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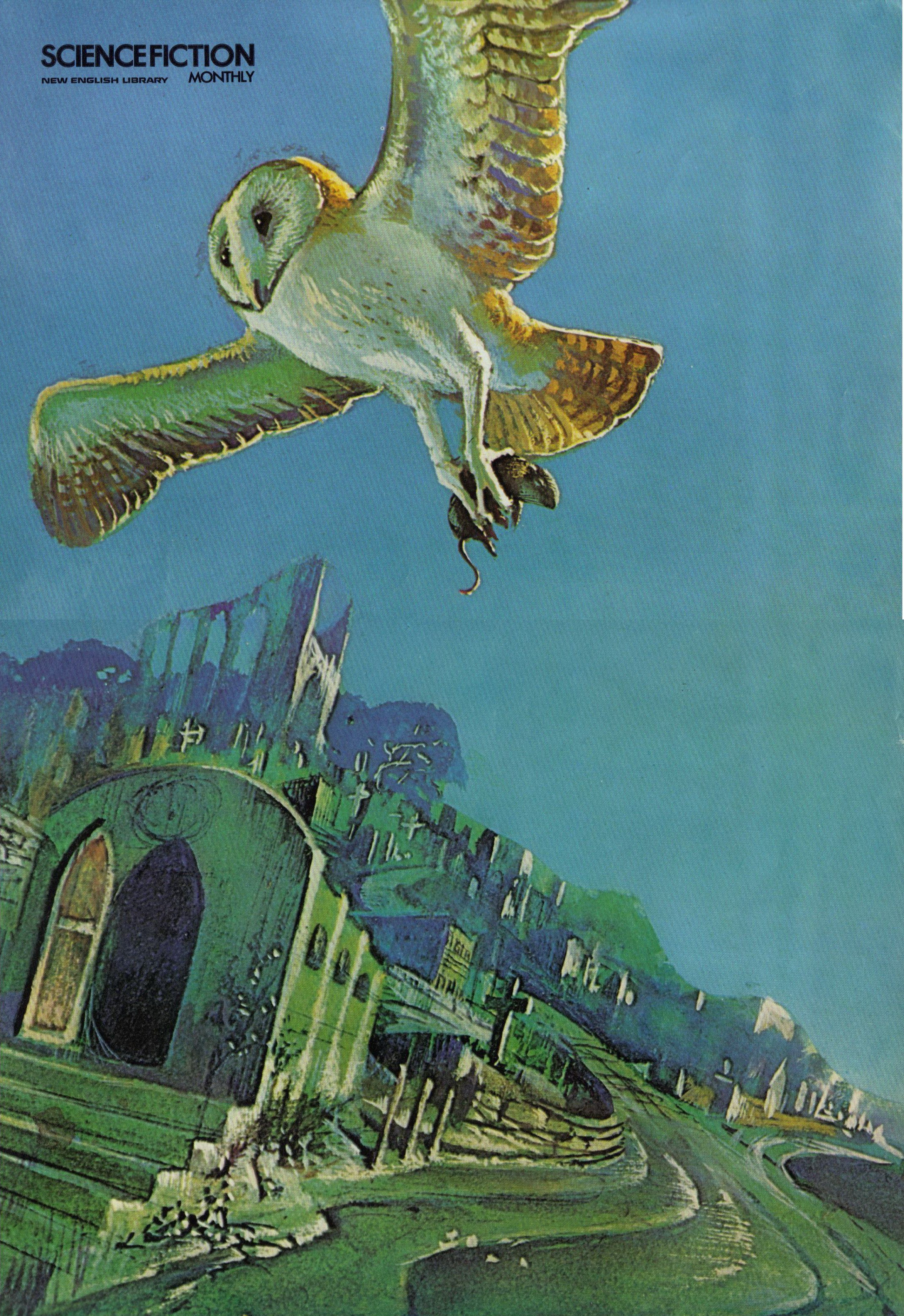
# SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY

*THIS ISSUE:*
*A closer look at Edgar Rice Burroughs*
*Fiction from:*
*E E 'Doc' Smith*
*Chris Penn*
*Ian Watson*
*Artist interview with Bob Fowke*
*Plus Mike Ashley's views on women in sf*



# SCIENCE FICTION

NEW ENGLISH LIBRARY MONTHLY



# SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY

**Volume 1 Number 10**

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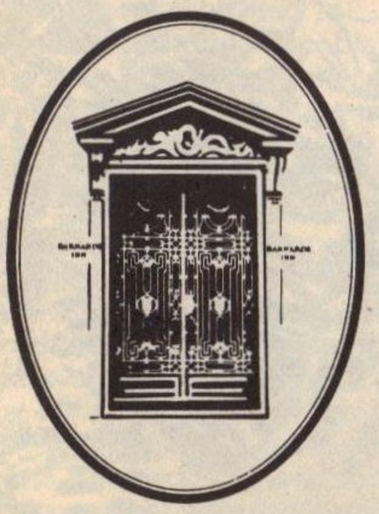
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**Cover:**
'EARTHWORKS' Painting by Bruce Pennington

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He came down on the small stones. The sheaving metal took his arm off. The squeal of the engines vomiting a psunami of pebbles against the dappled-grey-mare sky matched his pig-squeal of pain as plasti-sphincters imbedded his face and the lusting lovers of flame curled obscenely around the hull, sobbing, spitting as they devoured the fragile gold-white sand spread all about between the artificial dunes of vulcanised dust and scorched rocks.

He lurched as the ship keeled over onto its bubble, air-grit and darting sparks building a cyclone in the tumbling cabin. Blood squished in spasms from his amputation, a paint-sprayer coating the mosaic of segmented canopy with a gaudy, lisping film. The aquiline, bronze ochre hulk of the skitter shuddered in epilepsy as its sensitive nose burned a cinderous cave in the shore. It rolled like a shot brontosaurus, the anti-grav playing kaleidoscopic patterns with the salt-spray and the emergency jets gorging blue-white shimmers of thrust at broken angles. The ground wound in toward him on the final pivot, then the impact in a crush of antennae and xenobiological samplers, throwing him forward through the cantilevered arch of framework and console, out onto the bare, wet beach, rolling uncontrollably in a queer, eccentric manner—fast over the stub of his right arm, slowing as his body took the friction, then fast again, the sand forming a swab over the coagulating blood and tendons flapping like ribbons down to an imaginary hand.

The earth was warm on his panting face, but trembling, pieces of it like gritty polyps in his mouth. His bone-structure took on an empathy with the booming throb and climbing white-noise whine of the glowing ship as its reactors built toward their death. The section of beach shook for a quarter mile. The shift of spray from a tempest-ridden ocean built a colonnade of brine-steam and smoke in a vertical shaft a thousand feet high as beads of melted hull rolled over the buckled plates like sweat on a tanned back.

Mandrake stood shakily, blinking the dirt from his blood-struck face, and watched the sides of the skit blowing up as though they were bubble gum, bursting in gouts of vapour like lanced boils. His head was drumming. There was a soft, warm intangiability about the right side of his torso. The over-long, silvery fringe clung down the sweat on his forehead into his eyes. The uniform was scorched. The skitter was scorched—blistered, charred, upside-down in a self-dug trough of a grave, a giant, overturned amphibian denied the water, belching the last of its life in short, painful sobs of air. It shook in its death-throes, dropping welds and tongue-drooling rivets into the broad pattern of debris surrounding the collision. And the reactor, pulsing white in death heat, a heat so devilish it turned the five-inch plates transparent and oily so the body breathed with an uncanny, somehow blasphemous foreboding . . . that took the awe out of his stunned torpidity and sent him hurriedly, grimacing in pain, up the sand slope, toward the brilliant red gangling lines of the paraslave and salvation inside the squat hull of the *Saving Grace*.

There would be medication there and safety from the blast.

For the first time he thought of his disability, not realising it as a loss of limb, for that was to come, but rather . . . a blot of muzziness and pepper-prickling sensation fuddling his acute, trained, self-preservatory psychology. The instructed man, the operative. The professional—schooled, programmed—scheduled into his duties, and loyal to the necessity of his own survival at all costs, or almost all.

He clambered between the stones, clawing at the abrasive sand with his one remaining claw, and the rank stink of . . . necessity, not fear, exuding from his own body roiled against the random beats of violent shore wind. His hair trailed. His eyes were distended, fixed on the dark, acclivitous body of the *Grace* lying slightly less than level on a collapse of stones.

He scrabbled like an animal and reached the lifeboat breathless, lounging heavily over its canopy while watering eyes focused on the lock studs and he fumbled with the mental adjustment of a right-handed man in a mirror world, having to do everything the opposite way.

It took a long time. The skit vomited once, cartwheeling panels and fragmented metal in a smoke-driven orchid, but it was only the chemical reservoirs

**"I am a missionary of the White Church,' he told her, stressing each word painfully. His transferred voice was a susurrus in the crisp, rattling crackle of leaves and grass. 'I was sent here to show you the way, but . . . my ship crashed. There are strange magnetic variances in your atmosphere."**

and the pall of bituminous gas and bubbling steam continued unaffected from the throbbing reactor-cast.

Mandrake groaned, his fingers dry and shrivelled on the buttons. In his imagination he clasped his forehead with his other hand, squeezing the memory back. A simple series of digits. He wet his lips, then remembered. He played the illuminated presses. The slants unkissed and he fell inside onto the cramped couch. The shutters closed automatically. He turned on the main systems then threw up the screens. The jabs of pain from his stump began to pierce the unreality of it all. Breathing hungrily, he reached for the salvation tray and spread it out across his lap—analgesics, synthetic foods, corpuscle regenerators, myriad pills and canisters, toiletry, and the gold leaf intagliated Bible. He dragged at the touch seals and gulped a dozen sensory-dullers, then broke open the flesh aerosol and sprayed it liberally around the gory, chewy butt three inches long which was all that protruded from his right shoulder.

The aerosol spun a web of wet, diaphonous skin over his disfigurement, and the dullers worked at once, paralysing the nerve-ends that were bleating agony back at him, effectively short-circuiting their signals. He let the can drop to his side and lay back, sighing. His neck bones cracked loudly. The tray retracted and Mandrake shut his eyes, head supported by the padding, his tortured metabolism only now prepared to relax and account its multiple aberrations.

He rested there, thinking, scarcely cognisant of his condition, and made little response when the concussion of diseased thunder disrupted the piles of stones, the *Grace* kiltered sideways in the bleaching light and the screens turned a defensive black under the rolling, balling silver-grey mushroom that glowed like the skin of a leper in the cloud-doused sky.

It rose sheer and forbidding, the skit and the sand around it reduced to a broiling, mercuric pool and the ensuing hurricane ran black and scalding along the shore, winds of death spreading in a ripple with the visible tremor in the earth.

The *Grace's* hull burned and its gauges became eerily luminescent, casting a glaze on the prostrate man's wrankled features, but the screens did not fail and Mandrake lay still, partly-watching, partly-conscious, only partly aware of the frizzled, smoking corpses of thousands of gulls falling like volcanic rain from out of the swirling, ominous twilight.

Perhaps he fainted—the ague, the pressures. Somehow he slept, an uneasy, conscience-split recumbence, living again all the nightmares of his youth, the commitments of his calling. The protracted beeping of the pod mother's computer answering the *Grace's* persistent call for aid woke him after less than an hour. He came into a bleary awareness and probed tentatively at the relevant studs. The speecher made a rattling scratch at his aural senses then broke into the mother's continuous, repetitive vernacular. '. . . ingested. The reclamation pod will be despatched within the second cycle. Collate all relevant information and insure no harm comes to indigenous life.' It belched with a high-frequency petulance then began again. 'Your request for aid has been ingested. The reclamation pod will be despatched within the second cycle. Collate all . . .'.

Mandrake listened to it a full three times then killed the reception. Second cycle. That would be a minimum of five days.

He had been the last drop of a run of eleven planets within the system, eleven pods, twenty-two skits. The mother would be on its way back to the first and continue the circumnavigation ad infinitum until the surveying and missionary work was completed and, one by one, they returned.

There were two skitters to a pod. Once in orbit, the pod broke open and the skits went down to the surface, a proven, reliable system. Only this time a pure magnetic stratum above the ionosphere had sent the precise controls out of shift and they went screaming in. Mandrake remembered the other ship, with Olsen inside it, falling apart and scintillating like a Roman Candle as it went through the oxy-plane, spiralling and twisting with the appliance of an eagle displaying its aerodynamic prowess. He had been luckier—obtuse angle, always loathe to use more speed than was absolutely necessary. His innate trepidation had saved him. Now he was stranded, and wondered, suddenly, how the reclamation pod would make it through the bizarre atmosphere, wondered if he was going to be left on this minor satellite of a prospective nova dwarf for the remainder of his life.

He allowed himself the luxury of brooding—not part of his duties, and certainly not applauded by The Service—but Mandrake had always been an emotional radical, and besides, there was nobody watching him here, no fellow Ingestates eager to spy and denounce the invidious shortcomings of their 'friends'. That was one of the reasons he had volunteered for the missionary section, though he would never admit it. There, alone, he was his own master. He was beyond the screens and the psionic eyes. He was alone with himself, and with his God. Surely that was the only Service.

The *Grace* slid suddenly, inclining its nose up at the murky rain-sky ragged with impenetrable scars of radioactive fog. Mandrake broke off the selfishness of his thoughts and consulted the meters. The gamma, X-ray and infra-neutrino levels were high outside. The screens were draining the power-section though the reserve was good, but he ought to move out of the area. He left the distress signal on automatic, to keep the pod mother's clanking systems alive to his affliction, then plied power to the *Grace's* traction and began a zigzag traverse up the steepening scree slopes away from the ensurgent sea toward the spikey, patchy clots of vegetation that lay precariously 'neath the craggy overshadow of leaning, flaking mountains.

The drive presses were designed for manipulation by a two-handed controller, set astride the austere metal console. Without the full use of his arms, Mandrake's attempt at managing both the attitude and volition of his passage was erratic and peculiar. The *Grace* had a lethargic power and non-immediate response to impulses. It nosed about between the cols like a demented lizard perambulating for food, slewing and meandering as the figure inside struggled with the juggling act he had to perform to establish some idea of stability. After ninety minutes he was inside one of the breaks of foliage and exhausted.

He parked the *Grace* under a branch arbor—as though it needed protection—and slumped across the console feeling nauseous and caramel-sick with his own stench. The sprayed flesh had turned pig-pink and covered the jag of bone and raw meat as though it were packing round a steak. The bits of tendon were brown and shriven and the dirt and congealed blood on his young, care-torn face made a mask for an old man.

Dusk drew in its strings of darkness. It did not rain, but a slinking mist stole up from the sea and deliquesced on the *Grace's* canopy. Mandrake slept, in fits, his head cushioned on the crook of his one elbow, his eyes ever twitching and flinching behind the burned lids.

He awoke in agony, in utter dark. He cried out loud and wailed, feeling at his shoulder, involuntarily touching the disjointed abnormality of his amputation. In his fumbling he broke the band of cells, pressing lasers of open anguish up through his eyes, and felt the loss for the first time—the bone being sheared, the tendons drawn out, the tearing of the layers of his body-meat.

He rolled forward, hugging his shoulder, his face torn in suffering, the long, mourning cry issuing from the very deepest deep of his soul confined and



echoed in the small cabin. An acid-sweat of fear seeped from every pore and he wept pitifully for his own loss, his own needs of . . . something real to believe in, the torture of his existence. Still crying, he clambered from his knees and ran a spidery hand over the studs, forcing himself to concentrate, terrified of the total black and despair that was engulfing him. The search was endless. He was alone and in torment. He cried.

The lights came up, harsh and white.

Mandrake fell back onto the couch and dragged at the salvation tray. He dropped his head and fed from the analgesics like a thirsty Arab sating himself at an oasis. The tiny pills fell all across the tray and into the metal runnels in the floor. Trembling, he unpacked the aerosol and sprayed the wound again. The wet stream was cool. Steadily the cauldron of pain subsided to waves then to a dull nag of scars in his subconscious. He sat there and waited for the tears to dry out of his eyes.

He slept no more that night. He found the strength to swallow some pappy food then turned on the speecher for companionship while he lived out the dark hours until sunrise. Over and over again, the pod mother turning out its emotionless spiel about rescue, as if it cared.

'Your request for aid has been ingested. The reclamation pod will be despatched within the second cycle. Collate all relevant information and insure no harm comes to indigenous life.'

He sat staring at his own haggard reflection on the curve of the canopy and waited for dawn.

His second day. The radiation on the surface had levelled out to a permeated, lethal dose. Dead birds and, if he had been able to see them, insects littered the coarse earth floor around the *Grace*.

He watched the insipid, complacent sunrise then moved away again, though quite why he did not know. He was safe inside the machine. All he had to do was wait for the reclamation pod. They would find a way through. A cultured arm would be grafted onto his joint, pink and perfect, better than the original. His physiology and psyche would be nursed until he was whole again, yet, at the back of his mind, there was a compounding fear of retribution for infecting this world with the skit's poison, the killing, mutating, invisible wind of disease he had unwittingly unleashed along the shore. Somewhere, Mandrake thought, there must be more than a few dead birds and quietly dying trees. Somewhere, and his pious conscience made him go searching for it.

In the afternoon he found his retribution.

The habitation had been built within a cove flanked by huge, sweeping screes. Basically it was a series of cupolas in a semi-circle set on squat piles. The material was braided wood and cemented flint blocks.

He pulled the *Grace* into the centre of the beach and stopped. The expression on his face was one of stunned disbelief.

The black bodies lay like charcoal sticks across the breadth of the cove and under the burned-out shells of their homes, sticks of all sizes, but similar now in their total lack of recognisable features. Slats from shattered boats made a jigsaw of the waterline. Nothing stirred within the sheltered amphitheatre and again the ground was carpeted with scorched gulls.

