boy. A moving target is nice and challenging. But difficult.

AT THE MOMENT when Harriet Troom aimed the Rolls down the highway towards land's end the creature reached land's beginning. Before assaulting the beach it gathered its parts together. There was a helter-skelter quality to such size. Pincers, legs, feelers, arms, buttocks, ears, etc., had a way of wandering off. The creature had a natural sense of order so from time to time it paused to take inventory and consolidate into a comprehensible lump. It piled itself half-in and half-out of the surf. Because of the foggy dark the mountain it made was invisible. Now the creature, which was extremely light-sensitive, felt a sting in a secondary eye. The eye detected a pin-dot of light from a chink in the abbey wall. At the same moment a hectic spasm of wind wafted a ripe scent of the abbey's human visitors. The creature perked.

At once the entire scene seemed familiar. Of course, years before the creature had visited that very beach and enjoyed a supper of Dominican Fathers. Bingle, bong. There was a bell. The creature's primitive head remembered the bell which it had nibbled for dessert. Brassy and tart. It jiggled for a year afterward. The creature grinned, or tried to grin. One grey green mass separated from another and exposed a slit of flecked orange mush. For the creature, that was a big, broad smile.

Inside the abbey Monica was feeling the empty triumph of the conqueror. She had won the Scrabble game by hook and crook. As she totalled her points she cried.

Jay was still in pain from her dirty remark about his talent. She felt sorry for him and for herself. Victory in the game calmed her. She was now free to be nice. Jay needed some nice. He looked older by firelight.

"Darling," Monica said, "forgive me. There's always room for improvement. And its not easy for me either with every erectable male person in the whole wide world wanting to have sexual congress with me. Sometimes at night I can feel my fans dreaming so hard I practically drown in seminal fluid."

"Don't I have that too?" Jay said. "The women plus the queers."

"Cheer up," Monica said. "It's so clammy and dismal out. We've got hours to kill and I'm not sleepy. I'm not the least bit sleepy. Tell me a story. Tell me how it was when you first saw me."

"No."

"Please."

"Stop tonguing your upper lip."

"I will."

"I first saw you in your first flic, *Beloved Runt*, and my breathing clamped. I thought at last the Lord hath made a broad sufficient unto me."

"Fabulous."

"And I thought I've got to have her. So I met you and had you."

"What a way to tell it," Monica said. "How you hate me. You left out the entire love play sequence."

"You came at me so quickly I had no time for love play."

"I came at you? Jay, I was a star while you were doing improvisations in the Village."

"I did not say you had no distance on you when we met."

"I was discovered at fifteen."

"I'll bet you were."

"It was never like that. Never."

"Baby, you saw more ceiling before twenty than Michelangelo in a life of decorating."

"You are a filthy mouth. A sore loser. And don't ask me to calm you down when the going gets rough. Whisper never talked like you talk."

"Whisper Jones weighed fifty pounds when you married him and thirty-four ounces at the divorce."

"Annulment."

"All he wanted was custody of the oatmeal. You broke that boy's spirit."

"And Sherril? Didn't her pubic hair fall out from nerves?"

"How do you know that?"

"Never mind. It was all over town. Her follicles shrivelled from mental cruelty. Hell, it must have been mental."

"What does that mean?"

"You break the code. Big virility symbol."

"Listen, Monica, face the fact that your entire reason for being is to transport your mammaries to and from the studio. My work at least has a chance of contributing something, some little thing to the pool of artistic achievement. The best you can hope for is a medal in the tit olympics. And they're getting saggy if you want to know."

Monica inhaled and held her breath. Her face turned red. Jay watched her take in still more air. And more. She did very well.

"If you burst it's on your own head," he said.

Monica let the air gush out.

"Saggy?" she said.

She looked for something to break but there was nothing, only her hand mirror so she threw a can of vegetable soup which went rolling around the stone floor.

Jay fell to his hands and knees and roared. Monica threw another can, string beans this time, and he scampered away. He knew that she would soon begin to play zoo, being a cat or some kind of rhino and that the argument would end up in jungle love. They had played zoo five times in six days and he was bored with it but there was nothing better to do. The stone chilled his knee caps.