The hurricane must have gone along the shore and swirled here, part of Mandrake's mind told him. That's why the destruction was so complete.

But rationale would not bring the people back.

What kind of a God is it that would unleash this on innocents, and what kind of emissary for that God was he to cause it? He sat transfixed, numbed by the carnage, too numbed to feel anger or reproach, but again and again he asked the questions, as though some majestic voice from inside would answer from the strength of his own faith, his dedication, but again and again . . . no answer came.

He spent the night there, the ocean beating against the beach. On the third morning he moved the *Grace* through the destruction and up toward the mountains. He wanted a panorama view of the surroundings to collate the extent of the desolation. 'Collate all relevant information'.

The machine was trundling out of the village when a movement in the trees ahead drew his attention. He stopped, and watched. A lithe naked figure broke out of hiding and ran away up the slope, its long train of black hair swinging, the rounded buttocks wobbling as long legs stretched to climb. It was a girl.

Mandrake leaned forward intently and shouted, 'Wait'. Then he flicked on the broadcaster and called again and his voice rolled around the hills. The girl looked back in terror, her narrow, triangular face agog, pausing only for an instant then climbing again, wildly. Mandrake set the *Grace* into motion and

**"The reactor blew, you see. I crashed and the piles went critical. They can do that. Anyway, when the skitter went up it loosed a mass of poisonous radiation on the surface. I hoped it might have swept along a deserted coast and subsided, but it seems you lived in the village here and they were caught . . ."**

# SONG OF THE DEAD GULLS

BY CHRIS PENN




John Bolton

went after her. His dexterity with single-handed control had increased with experience. The underbrush went down under the groaning tracks and, inexorably, he began to gain.

Her glances became rapid stares, her movements frantic, her lips gibbering as soft tones of muted fear leaked from them. The *Grace's* bulbous hulk rolled up toward her. She fell, grazing her calf on a rock, the sun aglaze on her white body as though she were porcelain. She ran into a depression backed by a rock wall then spun, realising she was trapped, and darted to either side as the monster growled after her, the long, knobby shadow preceding it. Sunlight glared off the canopy. She could not see inside. As the *Grace* drew within a dozen feet she flattened herself against the wall, pressing her face side-on into it and clamped her jaw and eyes shut, waiting to be crushed.

The machine rumbled then the glissando of its drives whined away and it halted. She trembled, not looking, waiting. Mandrake, sitting in the supplicating refuge of his lifeboat felt a confused tautness of guilt and hope come over his body as he poised with his finger on the speecher press, his eyes running over the exquisite creature outside.

She was several years younger than he—early twenties, he guessed—had a perfect, firm figure and clean-edged jaw that tautened the unblemished white satin skin down her throat. Black, straight hair fell to her buttocks. There were brown stubs of nipples on lavish breasts and a sandy forest of pubic hair. Her feminity was full. Her nakedness was glorious.

Mandrake admired her beauty for long seconds, enamoured, but not aroused. As an Ingestate to the Exsatrap of the White Church he had, of course, been neutered.

Switching on the broadcaster, still he waited, an abrasive dryness in his throat, the guilt clotting there. He leaned away and turned down the gain. After a span of inactive time the girl untensed marginally and glanced toward the bubble. In the shadows of the gully now she could see the man encapsulated in the harmless, darting lamp reflections of the consoles. Nervous curiosity overcame horror. When at last Mandrake found words to put into the communicator, she started but was not afraid.

'I am a missionary of the White Church,' he told her, stressing each word painfully. His transferred voice was a susurrus in the crisp, rattling crackle of leaves and grass. 'I was sent here to show you the way, but . . . my ship crashed. There are strange magnetic variances in your atmosphere.'

She was looking about the *Grace* with a magic sparkle in her eyes, seeking the voice which spoke so quietly in this curious tongue. She had a woman's face lighted with a child's wonder.

Mandrake saw he was not getting through. What kind of surrealist linguism would she have? He could not reproduce it without the trans-shifter from the skit, anyhow. He strained for a common understanding, a catalystic movement. He started to improvise a crude sign-language, gazing earnestly out at her while she studied this unnatural being, noting him only as a component ranting inside its 'eye', and apparently without malice, but the arm he wanted to move was no longer there, the expressive fingers vapourised somewhere out on the shore. All he could use was words.

'The reactor blew. What happened to your village . . .' He was assuming she had been elsewhere and returned to find the ruin, hiding in incredulous panic for the past two days. '. . . I caused it. It was my fault. Do you understand? It was my fault.' His voice broke and he punched the console, suppressing a sob of self-pity. She looked at him sharply and backed away. Mandrake drew in his breath. His chest hurt. His sallow, martyrly-handsome features were marked with dark flutes of suffering and weariness.

'I'm sorry about the accident,' he continued evenly, holding himself, but needing an outlet. He had to tell somebody. He had to explain to this girl it . . . wasn't . . . his . . . fault. . . . His mind became confused, an overdose of emotion. He started to ramble. 'The reactor blew, you see. I crashed and the piles went critical. They can do that. Anyway, when the skitter went up it loosed a mass of poisonous radiation on the surface. I hoped it might have swept along a deserted coast and subsided, but it seems you lived in the village here and they were caught. . . .'

He halted abruptly, his mouth sagging, staring through the canopy as he realised she was still out there and the level was still ten times over the maximum. But she was untouched, and naked.

Not for long. Perhaps he was already too late. He must get her inside and feed her antidotes, but to open the slants, for however brief a period, meant exposing himself to the cosmic death. It would seep into his stump like ink into paper.

He paused, fighting with his convictions, with what he knew was right. Staring, he closed the stud and the slants whirred open.

Mandrake shuffled to the door and leaned out, beckoning. The girl edged back at first, wary of the unshaven, muddy face frowning encouragement at her and the unco-ordinated gesticulations of the one arm. He grunted soothingly. She approached the aperture with a superstitious caution. The missionary genuflected. The girl came forward, toward the access. Mandrake used his arm as a crutch to lever along the couch, making room for her. She was within two metres of the opening. He was sure she was coming. Then, suddenly, she sprang past the machine and sprinted out of the depression, her slim arms pistons jabbing at the air, hair flying down her back. He fell across the slants and called at her receding figure, fear of his own loneliness striking a brittle timbre in his voice.

'Come back. For God's sake . . . come back . . .'

She vanished. He shook his head and sobbed, her rejection a reinforcement of his guilt, his function of sense oblivious to the penalties of exposure. Then he prised himself slowly to a seated position and closed the slants with a savage jab.

He called up the pod mother and said , 'I want to make a report .'

The inane answer to his distress call chattered from the speecher overhead. He continued, ignoring it. 'I want to make a report about the way our interference with a peaceful planet has poisoned its atmosphere and killed God knows how many blameless people.'

He choked and spat blood, smooth as melted chocolate in his mouth, the chest rupture he had not previously been aware of stabbing in vapid constrictions. When he saw the girl the next day she had a leprous growth the size of her head balled over her spine.

Mandrake wanted to vomit, from the shamed pity of it.

She sat hunched in the shade of a flat-leaved tree and ignored the *Grace* as he pulled up before her. Her eyes were glassy and half-blind. Her hands, held up to her face, were being eaten away, and running, gangrenous sores stood like garish rosettes over her body.

Mandrake felt the overwhelming wave of guilt and anger pulse through him. He had taken no more analgesics—the girl could not be helped so why should he, the murderer, the despoiler, help himself—and the pain was a constant, solid rictification of his upper torso.

With uncharacteristic violence he smashed the Faith Emergency panel and struck the stud.

The pod mother began to bleat its salvationist propaganda then snapped quiet. There was a rustle as of moving robes, then a deep, uncompromising voice asking, 'You have activated the Faith Emergency sequence from your pod. Are you in need of assurance of your faith?'

'Yes.'

'Who is it that needs assurance?'

'Eboullid Mandrake, missionary of pod mother Divinity.'

'I see. You are in space?'

'I am on a planet,' Mandrake answered tautly. The Minister, so many light years distant in the safety of some ground-based church at home expounded the most imperceptible of sighs then continued the run-up to his "conversion".

'What is your need for restoration?'

The procedure was an anathema. By activating the sequence at all, Mandrake had condemned himself. There would be an enquiry. At best, he would be struck from the missionary order and delegated as lackey to some minor communicator. At worst, the long, white corridors of surgery.

'I have no need,' Mandrake told him acidly, with all that going through his mind. The horrors he had witnessed, however, seemed vast to their wholesome, impracticable yammerings of idealism. 'I want permission to kill,' he finished in monotone.

'When the White Church overcame the Unholy Wars two centuries ago . . .' The soliloquy began. Mandrake felt resentful, his fingers biting on the console, grinding his nails around the neat, glowing lines of studs. '. . . the first order of the Exsatrap was to relinquish the illness of violence. Thou shalt not harm nor extinguish any life in the Plane, however menial, and there has been no

**"He choked and spat blood, smooth as melted chocolate in his mouth, the chest rupture he had not previously been aware of stabbing in vapid constrictions. When he saw the girl the next day she had a leprous growth the size of her head balled over her spine. Mandrake wanted to vomit, from the shamed pity of it."**

slaughter for all these years. My son . . . you do not wish to kill. You have no compulsion to destroy. In your apotheosis of the spirit, all reasons of demonica were driven from you, and they must remain driven.'

He went on, soft cinnamon words that were at once both acceptable and tasteless, never changing, never imparting anything but a constant, sincere belief in insincerity.

The fever broke in foam-strips over Mandrake's face. He stabbed the press and interjected harshly. His body shook, and the words he forced himself to utter were strangled and shouted.

'I want permission to kill another human being.' There was a small gasp at the other end, an ordering of gospels. Now it was out, he found it easier to go on. 'My skitter crashed on the planet surface. I escaped to the *Saving Grace* but the reactor turned critical and contaminated the atmosphere. It has already wiped out one complete village, maybe more.' His mouth softened compassionately. 'There . . . there's a creature here, a female. She lived in naked purity until we arrived. Now her body is deformed and scaling.' He looked out at the girl, her big, pale eyes broken by moving patterns of twig-shadow, and swallowed hard. 'I want permission to kill her, in the name of compassion. I want to end her misery.'

The Minister's guarded voice took on a whispery, disgusted vehemence.

'You must not kill. You must not. It is against the very ethos of our order.'

'There are already a hundred dead by my mistake.'

'A folly of nature.'

'A folly of the White Church.'

'You must not condemn the Church,' the Minister roared suddenly, his sputtering garbled in volume through the speecher. Mandrake winced. 'You speak the vilest heresy, Mandrake. Forces of evil have corrupted you, somehow, somewhere. You are not fit to be member in the Exsatrap. I put against you the charge of heretic and recall you at once. You will be stripped of your standing and publicly disgraced. Exile on the black planets is cold, my son.'

'The Church is nothing but a substitute for a viable order of control. It has nothing to do with God.'

'The Church is God. The White Church . . .'

'No . . .' There was a silence, the gashes of space broken by their animosity, a bridge through the stars. Mandrake felt it, felt . . . so much inside himself, as though his vision had been cleared of hypocrisy and he saw them for what they were. His hand gnarled on the console. His teeth bit tight into a slavering wall.

'Give me permission to kill, if your faith has any meaning at all. Give it to me or I will renounce the Church and go damned to my own destruction.'

'You will not kill. You will not daub the Church in the eyes of God . . .'

'I will do what I feel is right.' He beat the panels with his fist, his body angled, burning, his head bowed.

'You have no weapons,' the Minister answered superciliously. Despite your heresy, ex-missionary Mandrake, you have not the facility to realise your threats.'

'There is the geology cannon. I'll use that.'

'You would use a cannon on a fellow being, a machine to destroy mountains? May God be my witness as I damn you, you and all your line. There will be outcry if you perform this vile act. Your family will be sent to the surgeries as genetic undesirables. The Church will curse the name of . . .'

He shut it off. The re-establisher winked ardently at him but he would not suffer any more. He knew what was humane. He knew what he had to do, as a true believer in the omnipresent.

The girl was still cowered by the tree. Mandrake played the studs. He eyed her for a last, lonely minute then fired the cannon. Its glare was blinding. Afterward, there was nothing.

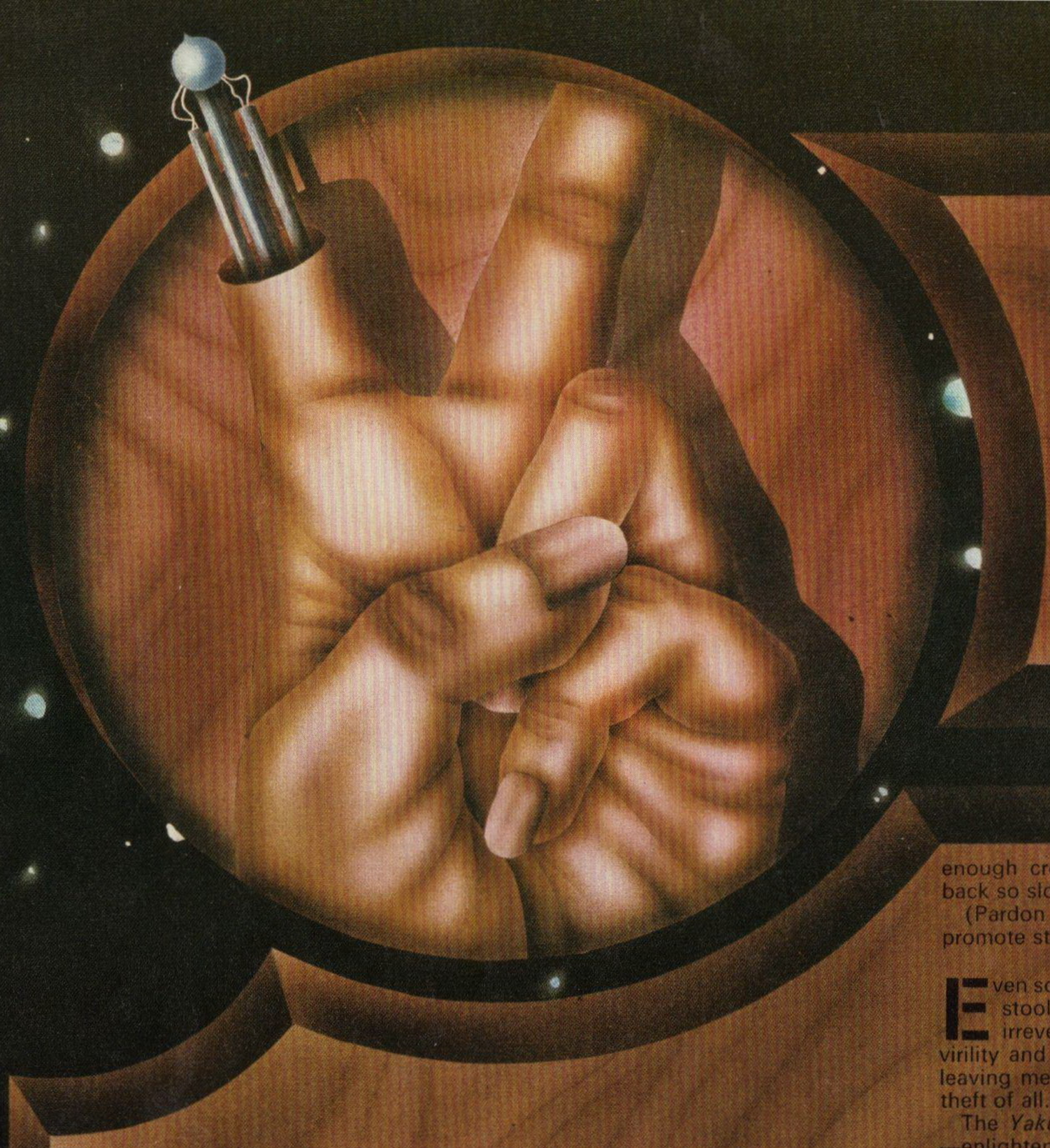
When the fifth reclamation pod found a way through the magnetic stratum and landed to deliver his excommunication orders, they discovered him laying out in the open beside a vapourised body, his flesh and hair gnawed away by the radiation, his face creased with a solemn, spiritual smile, and the atrophied silver light of an unquestionable belief glowing from his staring eyes.

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# Sitting on a Stool

'The remarkable thing about starwood is this: if you sit on it, it radiates its energies into you. It rejuvenates any human being. A properly cut and tailored piece of starwood recharges the mitochondria—the powerhouses-in the cells. It tones up the brain waves. It balances the Yin and Yang. A chess player

Starwood. Imagine. It comes in very small slices. Approximately this, by this, by this. (Quick gestures with the hands.) They trade it out at Point Q, which is to say at the intersection of reality with a mathematical equation—an idea more than a place, though we can both reach it. They ask whatever they want for it: ten kilos of a rare transuranium metal, the last surviving Botticelli, a few dozen beautiful boys and girls. Then they abolish the equation and vanish into oblivion (which is to say: into reality, somewhere else in the Galaxy or Magellanic Clouds), to reappear with another few slices of the wood after 123 terrestial years—maybe this says something about their home planet, or maybe nothing—probably it's a random number. No way of tracking them. No way of tracing the starwood world. They tell us it isn't anywhere near their home system, anyway . . .

Starwood. Just a single slice—sufficient for a stool. Or throne. Whether you're monk or monarch or whatever. But a very rich monk, need I say! Such as the head of the Japanese *Yakuza* Order . . .

A single slice—and if I'd stolen for ten years or worked honestly for 500, I'd still only have been able to travel to Point Q as a tourist to gawp at the bidding . . .