A log fell into the fire and sent up a shower of ash and sparks. The shadows leapt too, filling half the room

with Jay and Monica, dolls cut from black velvet.

THE CREATURE made a sound like *goorumbumbum* for no particular reason. It was on land, sloshing along. The air felt funny after years of water. Amphibious or not, the switch from gills made the creature heady, a little drunk. It waved a score of flippers and swooshed a hairy tail. The wind confirmed that fresh meat was imminent. The creature was sure of its prey. It began to think selectively like a housewife at a butcher's shop, trying to remember the Dominicans and what of them was most succulent. Bonk. Its vanguard antenna touched something. The abbey gate. The creature had no time to knock. It secreted chartreuse juice, dissolved the rusty metal and squished towards the house.

"Sleep in your own bag," Monica said to Jay.

She had wriggled inside the sack, all the way in, and curled up sniffing her own perfume. Jay was pacing back and forth hitting his fist into an open palm.

"Once I stepped on a child star," Jay said, "and she didn't scream or yell or howl like other kids. You know what she did? She said 'Hi, there.'"

"I'm sleeping," Monica said.

"And the awful thing is Monica that child star could have been you. It's what you would say. 'Hi there.' Oh Christ Almighty."

Monica's head came out of the bag.

"Try it," she said. "Try stepping on me."

"I am speaking symbolically," Jay said, "so I don't expect you to comprehend. Go back in the bag."

"Hi there," Monica said. "You think you're so damn superior. Didn't Mr. Bippy tell me how you were latching on to my star?"

"Huh?"

"How did he put it? He's marrying you for your light. He is a planet, a lousy planet, not himself a source of heat and smoke. That's what he told me. Hi, there."

"Bippy told you that? Well, stop the presses. He told me the same thing. He said Jay let's face up buddy baby if HE hadn't rested on the seventh day maybe things in the world would be rosier but he rested so we're stuck with our kismet and must own to basic truth. Monnie, which is what he calls you, is a great shape, but an empty bottle and you will empty yourself trying to fill her. Beware, Jay, she needs your inner illuminations."

"Bippy told you that?"

"Monnie is a vampire who lives on reflections, he said. Reflections from mirrors, from eyes, from puddles, from hub caps, from sun glasses. Boy, was he a hundred per cent accurate. Zowie."

Monica began twisting inside the bag.

"Finished," she said. "It's done. You are out of my life. You are dead and buried. You are garbage. I'm going home right now you miserable pig bastard and in a year from now nobody will remember you except like they remember a stain on the toilet bowl."

"That's great imagery coming from a girl," Jay said. "Go wet your lips."

"Don't worry yourself about my lips," Monica said, jumping out of the bag. "Worry about acting lessons."

"You membrane," Jay said, "you no-talent. You physical bum."

"Listen to limpy," Monica said.

THE CREATURE WRAPPED itself cosily around the abbey like a moist rag. It started on the East Wing, then goosed over the North, slithered part of itself to the West and met its tail with its nose on the South. The moment of confrontation, front to rear, was rare for the creature and for an instant it fell under the impression that it had encountered a friend. It would have tipped its hat if it had a hat but it had no hat so it snorted recognition. Its rear end gave no sign except a faint pulsation so the creature bit it in primitive rage. A bubble of pain ran through its nervous system along internal cords like seaweed and reached its medulla oblongata with a clonk. The creature wailed. A tear-drop formed and gurgled out of a red eye.

"Both parties suffer in divorce," Jay was saying when the wall sounded.

"If you're dreaming dreams about community property," Monica said, "over my dead body. Because I've got you under your own skin. Don't think she didn't tell me."

"What tell you? Who?"

"What tell me who? Bessie."

Jason froze.

"My god," Monica said. "The fattest cleaning woman in human history and you married to me and you couldn't let her go. You had to do it with Bessie the fat cleaning woman. You are some kind of pervert if you ask my jury."