Starwood—they've told us this to prove its rarity—comes from a quirk of a planetoid called Toscanini, with an orbit the same as a comet's ellipse. Toscanini rushes in from the chill of deep space, soaks up sunshine at perihelion for a few brief days then zips away again for long years in the icebox of far-out.

It ought to be no more than a ball of rock, too cold for any life form to take root on for most of its orbit, then baked sterile in the oven. But life, once seeded, is ingenious. Toscanini has an ecology of trees that quarry metals from the rocks. Not just any metals—superconducting metals that carry electrical activity on forever at the few degrees above absolute zero that the planet's surface reduces to through most of its flight.

Those trees on Toscanini live through the years of the freeze, powered by organic batteries that never run down. At perihelion, when the trees are being baked in the star's heat, they soak up the energy to power their batteries; then while the planet is scooting away through deep space again, the trees put out their shoots and saplings and new growth rings, radiating the surplus energy they've stored into the immediate vicinity to nourish them. It's such a life-enhancing energy that the whole Toscanini wood would be suffocated under tons of parasites if the planet didn't rush close enough to its sun to scour it clean of competition . . .

Why 'Toscanini' for a name? I've heard it said that their starship captain who first found the world and its strange organic metal trees had a taste for Earth music, and a sense of humour, and recalled a 'super conductor' from centuries ago . . .

But the remarkable thing about starwood is this. If you sit on it, it radiates its energies into you. And it rejuvenates any human being. A properly cut and tailored piece of starwood recharges the mitochondria (the powerhouses) in the cells. It tones up the brain waves. It balances the Yin and Yang. A chess-player squatting on starwood is unbeatable. A philosopher can work out the universal truths in his head. A businessman can build empires. It's the ultimate conditioner. Hair grows back—even brain cells regenerate. The impotent recover their virility. The immune system can eat up any cancer, however metastised. But they can only harvest mature trees—for a large enough cross-section of the superconductor circuits—and the trees grow back so slowly there on Toscanini, so they say.

(Pardon me if I sound like a promotional tape. Truly, they have no need to promote starwood, vulgarly. And the likes of I, no means of buying it . . .)

Even so, I'd hardly have dared try to steal the Grand Monk of the *Yakuza*'s stool from under him, hadn't I found I had a cancer, inoperable, irreversible, metastising plaguefully through me. Then all thoughts of virility and playing chess and planning perfect crimes washed out of me, leaving me with the one glaring imperative: to save my life by the riskiest theft of all.

The *Yakuza* are Buddhist monks, somewhere on the martial side of Zen—enlightenment through archery, swordsmanship, and other death-arts. They are also, each and every one, part of the great gangster fraternity underpinning whole commercial empires: the Benevolence Company. Yet a *Yakuza* is as earnestly philosophical as he is deft at protecting himself as he is potentially thuggish, in the old strict meaning of the word. A paradox. But Zen is a bird's nest of paradoxes, and the *Yakuza* are no exception. So the Grand Monk, sitting on his heap of gold and starwood—which he has fought his way to, through blinding enlightenments of backstreet duels and assassinations, is also author of one of the great works of religious thought of this age: *The Way of the Milky Way* . . . A fine, wise book.

But at least I could get to see the Grand Monk, to consult him on a point of philosophy, if I laid enough bribes 'along the way' and a large enough cash donation to the Benevolence Company at his feet. All quite in order. All quite normal. The same as a personal audience with the Roman Pope, amongst his Swiss guards.

He would be guarded, of course. The *Yakuza* being martial craftsmen, in this age that means solid state circuitry as well as the old perfect equipoise of mind and muscle . . . I hadn't realized all the implications, though. It was worse, far worse than I'd expected and I had to go through with it, when I got to the point. My weapons had an expiry deadline on them. I'd arranged it that way, so that I shouldn't just mumble something about philosophy and then back out . . .

A crazy, mad venture, in retrospect! but then, at the back of my mind, I thought I'd be safe forever if only I toppled him from his starwood stool and squatted there myself, however briefly. An almost mystical, magic obsession!

I had, of course, also planned escape routes.

I had, of course, watched all available tapes of the Grand Monk in audience with 'parishioners', counted and recounted the small team of swordsmen attending him. Always three, and only three.

I had, of course, expected a battery of sniff-snoops and scan-screens, on the way in to him . . . They wouldn't fight guns with swords—even if I had seen one tape of a *Yakuza* deflecting high-speed pellets with his sword's edge, after an hour's meditation on the stool . . . My weapons were undetectable. I'd stolen the specifications for them two years before from an eccentric inventor far away—whom I'd afterwards had to strangle. I was fairly sure they'd work. I'd saved them for this day.

My nerve and flash grenades were woven of poly-ice—the alternative coherent form of water that can be tied into knots like wire as soon as it spins out of a freezer's capillary tubes. These were hidden in a row down my lapel, like a jewelled decoration. The index and middle fingers of both my hands had thin woven ice capsules implanted in them with ice lenses primed to emit one single beam of laser fire if I cocked my finger and pointed it.

Within three hours after manufacture I had to use these weapons, before they grew incoherent, and used themselves on me. As I walked into the Grand Monk's room, I had just thirty minutes left . . . As I say, I had no choice but to proceed . . .

The Grand Monk had a fat, poachy white face, with eyes sunk deep in hoods of milky flesh. He must have been 150 years old with an infantile yoghurty complexion. His thick red and blue brocade robes tied with a white cord thick as a bell-rope, and his white linen cap, I recognised well enough from the tapes. His suite too, furnished with stern luxury. The *tatami* matting with its black borders. The few scrolls. The picture-window set to display a misty flight of geese through an emptiness intruded upon by a few gravity-defying cliffs. Data-bank within arm's reach of the stool he sat on, entirely enveloping this in his robes . . .

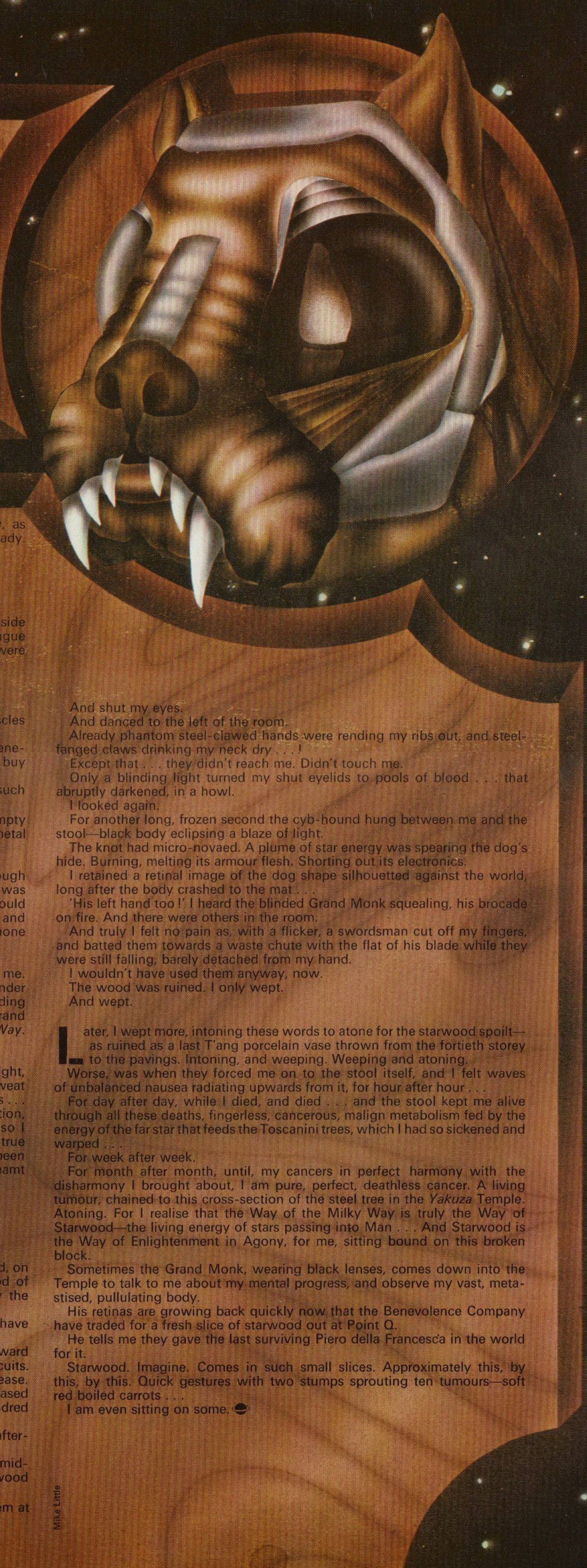
The stool, the stool is under *that mass* . . .!

I was intoxicated. I could already feel it healing me, invigorating me—leaking through his body and clothes . . . He had his bare flesh pressed to the starwood, under that red and blue brocade, I had no doubt . . . white buttocks

# Starwood

## By Ian Watson

**sitting on starwood is unbeatable. A philosopher can work out the universal truths in his head. A businessman can build empires. It's the ultimate conditioner; hair grows back, the impotent recover their virility and even brain cells regenerate.'**



in interface with the metal tree of Toscanini—in a reversal of entropy, as though a living star *defecated* energy into him . . . He disgusted me already. I could smell his flesh sizzling . . .

Something missing.

The three swordsmen!

Something else present.

A great dog . . . !

I stared at the creature. It sprawled, twice the size of a wolfhound, beside his stool, chin on its paws. Its nostrils flared, its ears pricked back, its tongue lolled out to taste me, a single eye opened to regard me. And its paws were human hands, with steel claws.

The eye shut, and the other eye opened.

It began to blink in sequence, rapidly.

One eye shut, one eye open.

Its sides were armoured like a rhino's. Its body rippled with hawser muscles of spun steel, as it stretched itself. I shrank into a knot of ice, inside.

'The cyb-hound,' intoned the Grand Monk. 'A fresh product of the Benevolence Company. But *you* came to ask about philosophy, not to buy protection.'

I held my donation slackly, wrapped in the correct scarlet ribbon, tied such and such a way. (Quick gestures with the hands.)

The proper procedure was, I should lay it in front of him on the empty wooden tray there—within half a metre of those grafted hands with metal claws!

I hesitated, briefly.

I understand the rapid ON/OFF blinking of the dog's eyelids well enough now . . . This surgical intersection of body and machine lolling there was impregnable to any ordinary sword, gun or grenade. My finger lasers would have to hit the beast direct through the eyes to short out its cyb-brain! and the eyelids would be high-reflective steel. Which was why its eyes shone like mirrors as it shut them and a nictitating barrier shot across.

Almost impossible.

I had twenty-six minutes before my woven ice uncohered and ravaged me.

So I laid my donation, carefully, at the Grand Monk's feet, squinting under his robes sleazily at the feet of the stool, like some young virgin boy standing under a transparent stairway to squint up skirts; and engaged the Grand Monk in talk . . . about what I remembered from *The Way of the Milky Way*. (It was a completely crazy venture, I knew now, but what choice had I?)

His hooded eyes regarded me pertly.

The cyb-hound's gaze flickered at me. And it dragged itself slowly upright, savouring my fear with its tongue on the very air . . . I'd painted my sweat glands over with a monomolecular filter, to fool the normal anxiety sniffers . . . but I couldn't block its animal sense for the essential taste of the situation, enhanced in the womb-vats, and souped up in the *Yakuza* craft-shop, so I imagined. (And all my imaginations only made matters worse. I wasn't a true assassin, only a skilful thief . . . and I believe even an assassin would have been bested by this beast . . . Not that any group or organisation would have dreamt of assassinating the Grand Monk. I was mad, I realise now . . .)

'In *The Way of the Milky Way* you say—'

'Yes?'

And the cyb-hound launched itself at me . . .

Which is the true horror of it.

For the Grand Monk's robes parted as he shifted, cross-legged, on the stool, and I saw his raw flesh in contact with the wood of Toscanini; I drank in the wood vicariously, voyeuristically—and saw the location of the knot in it.

Like wood from most worlds, starwood has knots where the branches have been lopped off the main trunk section . . .

As I say, the stool's superconductor rings leak star energy slowly upward into the body metabolism. Yet knots in the wood are secondary circuits. They have to be sealed off, or would upset the balance of the energy release. Thus ergs and ergs of power are locked up in a knot—ergs that can be released abruptly, all at once, in a tight jet along the line of the former branch, a hundred times as ravenous as a finger laser.

Of course, it ruins the wood. The stool's as spoilt as a cracked bell, afterwards . . .

The cyb-hound's front paws were off the ground now, and it hung in mid-air. (How time slowed down, as though the very glimpse of starwood immortalised that moment!)

I cocked my index and middle fingers of my right hand and flexed them at the knot, shattering the woven ice.

And shut my eyes.

And danced to the left of the room.

Already phantom steel-clawed hands were rending my ribs out, and steel-fanged claws drinking my neck dry . . . !

Except that . . . they didn't reach me. Didn't touch me.

Only a blinding light turned my shut eyelids to pools of blood . . . that abruptly darkened, in a howl.

I looked again.

For another long, frozen second the cyb-hound hung between me and the stool—black body eclipsing a blaze of light.

The knot had micro-novaed. A plume of star energy was spearing the dog's hide. Burning, melting its armour flesh. Shorting out its electronics.

I retained a retinal image of the dog shape silhouetted against the world, long after the body crashed to the mat . . .

'His left hand too!' I heard the blinded Grand Monk squealing, his brocade on fire. And there were others in the room.

And truly I felt no pain as, with a flicker, a swordsman cut off my fingers, and batted them towards a waste chute with the flat of his blade while they were still falling, barely detached from my hand.

I wouldn't have used them anyway, now.

The wood was ruined. I only wept.

And wept.

Later, I wept more, intoning these words to atone for the starwood spoilt—as ruined as a last T'ang porcelain vase thrown from the fortieth storey to the pavings. Intoning, and weeping. Weeping and atoning.

Worse, was when they forced me on to the stool itself, and I felt waves of unbalanced nausea radiating upwards from it, for hour after hour . . .

For day after day, while I died, and died . . . and the stool kept me alive through all these deaths, fingerless, cancerous, malign metabolism fed by the energy of the far star that feeds the Toscanini trees, which I had so sickened and warped . . .

For week after week.

For month after month, until, my cancers in perfect harmony with the disharmony I brought about, I am pure, perfect, deathless cancer. A living tumour, chained to this cross-section of the steel tree in the *Yakuza* Temple. Atoning. For I realise that the Way of the Milky Way is truly the Way of Starwood—the living energy of stars passing into Man . . . And Starwood is the Way of Enlightenment in Agony, for me, sitting bound on this broken block.

Sometimes the Grand Monk, wearing black lenses, comes down into the Temple to talk to me about my mental progress, and observe my vast, metastised, pullulating body.

His retinas are growing back quickly now that the Benevolence Company have traded for a fresh slice of starwood out at Point Q.

He tells me they gave the last surviving Piero della Francesca in the world for it.

Starwood. Imagine. Comes in such small slices. Approximately this, by this, by this. Quick gestures with two stumps sprouting ten tumours—soft red boiled carrots . . .

I am even sitting on some.

Mike Little



# Modern Masters of Science Fiction

By Walter Gillings

Robert McAulay

He spent half a century dreaming up alien worlds and creatures far out in interstellar space . . . when he wasn't thinking about the perfect doughnut.

# 4: EE 'DOC' SMITH

To followers of those doughty heroes Richard Seaton, Kimball Kinnison and Neal Cloud, these items from *The Universes of EE Smith* . . . *Adams of Procia*—Commander-in-chief of Procyon's armed forces . . . *bolega*—A drink like whiskey from Aldebaran II. *Dekanore VI*—A non-Tellurian planet inhabited by fantastically ugly, spider-like beings . . . *Place of Pleasant Odours*—Where Vegians, extremely sensitive to smell, preserve the scents of their friends . . . should be aromatic enough. They are typical of hundreds of entries in a unique concordance to the eleven best-known novels of the late Edward Elmer Smith, PhD, which it took two of his disciples four years to compile.* Its 270 pages form a complete reader's guide to the complex webwork of imaginary worlds and fantastic creations which earned the beloved 'Doc' the title of 'Historian of Civilisation'; a fitting memorial to one of the most inventive and influential writers to leave his mark on science fiction.

Few others have made such an impact as he did at his first appearance in 1928, or continued so long to delight a host of fans most of whom remained faithful even after his work had been dismissed as artless and juvenile. That his first novel, *The Skylark of Space*, opened the door for the extravagant excursions of super-science in the remotest regions, and led the way for 'space opera', has been held against him of recent years where once it was deemed a vital spur to the development of the genre. Yet, despite their limitations on the literary level, the sweeping 'epics' of 'Skylark' Smith are still relished for their sheer exuberance.

The pioneering *Amazing Stories* was in its third year when it serialised what it described as 'one of the outstanding scientifiction stories of the decade', predicting that it would be 'referred to by fans for years to come'. The prediction proved perfectly valid. Nearly twenty years later, when the first of the specialist publishers began to resurrect 'classic' tales from the magazines, the much-vaunted 'Skylark' was an obvious choice—and sold out so quickly that the firm had to be reorganised to cope with the demand from collectors.

Since 1946 it has seen publication in several forms in many parts of the world, and is still being reprinted, like the other Smith serials that followed at intervals through the years. Yet, before *Amazing* accepted it, *The Skylark* had gathered what the author cheerfully claimed was the biggest file of rejections on record.

He had begun to write the story after starting out as a chemical engineer in 1914, and didn't complete it until 1920. For two years, the wife of an old classmate helped him with the romantic interest that readers found so treacly but which seldom interfered with the high-geared action. Still, she didn't have the staying power of the determined Smith, who by the time he was 25 had held down a dozen different jobs, from stevedore to street-car conductor.