"So she told you, did she?" Jay said. "I'm glad. And maybe you will understand about how it was with the rain falling and me alone there in the house and this woman—woman, Monica, woman not girl. Obese, yes. Older, yes. But a woman. A woman, Monica."

"A fat cleaning woman."

"It was the best and purest moment of my life," Jay said.

"Yeah," Monica said. "Sure. I had to give her the rest of the week off. And the worst is not the threat of blackmail, no. The worst is she was disappointed. She was crushed. A morose buff left dead with no more dreams even from you."

"Muskless person."

"I have more musk in my little finger," Monica said.

"The deposit bottle boy told me," Jay said.

Monica twitched and quivered.

"What deposit bottle boy?"

"That deposit bottle boy. The centre-fold from the Scout Handbook. Be prepared. Oh, lordy. It was all over the supermarket."

"I admit it," Monica said. "At least I felt youth and



strength surging white heat through my loins."

"Youth and strength? From that senile midget? Youth and strength? They only sent him out after the six-ounce empties, the two centres."

"He was so grateful. So damned grateful he cried. And you know what? I'm glad they know in the market. I'm glad because as long as that boy goes around on his bike it's like written on a wall you were not man enough to satisfy me. It's a bug on your plate."

"It cost me a hundred dollars to keep him from selling descriptions to the magazines. That fink wrote a piece called 'Acne Valentine'."

"You stopped him?"

"For you, honey. It was a *knock*."

"Hooooooo."

"He complained you didn't tip him."

"Hooooooo."

CURLED AROUND THE abbey the creature cuddled its potential goodies. The rump-nip was like an overture to satisfaction. Its gastric mechanism stormed. The creature fed by absorption. It could have absorbed

the building but stone lay lumpy in its gut. It sensed the abbey as a shell with the nourishment deep inside. This kind of feasting came natural to a sea beast. The point was to get the inside out.

The creature, cautious, extended a tentative tentacle through a window. A fuzzy purple snake, it squirmed to the floor and along the ground.

"What's fuzzy purple and squirms along the ground," Jay said.

"No elephant jokes," Monica said.

She was packed, dressed, coated. She threw a kiss at Jay and went to the door.

"Monica," Jay said.

She opened the door and walked through it squoosh into the creature's underbelly. Monica recoiled into the room. Backward she came and tripped over the fuzzy purple tentacle.

"There's something damn strange going on here," Jay said.

The tentacle was exploring Monica. She watched this happen, then leaped to her feet. She wanted to scream but could not muster sufficient wind.

THE STORIES of Donald Barthelme beg to be misunderstood. Although they are rich with references to Freud, high culture, pop culture, existentialism, they are usually meaningless, enjoyable fantasies. They invite interpretation no more than Susan Sontag or a Baptist bible school. They owe something to Beckett and something to Kafka, but they are not poems, parables or allegories. They are clever and funny short stories.

Take the collection *Come Back, Dr. Caligari*, for fourteen examples. A thirty-five-year-old man unaccountably finds himself in the sixth grade, sitting in a too-small seat. His teacher would like to make love to him, but officially he is eleven years old. In another story, the narrator is being pursued through life by the agents of the Roman Catholic Church for a breach of faith in his boyhood at Our Lady of Sorrows School, when he refused to go out for the basketball team.

Meanwhile the bishop sends out his patrols, the canny old priests, the nuns on simple errands in stately pairs, I remember the year everyone wore black, what dodging into doorways, what obscene haste in crossing streets!

A third story tells how "Henry Mackie, Edward Asher and Howard Ettle braved a rainstorm to demonstrate against the human condition". Their leaflet

goes on to discuss, in simple language, the various unfortunate aspects of the human condition including death, unseemly and degrading bodily functions, limitations on human understanding, and the chimera of love.

Most of the stories in the collection are about "suburbia", the "suburban home", and its inhabitants, but there is never any pretence of sticking to real people or events; they are the gloves and socks of the *real* real people and events, residing and taking place in history, in literature, on the operating table, in the comic strips, in Hollywood:

Once in a movie house Bloomsbury recalled Tuesday Weld had suddenly turned on the screen, looked him full in the face, and said: You are a good man. You are good, good, good. He had immediately gotten up and walked out of the theatre, gratification singing in his heart.



ATROCITIES OF THE LOVE SLAVES OF EQUANIMITY

Snow White might be expected to be the Walt Disney story as well as the fairy tale, and it is. Like its heroine, this novel is sometimes bitchy and frustrated and sometimes cute and frustrated, but okay. Snow White is "a tall, dark beauty containing a great many beauty spots". The story is also blemished here and there with small specks of self-indulgence like "baff" for "bath", and "enemi" for "enemy".

"Snow White" couldn't possibly be a better name for a heroine of this type, with its reminders of frigidity and cleaning products (she spends one entire episode cleaning books and the oven). The woman herself lives with seven industrious men. She is variously depicted as a languishing Lady of Shalott looking out of the window with a mirror, a Rapunzel, a bitch goddess to her seven lovers, a "horsewife", a Disney heroine (who goes around nagging about why her prince hasn't come along), an all-American girl, so clean she only makes love in the shower.

She hangs her hair out the window, and eventually it attracts her prince, Paul. But it also attracts the villain, Hogo de Bergerac. This being modern America, hero and villain have undergone subtle changes. Paul, unable to approach her, devises a pillbox-shelter with periscope from which he can observe her door, and from which he dispatches trained dogs. Snow White, who studied "English Romantic Poets II: Byron, Keats, Shelley", who has written a long, fragmented poem containing her (prefabricated) hopes and terrors, is disgusted:

"Paul is a frog. He is frog through and through. I thought he would at some point cast off his mottled wetish green-and-brown integument to reappear washed in the hundred glistening hues of princeliness. But he is *pure frog*. So, I am disappointed. Either I have overestimated history. In either case I have made a *serious error*. So, There it is. I have been disappointed, and am, doubtless, to be disappointed further. Total disappointment. So, That's it. The red meat on the rug. The frog's legs on the floor."

Hogo is not much better at being a villain than Paul a hero. He comes on as a kind of half-hearted, pathetic Hell's Angel, who keeps Pontiac bucket seats in his living room, and

who it turns out has changed his name to Hogo from Roy. Everyone remains pretty comfortably dull, but dissatisfied, and what there is of the story lurches along in an amiable suburban way. The seven men (Bill, Clem, Dan, Edward, Hubert, Kevin and Henry) have "a fantasy of anger and malevolence" in which they barbecue Snow White. In reality they never do anything about her except the shower-stall and, at her orders, go to bed "singing the to-bed song, heigh-ho".

Meanwhile there are a few games for the reader to reduce tension: titles; headlines; repeated references to the occupations of the seven men (tending vats of Chinese baby food; washing buildings); Freud; semantics; a questionnaire at the end of Part I asking how the reader likes it so far; reading lists; speeches; a trial, a murder; reactions to the hair:

Reaction to the hair: Two older men standing there observed Snow White's hair black as ebony tumbling from the window. "Seems like some hair comin' outa that winda there," one said. "Yes, it looks like hair to me," his companion replied. "Seems like there oughta be some-thin' done about it." "Yes seems like it

oughta be punished with a kiss or something." "Well, we're too old for all that. You need a Paul or Paul-figure for that sort of activity. . . ."

But there is none of that sort of activity at all. The happy ending of the story is synopsisized in headlines. The Germans who thought up dwarves had limited imaginations, as have we, about how they ought to pass the time:

Perhaps we should not be sitting here tending the vats and washing the buildings and carrying the money to the vault once a week, like everybody else. Perhaps we should do something else entirely, with our lives. God knows what. We do what we do without thinking. One tends the vats and washes the buildings and carries the money to the vault, and never stops for a moment to consider that the whole process might be despicable. . . . Before we found Snow White wandering in the forest we lived lives stuffed with equanimity. There was equanimity for all. We washed the buildings, tended the vats, wended our way to the county cathouse once a week (heigh-ho). Like everybody else.

Anyone care to join me in a poison apple?

John Sladek

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Karen, 8

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