Born 1890 in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, he was raised on a riverside homestead in Idaho, where he worked as a lumberjack until his elder brother and sister helped him to get to college. By 1915 he was earning enough as a food chemist with the US Bureau of Standards to marry and settle down in Washington, DC, where his wife went to work to enable him to get his PhD. That is why the book version of *The Skylark* is dedicated 'To Jeannie'; though Mrs Lee Hawkins Garby got her name in the by-line—and her share of the $125 which *Amazing* paid for the serial.

In spite of the excruciating college-boy dialogue, and the melodramatic exchanges between heroic Dick Seaton and his scheming rival 'Blackie' DuQuesne, readers clamoured for a sequel. So, in *Skylark Three*, which followed in 1930, Smith took his atom-powered voyagers out again to the rescue of the people of the Green System who faced annihilation by the marauding Fenachrome. This 'tale of the galactic cruise which ushered in universal civilisation' presented a stupendous panorama of alien life-forms, mile-long spaceships travelling faster than light, devastating ray-weapons, and frightful battles in the void ending in inevitable triumph for the visiting Earthmen.

To keep him in tow, *Amazing* paid Smith more generously for this three-part serial, to which he wrote an epilogue suggesting that his readers had heard the last of the all-conquering Dick and his musical sweetheart. By way of a change, in 1931 he came up with another story, *Spacehounds of IPC*, which confined his new heroes of the Interplanetary Corporation to the solar system. He planned to make it the first of a series—but it wasn't what his fans wanted. 'We want Smith to write stories of scope and range. We want more Skylarks!' they insisted. And 80-year-old editor Dr T O'Conor Sloane, who still had seven years to go before he retired, pointed a lean finger out towards the Milky Way.

But Smith was never a 'hack' writer, whatever the critics said about the results of his labours. He planned his stories with care, and took his time writing them. By then, too, the science fiction field itself had enlarged, and another editor was beckoning in Smith's direction. If it had not fallen on evil days in 1933, *Astounding Stories* would have published *Triplanetary*, which gave rise to the 'Lensman' series, and actually enlivened four issues of *Amazing* in 1934. It was this story that introduced the concept of the 'inertialess drive' by which, it was assumed—since it could neither be proved nor disproved—spaceships might traverse the impossible gulfs of Smith's literary cosmos.

So, this time, the eight-limbed amphibians of the far planet Nevia, who were thirsty for iron rations, were properly frustrated by Conway Costigan and his colleagues, and forced to sign a Treaty of Eternal Peace. And, thirteen years later, to make a book of it, Smith wrote six new chapters to precede the *Amazing* story, harking back to the dawn of creation, recalling the end of Atlantis and the fall of Rome. All history is seen as a titanic struggle between two races of super-beings, the Arisians and the Eddorians, who influence humankind for good or ill as civilisation advances to the era of the Triplanetary League.

When the book appeared in 1948, even Smith's gentler critics found it hard to digest this turgid mixture of cosmic imagery and rip-roaring adventure which, none the less, was accepted as a useful prelude to the 'Lensman' saga—most of which had already run its course in the revived *Astounding*. The missing link was *First Lensman*, which Smith wrote specially for book publication in 1950 to bridge the gap between *Triplanetary* and *Galactic Patrol*, serialised in 1937-8.

By that time followers of *Astounding* had claimed 'Doc' Smith for their own. Prodded by editor F Orlin Tremaine, he had produced a third 'Slykark' story which it presented with a fanfare in 1934 and ran through seven issues. With the first instalment of *Skylark of Valeron* the magazine's sales soared, and at the end the author had added to his fans by thousands. He had also put what seemed an irreversible end to the luckless DuQuesne by reducing him to a capsule of pure intellect and flinging him into the fourth dimension. But good villains die hard, and he was still immortal . . .

After 'Valeron' there was evidently nothing left to explore, nor any more variations on the same familiar themes which made Smith's tales so popular. And he was still a part-time writer; he had business problems to wrestle with. For seventeen years he had been employed as chief chemist with a Michigan firm concerned with the specialist art of compounding doughnut mixes. In 1936 he moved to a new firm in which he had a financial interest, and it left him little time for science fiction. Yet, within a year, he was busily plotting the 'Lensman' series.

The Lensmen and their ladies, selected from many worlds for their superior qualities, are so-called because they carry a device enabling them to communicate with any form of sentient life their creator can dream up, and bring quick death to unauthorised users. Their leading heroes are *First Lensman* Virgil Samms, who extended the Triplanetary League to embrace the entire solar system; *Grey Lensman* Kim Kinnison, whose exploits range over two galaxies, and his mate Clarrissa MacDougall, the red-headed nurse who made good as a *Second Stage Lensman*. Not until many tyrants have been overthrown on as many planets are Kim and 'Mac' able to get married (a really big affair, this) and complete the ages-long breeding programme culminating in the five *Children of the Lens*, who are destined to succeed the ancient Arisians as Guardians of Civilisation.

In all, the 'Lensman' serials helped to fill eighteen issues of *Astounding* over a ten-year period ending in 1948. In between times the number of science fiction pulps had multiplied, but few of the newcomers survived the war years; the real boom came afterwards. One of the casualties was *Comet Stories*, edited by Tremaine, for whom Smith agreed to write a new series featuring 'Storm' Cloud, a nuclear physicist and spaceman whose job is to snuff out atomic power plants when they run wild like oilwells. Only one story appeared before *Comet* was extinguished in 1941, leaving *Astonishing Stories* to feature two others before it too folded. Because of their loose connection with the 'Lensman' tales, in 1960 the three stories were combined in a book titled *The Vortex Blaster*, paperbacked as *Masters of the Vortex*.

The war hit Smith hard, too. He found himself redundant and forced to live on his savings until, at 51, he went to work in an ordnance plant. Only when he was back in the cereals business in Chicago after the war did he essay *Children of the Lens*—with an eye to his own three children and their offspring. In 1957 he retired to live in Florida—and continue his writing. For he could not ignore the current trends in science fiction, which challenged his powers; especially after his earlier work, which he had spent ten years revising for book publication, had been diminished by relentless critics.

In *The Galaxy Primes* he introduced the sort of ideas that were being encouraged in *Astounding*, deriving from what editor John W Campbell termed 'psi phenomena': Smith's Lens, he instanced, was 'essentially a psi machine'. But the story proved more acceptable to *Amazing*, which serialised it in 1959 before it emerged, finally, as a paperback.

Undaunted, he contrived to make his last appearance in *Astounding* in 1960 with *Subspace Survivors*, a short story paving the way for a novel—which Campbell found wanting. It reached Smith's fans in 1965 as a hardcover book titled *Subspace Explorers*. And, towards the end, he found a more receptive market for his work in the magazine *Worlds of If*, which in 1961-2 featured *Masters of Space*, a two-part tale which also carried in its by-line the name E Everett Evans. Of all his admirers, he was the most devoted, and when he died leaving this novel unfinished Smith revised it completely.

The affectionate regard in which 'The Doc' was held by the science fiction fraternity was demonstrated when, in 1963, at the Twenty-first World Convention in Washington—where 'The Skylark' was hatched—veteran fans presented him with their Hall of Fame award. By then he was having trouble with his eyes, but he had still not done with writing. The following year he reappared in *If* with *The Imperial Stars*, in which he tried to recapture some of the atmosphere of the 'Lensman' stories. This tale, too, gave promise of a series featuring a troupe of circus performers involved in espionage in a galactic empire.

Then editor Frederik Pohl, having egged him on, surprised Smith's old-time followers by presenting *Skylark DuQuesne*, in which the legendary villain who had been dispatched thirty years before was reincarnated, and compelled to join Dick Seaton in resisting another grim menace from afar. The serial had hardly ended when the news reached his friends, in August 1965, that 'Skylark' Smith had died of a heart attack. It was the end of what *If* had called 'the most famous science fiction saga of all time'.

**By Ron Ellik and Bill Evans. Advent: Publishers, Chicago, 1966.*

### The Novels of EE Smith

These are given in the order in which they belong to a continuous series—with three exceptions. Dates in brackets indicate prior or sole publication in the USA; other dates refer to UK publication in hardcover. Paperback editions (pb) are listed only where they appeared under a different title or were the first publication.

***The 'Skylark' series:***
(1946) 1949 pb: The Skylark of Space. (1948) 1974 pb: Skylark Three. (1949): Skylark of Valeron. (1967 pb): Skylark DuQuesne.

***The 'Lensman' series:***
(1948) 1954: Triplanetary. (1950) 1955: First Lensman. (1950) 1955: Galactic Patrol. (1951) 1971: Grey Lensman. (1953) 1972: Second Stage Lensman. (1954) 1972: Children of the Lens. (1960): The Vortex Blaster. (1968 pb) 1972: Masters of the Vortex (The Vortex Blaster).

***Unconnected stories:***
(1947): Spacehounds of IPC. (1965): Subspace Explorers. (1965 pb): The Galaxy Primes.

# THE FALL OF ATLANTIS

## By E E 'Doc' Smith

Ariponides, recently elected Faros of Atlantis for his third five-year term, stood at a window of his office atop the towering Farostery. He did not really see the tremendous expanse of quiet ocean, nor the bustling harbour, nor the metropolis spread out so magnificently and so busily beneath him. He stood there, motionless, until a subtle vibration warned him that visitors were approaching his door.

'Come in, gentlemen . . . Please be seated.' He sat down at one end of a table moulded of transparent plastic. 'Psychologist Talmonides, Statesman Cleto, Minister Philamon, Minister Marxes and Officer Artomenes, I have asked you to come here personally because I have every reason to believe that the shielding of this room is proof against eavesdroppers; a thing which can no longer be said of our supposedly private television channels. We must discuss, and if possible come to some decision concerning, the state in which our nation now finds itself.

'This world-wide frenzy of unrest followed closely upon the controlled liberation of atomic energy and may be—probably is—traceable to it. It is in no part due to imperialistic aims or acts on the part of Atlantis. This fact cannot be stressed too strongly. We never have been and are not now interested in Empire. It is true that the other nations began as Atlantean colonies, but no attempt was ever made to hold any one of them in colonial status against the wish of its electorate. All nations were and are sister states. We gain or lose together. Atlantis, the parent, was and is a clearing-house, a co-ordinator of effort, but has never claimed or sought authority to rule; all decisions being based upon free debate and free and secret ballot.

'But now! Parties and factions everywhere, even in old Atlantis. Every nation is torn by internal dissensions and strife. Nor is this all. Uighar as a nation is insensately jealous of the Islands of the South, who in turn are jealous of Maya. Maya of Bantu, Bantu of Ekopt, Ekopt of Norheim, and Norheim of Uighar. A vicious circle, worsened by other jealousies and hatreds intercrossing everywhere. Each fears that some other is about to try to seize control of the entire world; and there seems to be spreading rapidly the utterly baseless belief that Atlantis itself is about to reduce all other nations of Earth to vassalage.

'This is a bald statement of the present condition of the world as I see it. Since I can see no other course possible within the constituted framework of our democratic government, I recommend that we continue our present activities, such as the international treaties and agreements upon which we are now at work, intensifying our effort wherever possible. We will now hear from Statesman Cleto.'

'You have outlined the situation clearly enough, Faros. My thought, however, is that the principal cause of the trouble is the coming into being of this multiplicity of political parties, particularly those composed principally of crackpots and extremists. The connection with atomic energy is clear: since the atomic bomb gives a small group of people the power to destroy the world, they reason that it thereby confers upon them the authority to dictate to the world. My recommendation is merely a special case of yours; that every effort be made to influence the electorates of Norheim and of Uighar into supporting an effective international control of atomic energy.'

'You have your data tabulated in symbolics? asked Talmonides, from his seat at the keyboard of a calculating machine.

'Yes. Here they are.'

'Thanks.'

'Minister Philamon,' the Faros announced.

'As I see it—as any intelligent man should be able to see it—the principal contribution of atomic energy to this worldwide chaos was the complete demoralisation of labour,' the grey-haired Minister of Trade stated, flatly. 'Output per man-hour should have gone up at least twenty per cent, in which case prices would automatically have come down. Instead, short-sighted guilds imposed drastic curbs on production, and now seem to be surprised that as production falls and hourly wages rise, prices also rise and real income drops. Only one course is possible, gentlemen; labour *must* be made to listen to reason. This feather-bedding, this protected loafing, this . . .'

'I protest!' Marxes, Minister of Work, leaped to his feet. 'The blame lies squarely with the capitalists. Their greed, their rapacity, their exploitation of . . .'

'One moment, please!' Ariponides rapped the table sharply. 'It is highly significant of the deplorable condition of the times that two Ministers of State should speak as you two have just spoken. I take it that neither of you has anything new to contribute to this symposium?'

Both claimed the floor, but both were refused it by vote.

'Hand your tabulated data to Talmonides,' the Faros directed. 'Officer Artomenes?'

'You, our Faros, have more than intimated that our defence programme for which I am primarily responsible, has been largely to blame for what has happened,' the grizzled warrior began. 'In part, perhaps it was—one must be blind indeed not to see the connection, and biased indeed not to admit it. But what should I have done, knowing that there is no practical defence against the atomic bomb? Every nation has them, and is manufacturing more and more. Every nation is infested with the agents of every other. Should I have tried to keep Atlantis toothless in a world bristling with fangs? And could I —or anyone else—have succeeded in doing so?'

'Probably not. No criticism was intended; we must deal with the situation as it actually exists. Your recommendations, please?'

'I have thought this thing over day and night, and can see no solution which can be made acceptable to our—or to any real—democracy. Nevertheless, I have one recommendation to make. We all know that Norheim and Uighar are the sore spots—particularly Norheim. We have more bombs as of now than both of them together. We know that Uighar's supersonic jobs are ready. We don't know exactly what Norheim has, since they cut my Intelligence line a while back, but I'm sending over another operative—my best man, too—tonight. If he finds out that we have enough advantage in speed, and I'm pretty sure that we have, I say hit both Norheim and Uighar right then, while we can, before they hit us. And hit them hard—pulverise them. Then set up a world government strong enough to knock out any nation—including Atlantis—that will not co-operate with it. This course of action is flagrantly against all international law and all the principles of democracy, I know; and even it might not work. It is, however, as far as I can see, the only course which *can* work.'

'You—we all—perceive its weaknesses.' The Faros thought for minutes. 'You cannot be sure that your Intelligence has located all of the danger points, and many of them must be so far underground as to be safe from even our heaviest missiles. We all, including you, believe that the Psychologist is right in holding that the reaction of the other nations to such action would be both unfavourable and violent. Your report, please, Talmonides.'

'I have already put my data into the integrator.' The Psychologist punched a button and the mechanism began to whir and to click. 'I have only one new fact of any importance; the name of one of the higher-ups and its corollary implication that there may be some degree of co-operation between Norheim and Uighar . . .'

He broke off as the machine stopped clicking and ejected its report.

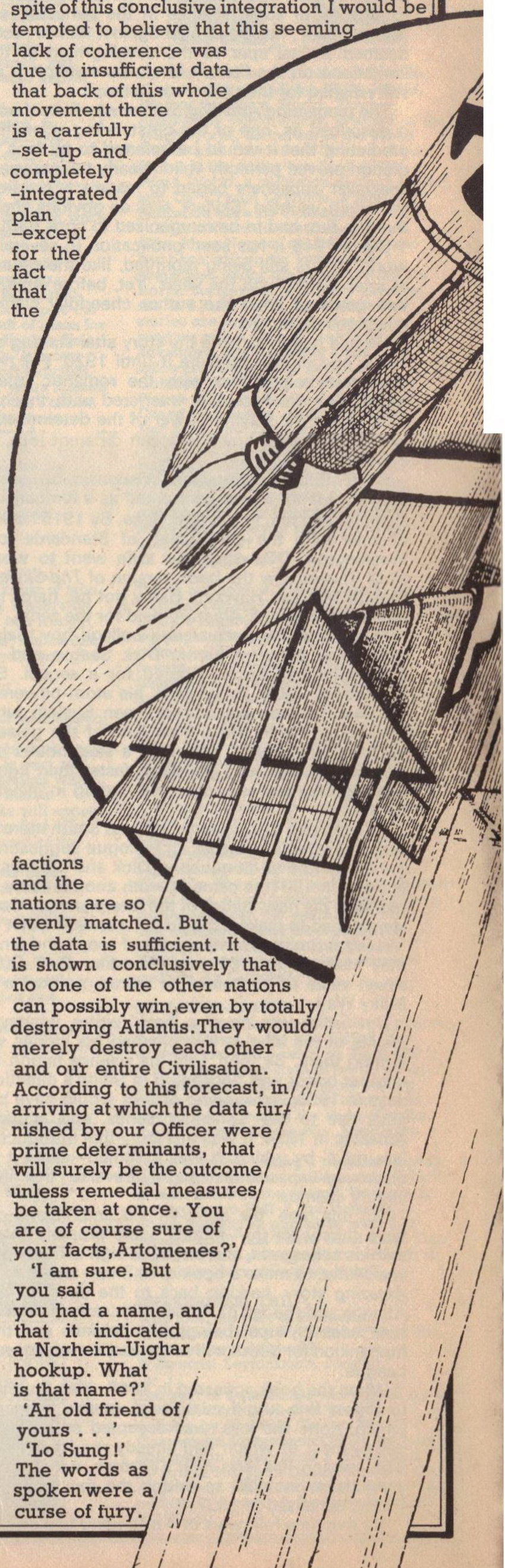
'Look at that graph—up ten points in seven days!' Talmonides pointed a finger. 'The situation is deteriorating faster and faster. The conclusion is unavoidable—you can see yourselves that this summation line is fast approaching unity—that the outbreaks will become uncontrollable in approximately eight days. With one slight exception—here—you will notice that the lines of organisation and purpose are as random as ever. In spite of this conclusive integration I would be tempted to believe that this seeming lack of coherence was due to insufficient data—that back of this whole movement there is a carefully-set-up and completely-integrated plan—except for the fact that the factions and the nations are so evenly matched. But the data is sufficient. It is shown conclusively that no one of the other nations can possibly win, even by totally destroying Atlantis. They would merely destroy each other and our entire Civilisation. According to this forecast, in arriving at which the data furnished by our Officer were prime determinants, that will surely be the outcome unless remedial measures be taken at once. You are of course sure of your facts, Artomenes?'

'I am sure. But you said you had a name, and that it indicated a Norheim-Uighar hookup. What is that name?'

'An old friend of yours . . .'

'Lo Sung!'

The words as spoken were a curse of fury.



'None other. And, unfortunately, there is as yet no course of action indicated which is at all promising of success.'

'Use mine, then!' Artomenes jumped up and banged the table with his fist. 'Let me send two flights of rockets over right now that will blow Uigharstoy and Norgrad into radio-active dust and make a thousand square miles around each of them uninhabitable for ten thousand years! If that's the only way they can learn anything, let them learn!'

'Sit down, Officer,' Ariponides directed, quietly. 'That course, as you have already pointed out, is indefensible. It violates every Prime Basic of our Civilisation. Moreover, it would be entirely futile, since this resultant makes it clear that every nation on Earth would be destroyed within the day.'

'What, then?' Artomenes demanded, bitterly.

'Sit still here and let them annihilate us?'

'Not necessarily. It is to formulate plans that we are here. Talmonides will by now have decided, upon the basis of our pooled knowledge, what must be done.'

'The outlook is not good; not good at all,' the Psychologist announced, gloomily. 'The only course of action which carries any promise whatever of success—and its probability is only point one eight—is the one recommended by the Faros, modified slightly to include Artomenes' suggestion of sending his best operative on the indicated mission. For highest morale, by the way, the Faros should also interview this agent before he sets out. Ordinarily I would not advocate a course of action having so little likelihood of success; but since it is simply a continuation and intensification of what we are already doing, I do not see how we can adopt any other.'

'Are we agreed?' Ariponides asked, after a short silence.

They were agreed. Four of the conferees filed out and a brisk young man strode in. Although he did not look at the Faros his eyes asked questions.

'Reporting for orders, sir' He saluted the Officer punctiliously.

'At ease, sir' Artomenes returned the salute. 'You were called here for a word from the Faros. Sir, I present Captain Phryges.'

'Not orders, son . . . no.' Ariponides' right hand rested in greeting upon the captain's left shoulder, wise old eyes probed deeply into gold-flecked, tawny eyes of youth; the Faros saw, without really noticing, a flaming thatch of red-bronze-auburn hair. 'I asked you here to wish you well; not only for myself, but for all our nation and perhaps for our entire race. While everything in my being rebels against an unprovoked and unannounced assault, we may be compelled to choose between our Officer's plan of campaign and the destruction of Civilisation. Since you already know the vital importance of your mission, I need not enlarge upon it. But I want you to know fully, Captain Phryges, that all Atlantis flies with you this night.'

'Th . . . thank you, sir.' Phryges gulped twice to steady his voice. 'I'll do my best, sir.'

And later, in a wingless craft flying towards the airfield, young Phryges broke a long silence. 'So *that* is the Faros . . . I like him, Officer . . . I have never seen him close up before . . . there's something about him . . . He isn't like my father, much, but it seems as though I have known him for a thousand years!'

'Hm . . . m . . . m. Peculiar. You two are a lot alike, at that, even though you don't look anything like each other. . . . Can't put a finger on exactly what it is, but it's there.' Although Artomenes nor any other of his time could place it, the resemblance was indeed there. It was in and back of the eyes; it was the 'look of eagles' which was long later to become associated with the wearers of Arisia's Lens. 'But here we are, and your ship's ready. Luck, son.'

'Thanks, sir. Goodbye.'

The ship was a tremendous flying wing. A standard commercial job. Empty—passengers, even crewmen, were never subjected to the brutal accelerations regularly used by unmanned carriers. Phryges scanned the panel. Tiny motors were pulling tapes through the controllers. Every light showed green. Everything was set. Donning a waterproof coverall, he slid through a flexible valve into his acceleration-tank and waited.

A siren yelled briefly. Black night turned blinding white as the harnessed energies of the atom were released. For five and six-tenths seconds the sharp, hard, beryllium-bronze leading edge of the back-sweeping V sliced its way through ever-thinning air.

The vessel seemed to pause momentarily; paused and bucked viciously. She shuddered and shivered, tried to tear herself into shreds and chunks; but Phryges in his tank was unconcerned. Earlier, weaker ships went to pieces against the solid-seeming wall of atmospheric incompressibility at the velocity of sound; but this one was built solidly enough, and powered to hit that wall hard enough, to go through unharmed.

The hellish vibration ceased; the fantastic violence of the drive subsided to a mere shove; Phryges knew that the vessel had levelled off at its cruising speed of two thousand miles per hour. He emerged, spilling the least possible amount of water upon the polished steel floor. He took off his coverall and stuffed it back through the valve into the tank. He mopped and polished the floor with towels, which likewise went into the tank.

He drew on a pair of soft gloves and, by manual control, jettisoned the acceleration tank and all the apparatus which had made that unloading possible. This junk would fall into the ocean; would sink; would never be found. He examined the compartment and the hatch minutely. No scratches, no scars, no marks; no tell-tale marks or prints of any kind. Let the Norskies search. So far, so good.

Back towards the trailing edge then, to a small escape-hatch beside which was fastened a dull black ball. The anchoring devices went out first. He gasped as the air rushed out into near-vacuum, but he had been trained to take sudden and violent fluctuations in pressure. He rolled the ball out upon the hatch, where he opened it; two hinged hemispheres, each heavily padded with moulded composition resembling sponge rubber. It seemed incredible that a man as big as Phryges, especially when wearing a parachute, could be crammed into a space so small; but that lining had been moulded to fit.

This ball *had* to be small. The ship, even though it was on a regularly-scheduled commercial flight, would be scanned intensively and continuously from the moment of entering Norheiman radar range. Since the ball would be invisible on any radar screen, no suspicion would be aroused; particularly since—as far as Atlantean Intelligence had been able to discover—the Norheimans had not yet succeeded in perfecting any device by the use of which a living man could bail out of a supersonic plane.

Phryges waited—and waited—until the second hand of his watch marked the arrival of zero time. He curled up into one half of the ball; the other half closed over him and locked. The hatch opened. Ball and closely-prisoned man plummeted downward; slowing abruptly, with a horrible deceleration, to terminal velocity. Had the air been a trifle thicker the Atlantean captain would have died then and there; but that, too, had been computed accurately, and Phryges lived.

And as the ball bulleted downward on a screaming slant, it *shrank*!

This, too, the Atlanteans hoped, was new—a synthetic material which air-friction would erode away, molecule by molecule, so rapidly that no perceptible fragment of it would reach ground.

The casing disappeared, and the yielding porous lining. And Phryges, still at an altitude of over thirty thousand feet, kicked away the remaining fragments of his cocoon and, by judicious planing, turned himself so that he could see the ground, now dimly visible in the first dull grey of dawn. There was the highway, paralleling his line of flight; he wouldn't miss it more than a hundred yards.

He fought down an almost overwhelming urge to pull his rip-cord too soon. He had to wait—wait until the last possible second—because parachutes were big and Norheiman radar practically swept the ground.

Low enough at last, he pulled the ring. Z-r-r-e-e-k—WHAP! The chute banged open; his harness tightened with a savage jerk, mere seconds before his hard-sprung knees took the shock of landing.

That was close—too close! He was white and shaking, but unhurt, as he gathered in the billowing, fighting sheet and rolled it, together with his harness, into a wad. He broke open a tiny ampoule, and as the drops of liquid touched it the stout fabric began to disappear. It did not burn; it simply disintegrated and vanished. In less than a minute there remained only a few steel snaps and rings, which the Atlantean buried under a meticulously-replaced circle of sod.

He was still on schedule. In less than three minutes the signals would be on the air and he would know where he was—unless the Norsks had succeeded in finding and eliminating the whole Atlantean undercover group. He pressed a stud on a small instrument; held it down. A line burned green across the dial—flared red—vanished.

'Damn!' he breathed, explosively. The strength of the signal told him that he was within a mile or so of the hideout—first-class computation—but the red flash warned him to keep away. Kinnexa—*it had better be Kinnexa*!—would come to him.

How? By air? Along the road? Through the woods on foot? He had no way of knowing—talking, even on a tight beam, was out of the question. He made his way to the highway and crouched behind a tree. Here she could come at him by any route of the three. Again he waited, pressing infrequently a stud of his sender.

A long, low-slung ground-car swung around the curve and Phryges' binoculars were at his eyes. It *was* Kinnexa—or a duplicate. At the thought he dropped his glasses and pulled his guns—blaster in right hand, air-pistol in left. But no, that wouldn't do. She'd be suspicious, too—she'd have to be—and that car probably

Robert McAulay

mounted heavy stuff. If he stepped out ready for business she'd fry him, and quick. Maybe not—she might have protection—but he couldn't take the chance.

The car slowed; stopped. The girl got out, examined a front tyre, straightened up, and looked down the road, straight at Phryges' hiding place. This time the binoculars brought her up to little more than arm's length. Tall, blonde, beautifully built; the slightly crooked left eyebrow. The thread-line of gold betraying a one-tooth bridge and the tiny scar on her upper lip, for both of which he had been responsible—she always did insist on playing cops-and-robbers with boys older and bigger than herself—it *was* Kinnexa! Not even Norheim's science could imitate so perfectly every personalising characteristic of a girl he had known ever since she was knee-high to a duck!

The girl slid back into her seat and the heavy car began to move. Openhanded, Phryges stepped out into its way. The car stopped.

'Turn around. Back up to me, hands behind you' she directed, crisply.

The man, although surprised, obeyed. Not until he felt a finger exploring the short hair at the back of his neck did he realise what she was seeking—the almost imperceptible scar marking the place where she bit him when she was 7 years old!

'Oh, Fry! It *is* you! *Really* you! Thank the gods! I've been ashamed of that all my life, but now . . .'

He whirled and caught her as she slumped, but she did not quite faint.

'Quick! Get in . . . drive on . . . not too fast!' she cautioned, sharply, as the tyres began to scream. 'The speed limit along here is seventy, and we can't be picked up.'

'Easy it is, Kinny. But *give*! What's the score? Where's Kolanides? Or rather, what happened to him?'

'Dead. So are the others, I think. They put him on a psycho-bench and turned him inside-out.'

'But the blocks?'

'Didn't hold—over here they add such trimmings as skinning and salt to the regular psycho routine. But none of them knew anything about me, nor about how their reports were picked up, or I'd have been dead, too. But it doesn't make any difference, Fry—we're just one week too late.'

'What do you mean, too late? Speed it up!' His tone was rough, but the hand he placed on her arm was gentleness itself.

'I'm telling you as fast as I can. I picked up his last report day before yesterday. They have missiles just as big and just as fast as ours—maybe more so—and they are going to fire one at Atlantis tonight at exactly seven o'clock.'

'Tonight! Holy gods!' The man's mind raced.

'Yes.' Kinnexa's voice was low, uninflected. 'And there was nothing in the world that I could do about it. If I approached any one of our places, or tried to use a beam strong enough to reach anywhere, I would simply have got picked up, too. I've thought and thought, but could figure out only one thing that might possibly be of any use, and I couldn't do that alone. But two of us, perhaps . . .'

'Go on. Brief me. Nobody ever accused you of not having a brain, and you know this whole country like the palm of your hand.'

'Steal a ship. Be over the ramp at exactly Seven Pay Emma. When the lid opens, go into a full-power dive, beam Artomenes—if I had a second before they blanketed my wave—and meet their rocket head-on in their own launching-tube.'

This was stark stuff, but so tense was the moment and so highly keyed up were the two that neither of them saw anything out of the ordinary in it.

'Not bad, if we can't figure out anything better. The joker being, of course, that you didn't see how you could steal a ship?'

'Exactly. I can't carry blasters. No woman in Norheim is wearing a coat or a cloak now, so I can't either. And just look at this dress! Do you see any place where I could hide even one?'

He looked, appreciatively, and she had the grace to blush.

'Can't say that I do,' he admitted. 'But I'd rather have one of our own ships, if we could make the approach. Could both of us make it, do you suppose?'

'Not a chance. They'd keep at least one man inside all the time. Even if we killed everybody outside, the ship would take off before we could get close enough to open the port with the outside controls.'

'Probably. Go on. But first, are you sure that you're in the clear?'

'Positive.' She grinned mirthlessly. 'The fact that I am still alive is conclusive evidence that they didn't find out anything about me. But I don't want you to work on that idea if you can think of a better one. I've got passports and so on for you to be anything you want to be, from a tubeman up to an Ekoptian banker. Ditto for me, and for us both, as Mr and Mrs.'

'Smart girl.' He thought for minutes, then shook his head. 'No possible way out that I can see. The sneak-boat isn't due for a week, and from what you've said it probably won't get here. But you might make it, at that. I'll drop you somewhere . . .'

'You will not,' she interrupted, quietly but definitely. 'Which would *you* rather—go out in a blast like that one will be, beside a good Atlantean, or, after deserting him, be psychoed, skinned, salted, and—still alive—drawn and quartered?'

'Together, then, all the way,' he assented. 'Man and wife. Tourists—newlyweds—from some town not too far away. Pretty well fixed, to match what we're riding in. Can do?'

'Very simple.' She opened a compartment and selected one of a stack of documents. 'I can fix this one up in ten minutes. We'll have to dispose of the rest of these, and a lot of other stuff, too. And you had better get out of that leather and into a suit that matches this passport photo.'

'Right. Straight road for miles, and nothing in sight either way. Give me the suit and I'll change now. Keep on going or stop?'

'Better stop, I think,' the girl decided. 'Quicker, and we'll have to find a place to hide or bury this evidence.'

While the man changed clothes, Kinnexa collected the contraband, wrapping it up in the discarded jacket. She looked up just as Phryges was adjusting his coat. She glanced at his armpits, then stared.

'Where are your blasters?' she demanded. 'They ought to show, at least a little, and even I can't see a sign of them.'

He showed her.

'But they're so tiny! I never saw blasters like that!'

'I've got a blaster, but it's in the tail pocket. These aren't. They're air-guns. Poisoned needles. Not worth a damn beyond a hundred feet, but deadly close up. One touch anywhere and the guy dies right then. Two seconds max.'

'Nice!' She was no shrinking violet, this young Atlantean spy. 'You have spares, of course, and I can hide two of them easily enough in leg-holsters. Gimme, and show me how they work.'

'Standard controls, pretty much like blasters. Like so.' He demonstrated, and as he drove sedately down the highway the girl sewed industriously.

The day wore on, nor was it uneventful. One incident, in fact—the detailing of which would serve no useful purpose here—was of such a nature that at its end:

'Better pin-point me, don't you think, on that ramp?' Phryges asked quietly. 'Just in case you get scragged in one of these brawls and I don't?'

'Oh! Of course! Forgive me, Fry—it slipped my mind completely that you didn't know where it was. Area six; pin-point four seven three dash six oh five.'

'Got it.' He repeated the figures.

But neither of the Atlanteans was 'scragged', and at six pm an allegedly honeymooning couple parked their big roadster in the garage at Norgrad Field and went through the gates. Their papers, tickets included, were in perfect order; they were as inconspicuous and as undemonstrative as newly-weds are wont to be. No more so, and no less.

Strolling idly, gazing eagerly at each new thing, they made their circuitous way towards a certain small hangar. As the girl had said, this field boasted hundreds of supersonic fighters, so many that servicing was a round-the-clock routine. In that hangar was a sharp-nosed, stubby-V'd flyer, one of Norheim's fastest. It was serviced and ready.

It was too much to hope, of course, that the visitors could actually get into the building unchallenged. Nor did they.

'Back, you!' A guard waved them away. 'Get back to the Concourse, where you belong—no visitors allowed out here!'

F-f-t! F-f-t! Phryges' air-gun broke into soft but deadly coughing. Kinnexa whirled—hands flashing down, skirt flying up—and ran. Guards tried to head her off; tried to bring their own weapons to bear. Tried—failed—died.

Phryges, too, ran; ran backward. His blaster was out now and flaming, for no living enemy remained within needle range. A rifle bullet w-h-i-n-g-e-d past his head, making him duck involuntarily and uselessly. Rifles were bad; but their hazard, too, had been considered and had been accepted.

Kinnexa reached the fighter's port, opened it, sprang in. He jumped. She fell against him. He tossed her clear, slammed and dogged the door. He looked at her then, and swore bitterly. A small, round hole marred the bridge of her nose, the back of her head was gone.

He leaped to the controls and the fleet little ship screamed skyward. He cut in transmitter and receiver, keyed and twiddled briefly. No soap. He had been afraid of that. They were already blanketing every frequency he could employ; using power through which he could not drive even a tight beam a hundred miles.

But he could still crash that missile in its tube. Or—could he? He was not afraid of other Norheiman fighters; he had a long lead and he rode one of their very fastest. But since they were already so suspicious, wouldn't they launch the bomb *before* seven o'clock? He tried vainly to coax another knot out of his wide-open engines.

With all his speed, he neared the pin-point just in time to see a trail of super-heated vapour extending up into and disappearing beyond the stratosphere. He nosed his flyer upward, locked the missile into his sights, and levelled off. Although his ship did not have the giant rocket's acceleration, he could catch it before it got to Atlantis, since he did not need its altitude and since most of its journey would be made without power. What he could do about it after he caught it he did not know, but he'd do *something*.

He caught it; and, by a feat of piloting to be appreciated only by those who have handled planes at supersonic speeds, he matched its course and velocity. Then, from a distance of barely a hundred feet, he poured his heaviest shells into the missile's war-head. He *couldn't* be missing! It was worse than shooting sitting ducks—it was like dynamiting fish in a bucket! Nevertheless, nothing happened. The thing wasn't fused for impact, then, but for time; and the activating mechanism would be shell- and shock-proof.

But there was still a way. He didn't need to call Artomenes now, even if he could get through the interference which the fast-approaching pursuers were still sending out. Atlantean observers would have lined this stuff up long since; the Officer would know exactly what was going on.

Driving ahead and downward, at maximum power, Phryges swung his ship slowly into a right-angle collision course. The fighter's needle nose struck the war-head within a foot of the Atlantean's point of aim, and as he died Phryges knew that he had accomplished his mission. Norheim's missile would not strike Atlantis, but would fall at least ten miles short, and the water there was very deep. Very, *very* deep. Atlantis would not be harmed.

It might have been better, however, if Phryges had died with Kinnexa on Norgrad Field; in which case the continent would probably have endured. As it was, while that one missile did not reach the city, its frightful atomic charge exploded under six hundred fathoms of water, ten scant miles from Atlantis' harbour, and very close to an ancient geological fault.

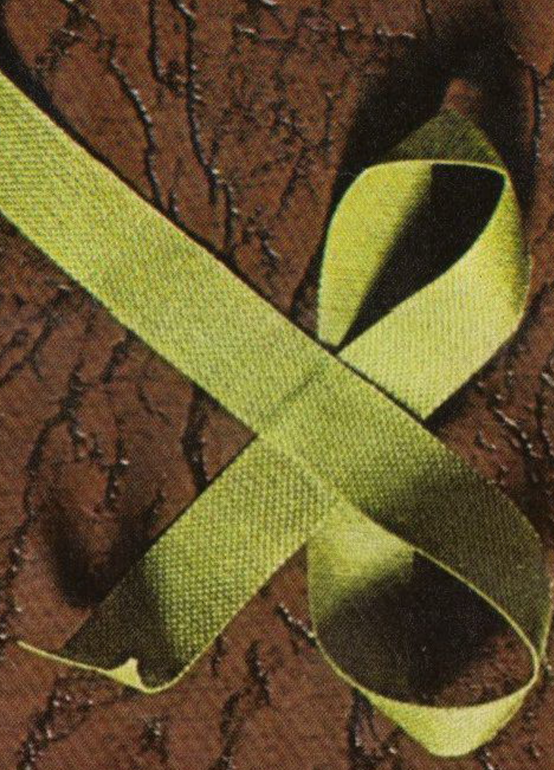
Artomenes, as Phyrges had surmised, had had time in which to act, and he knew much more than Phryges did about what was coming towards Atlantis. Too late, he knew that not one missile, but seven, had been launched from Norheim, and at least five from Uighar. The retaliatory rockets which were to wipe out Norgrad, Uigharstoy, and thousands of square miles of environs were on their way long before either bomb or earthquake destroyed all of the Atlantean launching ramps.

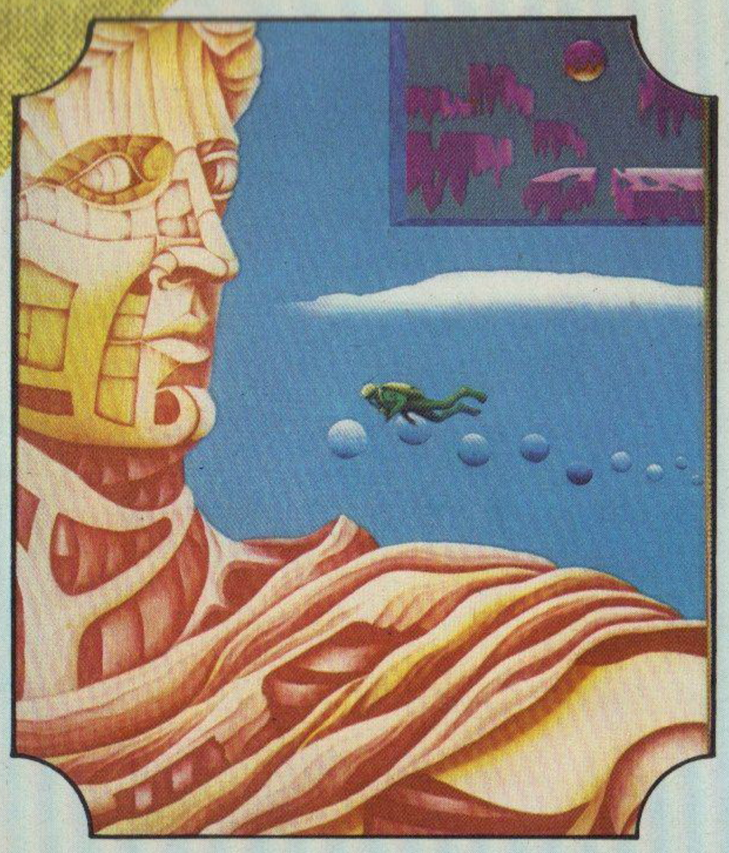
But when equilibrium was at last restored, the ocean rolled serenely where a minor continent had been.

# THE WINNING PAINTINGS

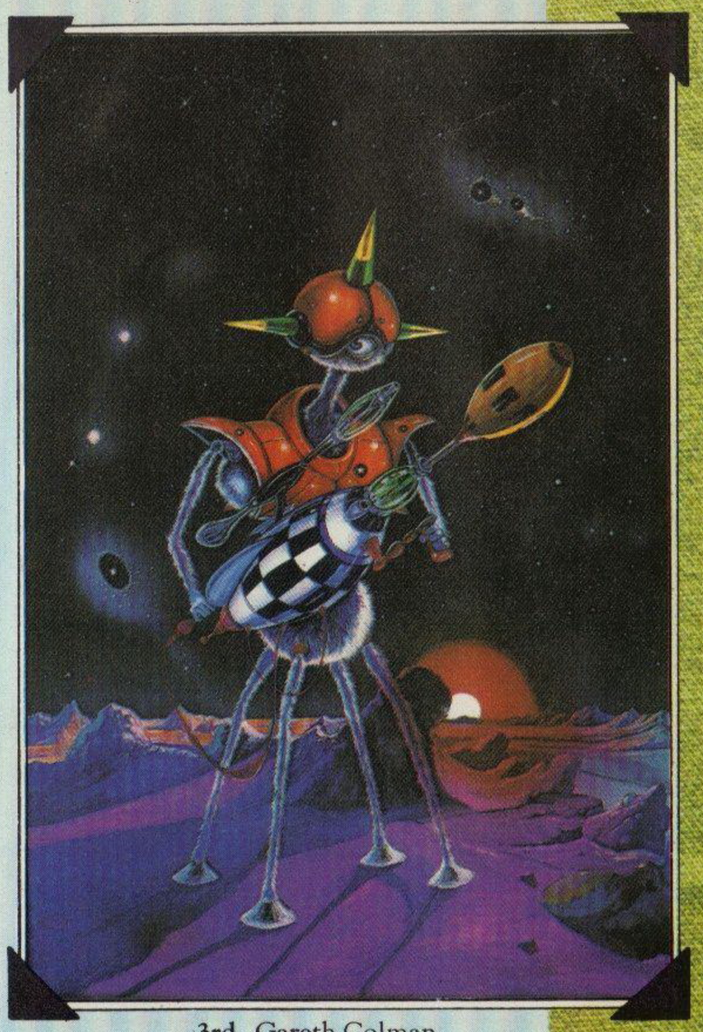
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*These will be repeated poster size in forthcoming issues*



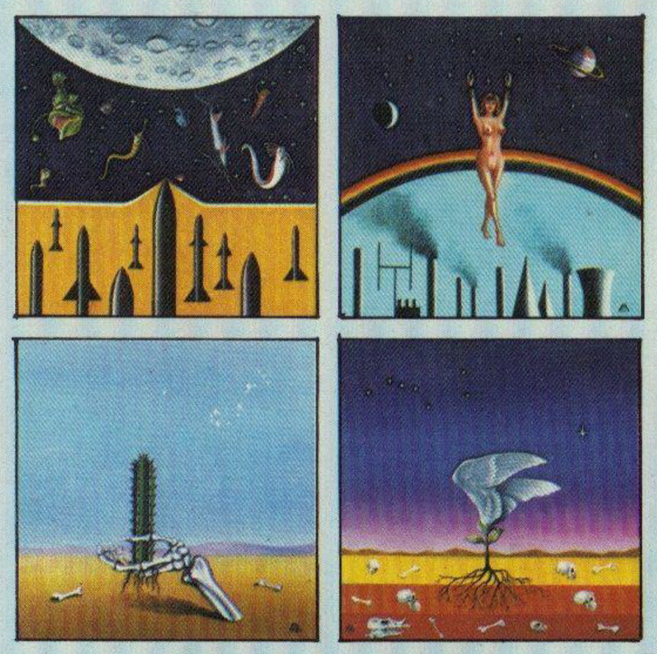


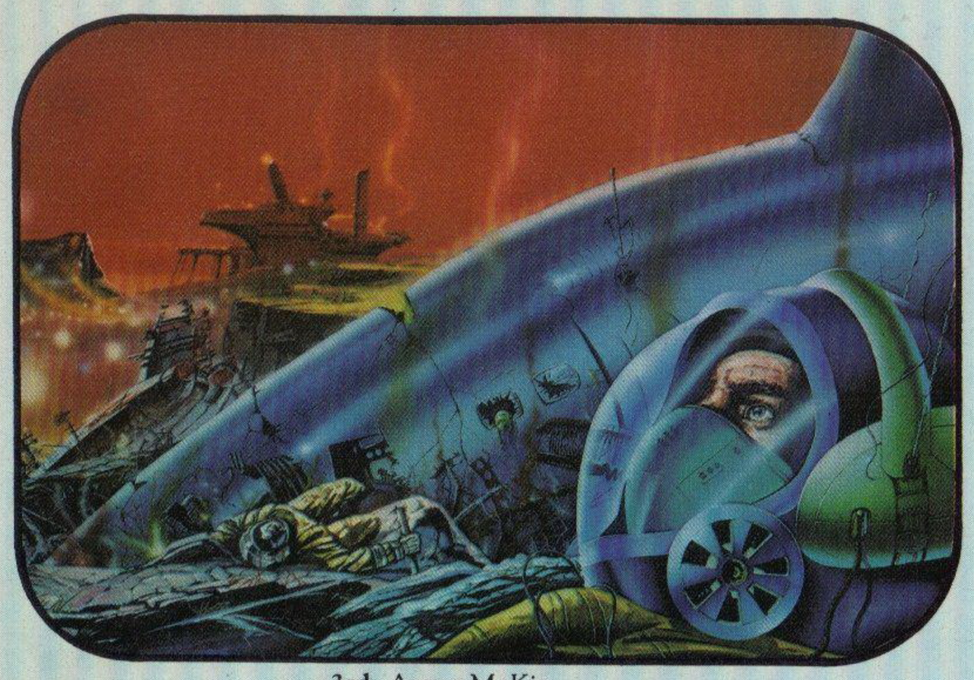
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Brixton Hill
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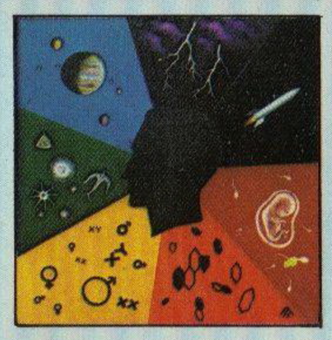
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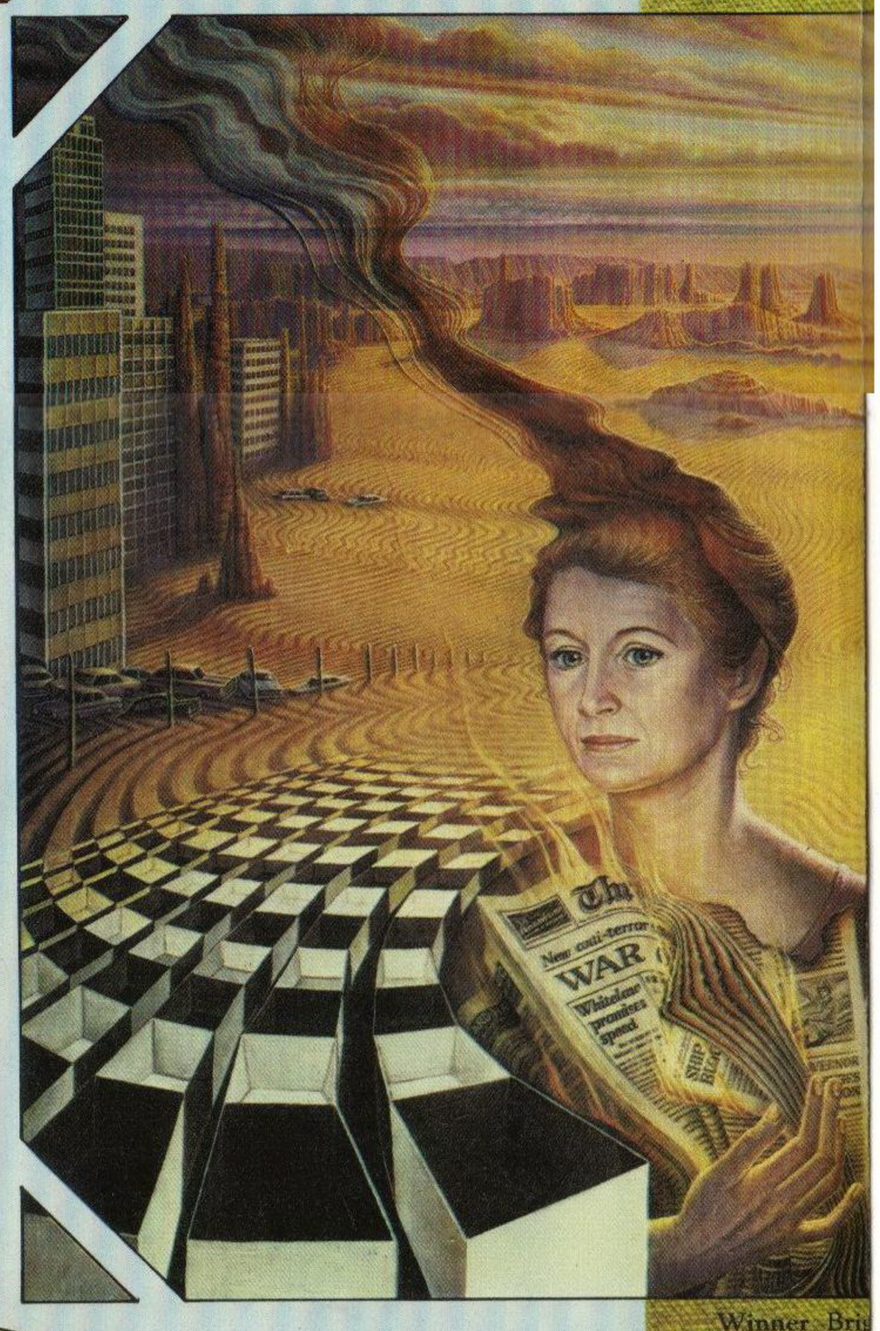
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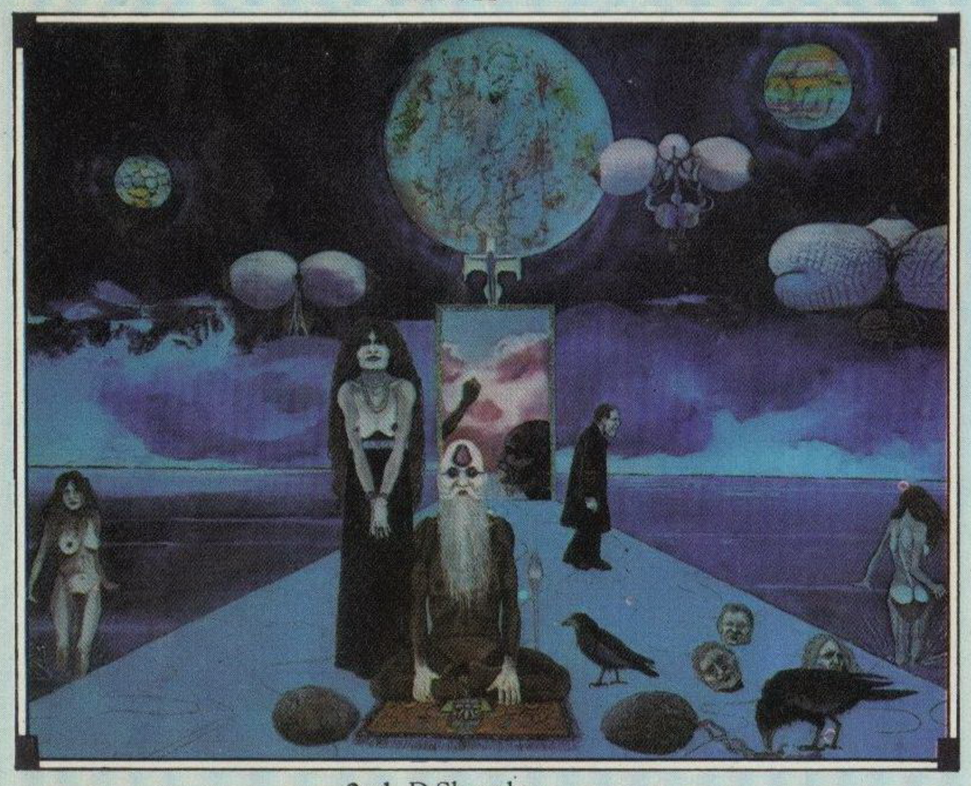




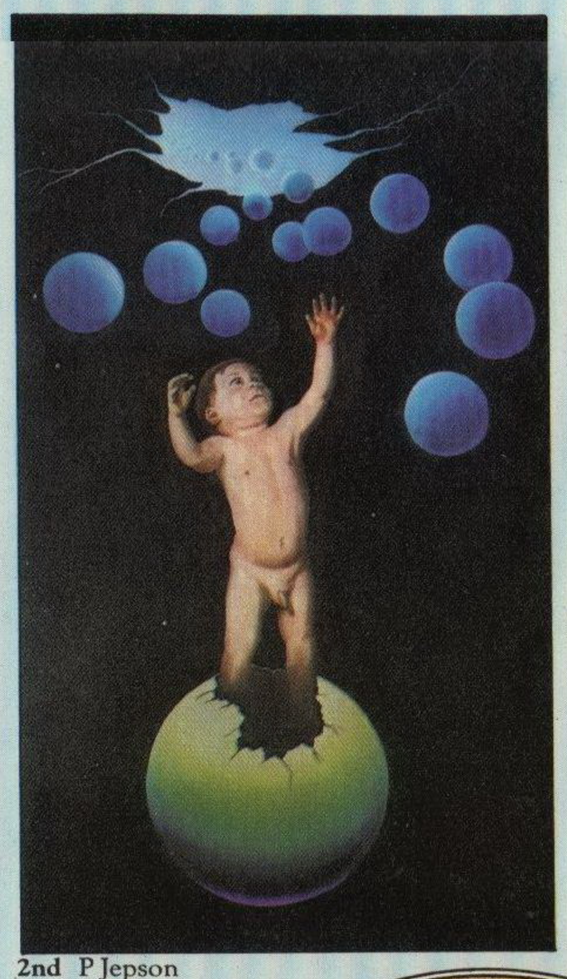
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29 Kirkwood Gardens
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Co. Durham
NE10 8TP







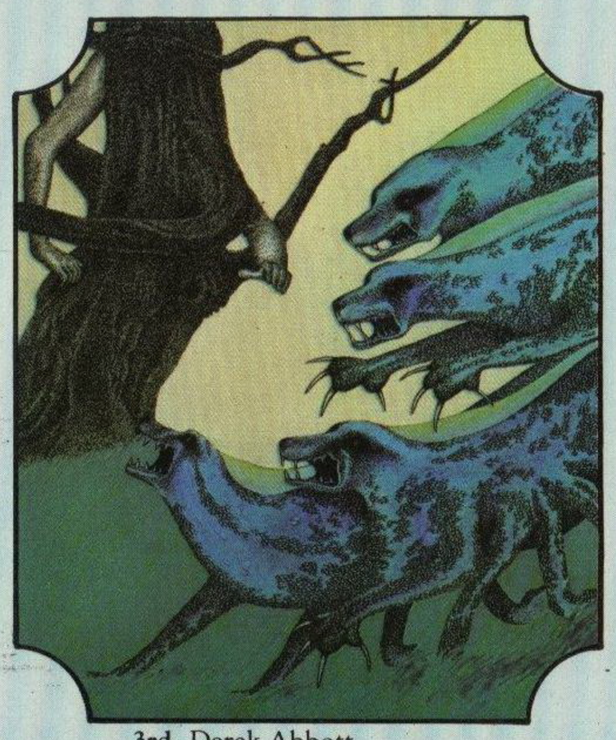
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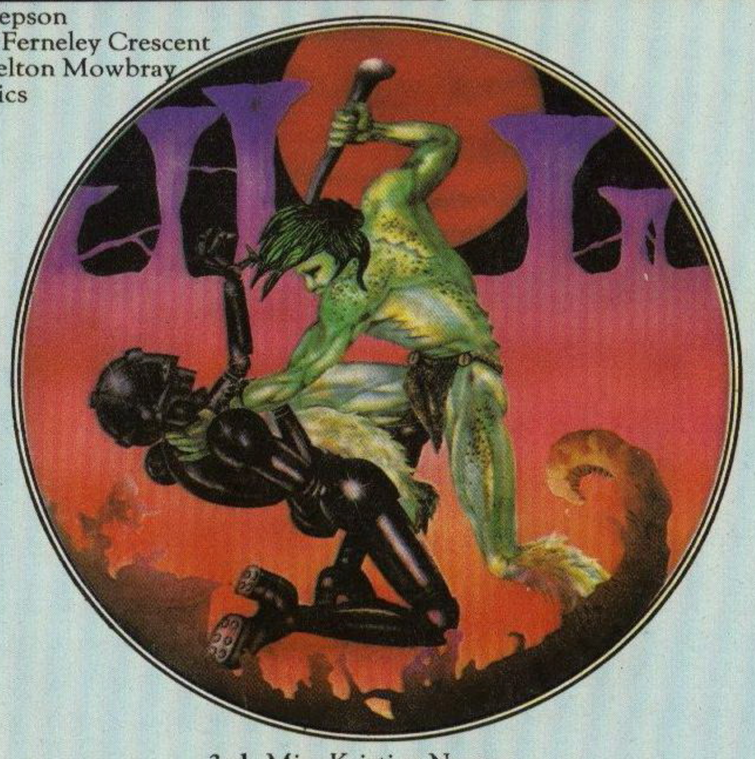
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Melton Mowbray
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**3rd** M J Parry
20 Regent Avenue
Huyton with Roby
Liverpool
Lancs
L14 6UL



**3rd** Derek Abbott
138 Wanstead Park Road
Ilford
Essex



**3rd** Miss Kristine Nason
60 Park Road South
Claughton
Birkenhead (Merseyside)
Cheshire

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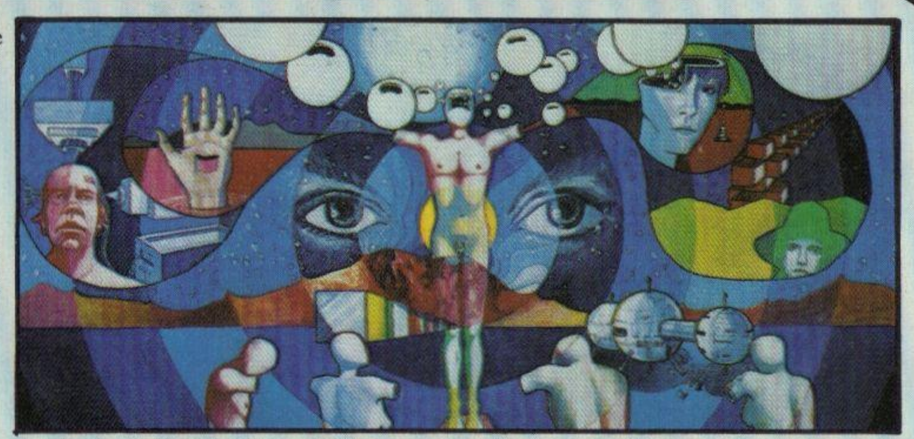
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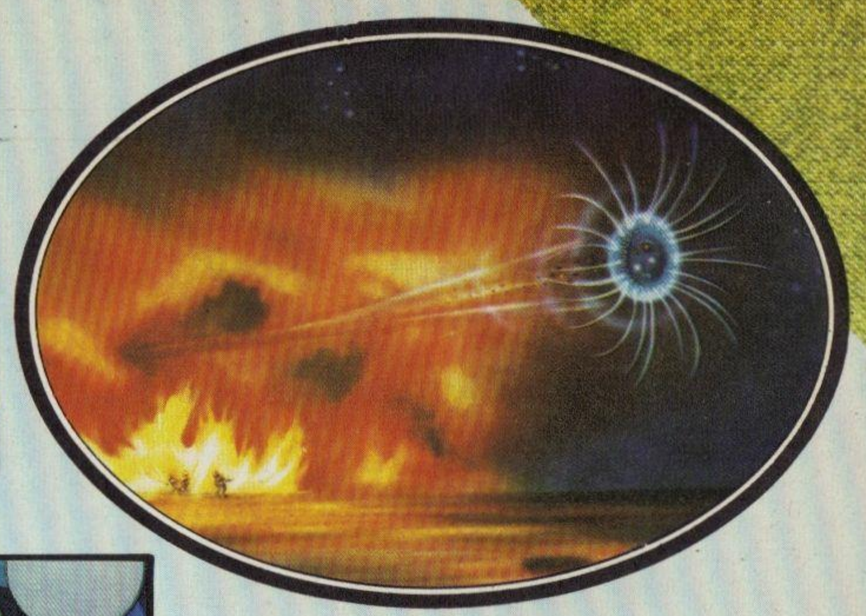
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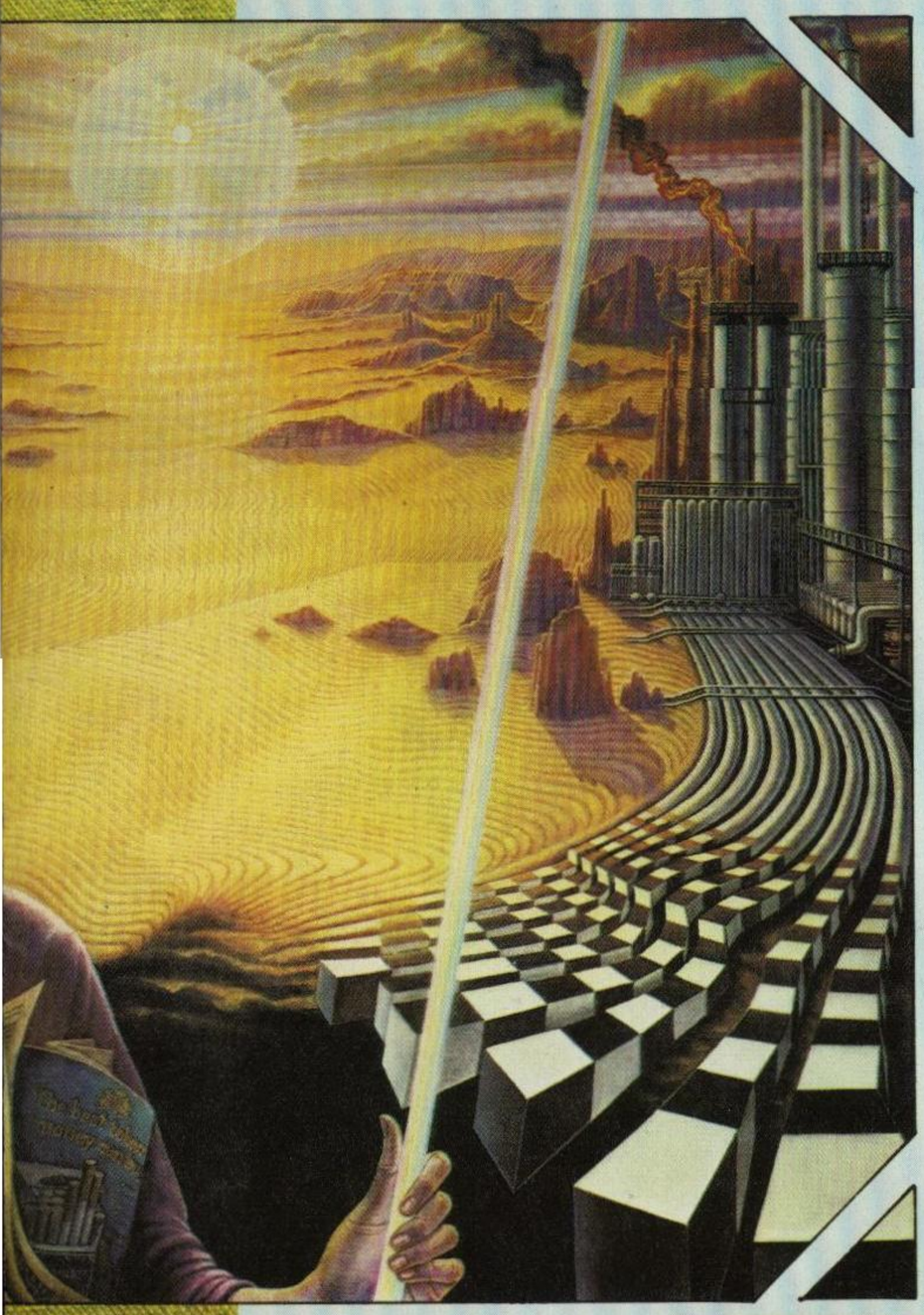
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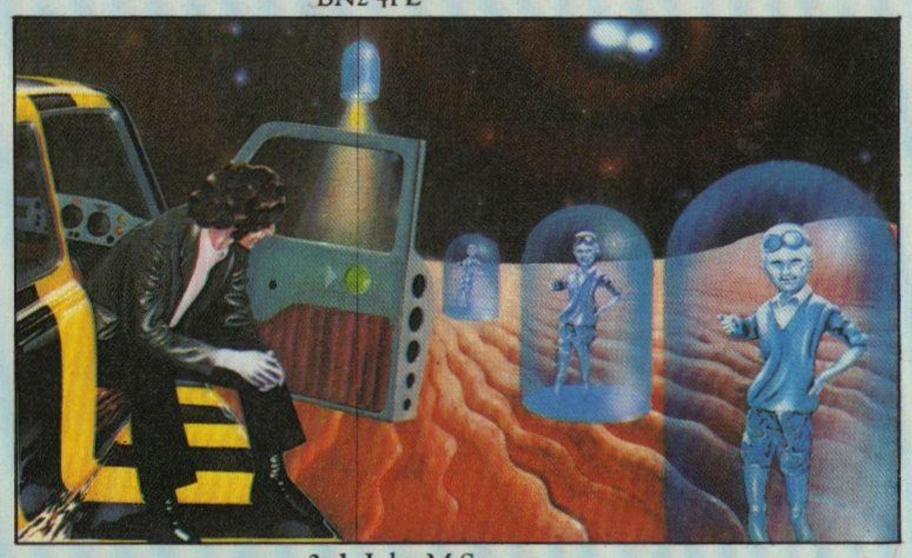


3rd D Horsfield
18 Lower Bevendean Avenue
Brighton
Sussex
BN2 4FE



3rd G W Harrison
13 Burns Road
Pound Hill
Crawley
Sussex





3rd John M Storey
Flat 2
13 Sycamore Avenue
Harehills Lane
Leeds
LS8 4DZ



2nd Gareth Colman
36 Ashford Road
Maidstone
Kent ME14 5BH



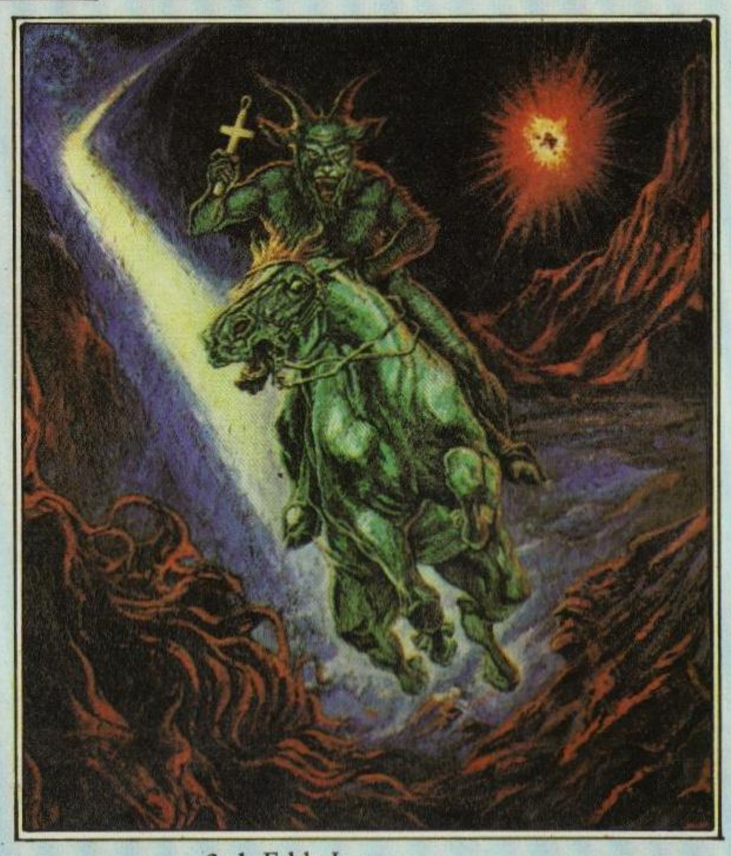
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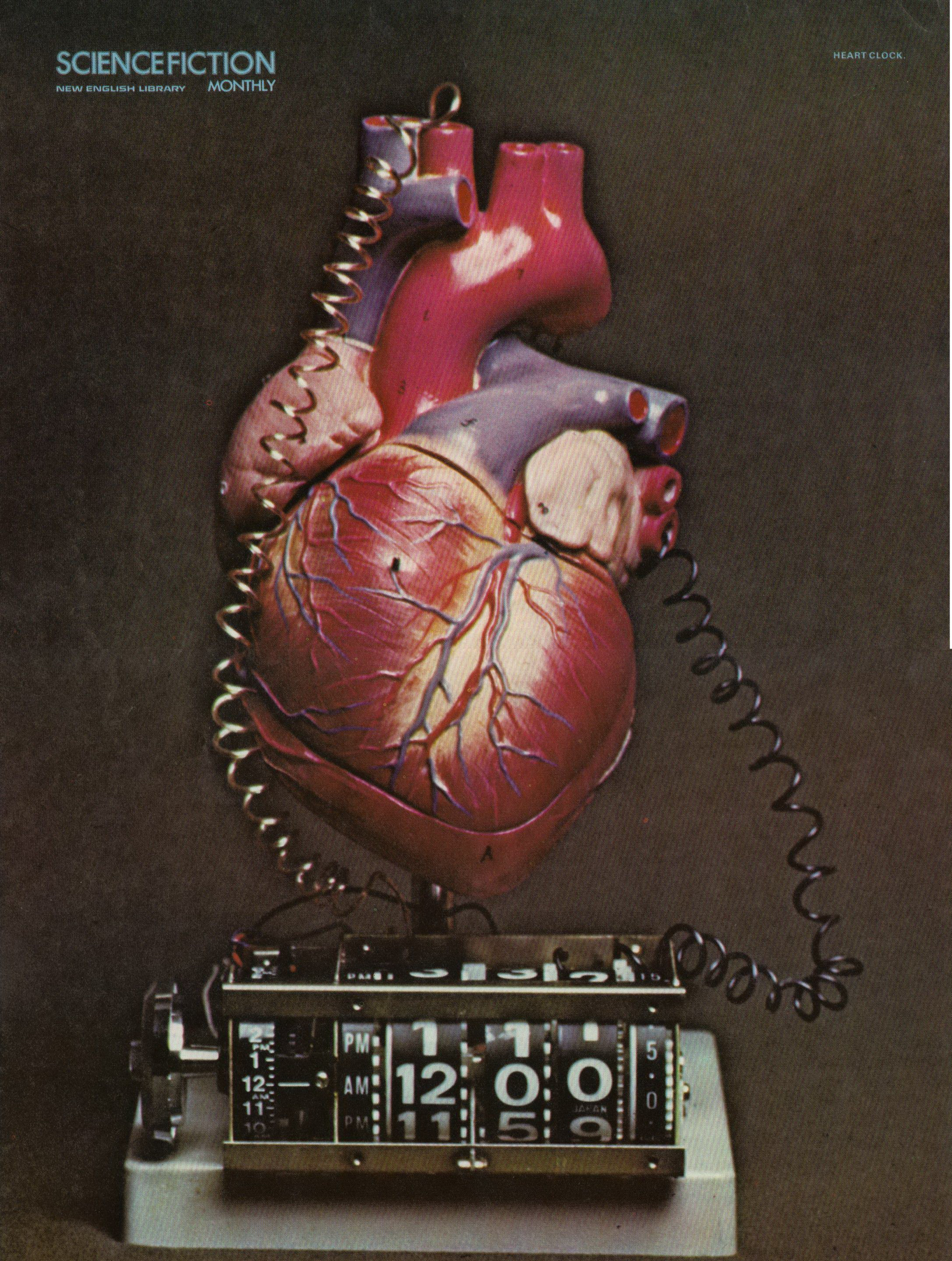
3rd Eddy Lowe
58 Broadmoor Avenue
Oldbury
Warley
Worcs



3rd Robin Hidden
38 Overton Close
Congleton
Cheshire

# SCIENCE FICTION

NEW ENGLISH LIBRARY MONTHLY



# NEWS

**By Aune R Butt**

A VERY WELCOME DUPLICATED PAMPHLET called *A Little Gem Guide to SF Fanzines* has now been produced by Peter Roberts. It's intended to be a short guide to sf fandom for interested newcomers to the field and has arisen out of a large number of enquiring letters addressed to Peter as a result of our mention in SFM 1.

Peter's pamphlet covers most aspects of sf fanzines under general information headings such as what they are, how to get them and how to produce one, as well as including a list of extant fanzines. Written in a chatty and informative way, this pamphlet is one of the most useful guides to the sf fan scene I've yet come across, and it's a must for anyone keen to get involved.

The guide is produced and published by Peter Roberts, of 6 Westbourne Park Villas, London W2, and is available at a cost of 10p, including postage.

In his introduction Peter points out that the guide will date fairly quickly as the world of fanzine production is constantly changing. He therefore hopes to produce further issues, and would welcome useful comments and suggestions.

***IF YOU ARE A DEVOTED READER of Edgar Rice Burroughs' novels, why not join the*** British Edgar Rice Burroughs Society***? Centred not only on Burroughs' Tarzan, Martian and Venusian books but also on his non-sf works, this society is in touch with the fan scene worldwide—America, Australia, Europe and even Russia! The society, also has close contacts with two ERB magazines,*** Burroughsiana ***in this country, and*** Jasoomian (Earthman, ***if you happen to be a native of Barsoom) which is published from California.***

***Anyone interested in further information or details of membership please write to the following addresses: Rodney Jackson, 8 Park Road, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire in the North of England; and in London and the South to Frank Westwood, 48 Creswick Road, Acton, London W3 9HF.***

*SEACON 75 is the name of next year's Easter Science Fiction Convention which is to be held at the De Vere Hotel, Coventry, on 28-31 March 1975. Guest of Honour is to be Michael Moorcock, author of the popular* Runestaff *series of sword-and-sorcery/fantasy novels. A variety of professional writers are expected to attend, as well as the usual enthusiastic band of fans; there will be an art exhibition, talks, debates, and social occasions. Judging by 1974's Easter Con this should be an event well worth attending.*

*Supporting membership costs £1.00 and attending membership £2.50. The Con is being organised by Malcolm Edwards, to whom you should address enquiries and send fees, at the following address: 19 Ranmoor Gardens, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 1OQ. The first progress report came out in June, the second one is due out in October. Malcolm Edwards will keep those interested in attending posted about events.*

NEIL STOTT of Beck House, Old Hutton, Near Kendal, Westmorland, LA8 0NH has written to us asking for a mention on this page for a junior science fiction club he is interested in starting. Strictly for 10-14 year olds, this club will be formed by Neil and his friends. Anyone who is interested in joining please write to him at the address given above.

FOUNDATION is the official publication issued by the Science Fiction Foundation based in the North East London Polytechnic, and is the major journal of sf reviews in this country.

This booklet (A5 size and containing approximately 100 pages) is capably edited by Peter Nicholls, who has been able to draw on the services of such writers as Brian Aldiss, John Brunner, Brian Stableford, Robert Silverberg, Ursula Le Guin, L Sprague De Camp, Malcolm Edwards and many others. Articles like Ursula Le Guin's *A Citizen of Mondath* and Peter Nicholls' own series *Science Fiction and the Mainstream* are typical of the high (if at times somewhat scholarly) standard of *Foundation*. Though mostly serious in tone some of the articles are written in a lighter vein, particularly the autobiographical ones concerning an author's personal appreciation of his (or her) life and work in sf.

The next two issues of *Foundation* are due out by October, and will contain three major autobiographical articles by Aldiss, Delany and Silverberg, plus, of course, book reviews by the ubiquitous Chris Priest. Back issues are available from number 4 onwards, costing 50p each for issues 4 & 5 and 75p each for single copies after that. The subscription rate is £2.40 per year for four copies, and all editorial and subscription correspondence should be addressed to: The Editor, *Foundation*, The Science Fiction Foundation, North East London Polytechnic, Longbridge Road, Essex RM8 2AS. Canada and USA subscription rates can be obtained on application to the above address.

I would particularly recommend *Foundation* for readers who see sf as belonging to the mainstream of modern literature rather than as a freak breakaway form existing in isolation.

Maryland College, Woburn, is putting on a weekend seminar on the subject of science fiction, from 22-24 November. The course will consist mainly of lectures and discussions, with the film *Metropolis* being shown on Saturday.

The pamphlet I received about this course was clearly written by an enthusiast; it says it is 'A weekend of speculation, imagination and discussion about science fiction – its definition, its scope, its quality and its contribution to our awareness of being universal animals. Newcomers and addicts will be equally welcome and each session will conclude with an open discussion based on the issues raised in the preceding lecture.'

Course members are asked to provide themselves with a copy of the collection of sf stories edited by Brian Aldiss and published by Penguin Books.

The pamphlet continues by saying that both course tutors – John Rickett and Alex Boyd – are inveterate and irredeemable enthusiasts who feel that there are no authorities in the field and that their roles as tutors will be directed at the stimulation of argument, ideas and viewpoints.

The college is set in fine Bedfordshire countryside and is comfortable with plenty of single rooms, central heating and individual wash basins. Residential fees for this course are £7.30; non-residential (tuition, and all meals except breakfast) £4.50. Apply for details to the Assistant Secretary, Maryland, Woburn, Milton Keynes, MK17 9JD.

## BOOKS

**Heart Clock** *by Dick Morland.* Published by New English Library Ltd, 40p. The economy of Britain was in a precarious state. Doom threatened large on the horizon, until Matthew Matlock solved the problem so simply. Economic stability, he said, was directly related to population growth. Regulate the latter and the former will reappear naturally. And he had his own original ideas on regulation methods too. Now, forty years later, he no longer upholds this system. His fight is to undo all the work he accomplished so many years ago. A startling new work of imaginative fiction is a *Sunday Times* fiction choice of the year.

**The Green Gene** *by Peter Dickinson.* **Published by Panther Books, 35p. A departure for Peter Dickinson who is better known as a writer of novels of crime and detection.** The Green Gene **is a satirical novel set in England in the not-too-distant future.**

**Tomorrow's World** by James Burke and Raymond Baxter. *Published by Corgi/Carousel, 30p. Based on the BBC Television programme and edited by Michael Latham. With every passing month there are astonishing developments at the frontiers of science and technology—developments which ensure that life on Earth will never be quite the same again. This book looks ahead into this new world; at the working of the human brain; at gadgets that can save lives; and at the new advances in pleasure machines.*

**Tomorrow's World: The Tools of Change & Tomorrow's World: The Last Frontier** both by James Burke and Raymond Baxter. *Published by Corgi/ Carousel, 30p each. Second and third in the series based on the popular BBC television programme, these books cover such aspects of man's advancing technology as 'Skylab', electron and optical microscopy, medicine-laser-generated 3D displays of X-ray pictures and ocean depths discoveries.*

**The Men From P.I.G. and R.O.B.O.T.** by Harry Harrison. **Published by Faber & Faber Ltd, £1.95. For the 11,000 graduates the great moment had come at last. They were no longer cadets but members of the Patrol—the warriors and policemen of space. The Commanding Officer welcomed them to the Patrol and told them the inspiring story of one of the special assignments; how Bron Wurber, the man from P.I.G. (the Porcine Interstellar Guard) came to the help of the planet Trowbri with his herd of specially bred and trained pigs.**

**The story was received with great applause, but the CO detected in some of the graduates a certain lack of enthusiasm for pigs. For their benefit he narrated the equally thrilling adventures of Henry Venn, the man from R.O.B.O.T. (Robot of Obtrusion Battalion Omega Three) who with his robots solved the mystery of the paranoiac behaviour of the inhabitants of the planet Slagter.**

**Writers are often preoccupied with the problems and threats of technology. In these ingenious and hilarious stories Harry Harrison refreshingly demonstrates the comic possibilities.**

**To Your Scattered Bodies Go** *by Philip José Farmer.* Published by Panther Books, 40p. First in Farmer's *Riverworld* series, which won a Hugo award for the best novel of its year. Burton, out of 35 or so billion souls, is chosen by some unknown agent to lead a force of twelve selected individuals, whose ultimate mission will be to sail up the great River on whose shores they have been resurrected, to find out why all humanity has been denied its 'final rest'.

**Real-Time World** by Christopher Priest. *Published by New English Library Ltd, £2.25. A collection of sf short stories by the author of* Inverted World. Real-Time World *raises the question of the nature of reality and how we can measure our sensations without external standards;* The Head and the Hand *gives us a glimpse into the horrific world of a super-star of the future who performs mutilations on his own body to satisfy his own passion and that of his watchers—just two examples which show that the sf short story is still very much alive.*

**Excalibur** *by Saunders Anne Laubenthal.* Published by Pan Books, 40p. Here is one of the most enduring legends of the Western Hemisphere—the story of the sword of King Arthur, the mighty blade Excalibur that only he could wield. Thundering down through the centuries comes this mystic weapon, with the heroism and magic of Arthur's court transplanted in a time and place far removed from old Camelot. *Excalibur* is a tale of the age-old struggle between good and evil, where the protagonists are linked by heredity and by witchcraft to the champions of the ancient of days.

**The Disappearance** by Philip Wylie. **Published by Panther Books, 50p. 'The world's most startling novel' (Daily Express), set in a world where suddenly all the women disappear from the men's point of view, and all the men disappear from the women's! In these two parallel, monosexual worlds different sorts of adjustments have to be made to meet the problems that occur.**

**The Seedbearers** *by Peter Valentine Timlett.* Published by Quartet Books, 40p. An occult fantasy novel. The bloody story of an immense and violent struggle in the Atlantis of occult legend.

# THE FEMININE FEATURE

BY MICHAEL ASHLEY

**According to a London sf bookseller less than one per cent of his customers are women. Is sf the male stronghold that these statistics lead us to believe? Do only men write good sf? In The Feminine Feature MICHAEL ASHLEY examines the role of women in the genre and comes up with some surprising revelations.**



Cheryl Drower

It can hardly have escaped your notice by now that the editor of this magazine is a female. This in itself is almost unique in the science fiction field. But to rub the male nose in the mud that much more, the assistant editor is also female; and that is hitherto unheard of. One might come to accept it in ordinary magazine editing, but in the science fiction field it seems to us followers that perhaps at last female emancipation is going a little too far.

Science fiction is a subject that somehow, by its very definition, is a *closed shop* for males alone. At least that is one's first impression, particularly since it is such a male dominated field. Leading authors, Asimov, Clarke, Heinlein, leading editors Campbell, Pohl,—where *are* the females? It may come as a surprise to many that there is a growing participation in sf by women, and that their very presence has helped in the maturity and expansion of the genre.

Now you may think that a rather brash statement written to appease our lady editors after my somewhat haughty start, but not so. One has only to consider the role women have played in the somewhat alien genre of sf to realise what a significant contribution they have made.

Brian Aldiss once said: 'Science fiction is no more written for scientists than ghost stories were written for ghosts'. (1) It is as true if one substitutes 'by' for 'for'. The relevancy here is that people tend to regard science fiction with the emphasis on *science* instead of on *fiction*. This was the road Hugo Gernsback led us down in 1926, with his ideal that science be taught through fiction. As a result he tended to print stories by scientists loaded with fancy hypotheses and startling formulae to the detriment of a story-line. Consequently, with so few female scientists thriving at that time (though I will concede Marie Curie was a knowledgeable 59) one hardly found many female sf writers. There were exceptions, as ever: the Emmeline Pankhursts, Elizabeth Frys and Florence Nightingales of the sf world. A certain homage should be accorded these pioneers, not solely because they were pioneers, but because they happened to write some damned good fiction.

The earliest regular female sf writer was none other than Mary Shelley (1797-1851), author of the unforgettable *Frankenstein* (1818). It is notable that in his study of sf *Billion Year Spree*, Brian Aldiss refers to *Frankenstein* as the first true work of science fiction. Moreso, I feel, is that *Frankenstein* is the first serious work in sf that takes into account man's emotions. Hitherto man's feelings were irrelevant in the mass of imaginative wanderings and satirical propaganda that had masqueraded as embryo sf. Could it perhaps be the fact that the author of *Frankenstein* was a female that emotions entered the field? It was by no means a passing phase. Mary Shelley used man's emotions as the key to her shorter story *The Mortal Immortal* (1834), wherein she reveals the despair of a man who having taken an immortality elixir stays young whilst his wife grows old and dies.

Mary Shelley was a premature beacon. Thereafter most female authors clung more dearly to the Victorian horror boom, where somehow they thrived. As we enter the twentieth century however we come across American author Gertrude Bennett, who wrote all her fiction under the pen name of Francis Stevens. It was a sign of the times that she had to hide behind a male name. Ms Bennett wrote chiefly scientific romances of the A Merrit school, and is best remembered for her lost-race adventures, *Citadel of Fear* (1918) and *Sunfire* (1923). The feminine touch for the bizarre was here brought into sf with great effect.

With the appearance of the Gernsback magazines two female authors in particular emerged, Clare Winger Harris and Lilith Lorraine. Clare Winger Harris had actually debuted in *Weird Tales* with *A Runaway World* in July 1926, but soon appeared in *Amazing Stories* with *The Fate of the Poseidonia* (June 1927) in response to a competition. Before long she brought in the female touch with *A Baby on Neptune* (*Amazing Stories*, December 1929) written in collaboration with Dr Miles Breuer. Lilith Lorraine was essentially a poet, and her command of the language comes through in her contributions such as *The Isle of Madness* (*Wonder Stories*, November 1935).

Harris and Lorraine were not the only female sf writers, although they were perhaps the most accomplished. Passing mention must be made of Amelia Reynolds Long for the particularly thought-provoking and powerful short story *Omega* (*Amazing*, July 1932); and also Leslie F Stone who composed a touching tale *Women With Wings* (*Air Wonder*, May 1930) and even got the word rape into sf, although with the broadest of meanings in *The Rape of the Solar System* (*Amazing*, December 1934). Louise Taylor Hansen (who kept her femininity hidden behind a simple L Taylor Hansen byline) introduced a certain amount of humour into sf with tales such as *The Prince of Liars* (*Amazing*, October 1930).

It is also worth considering that Gernsback's pool of consultant science editors which each issue of his magazines boasted contained but one female, Dr Marjorie Babcock, and her subject was psychology.

Emotions, the mind, what motivates a man. Much of this was omitted from early sf. It was generally only the lust for scientific knowledge, followed by the deranged lust for world power

**'The people who inhabit Ursula Le Guin's fictional worlds are real, human and have depth. This is true of many female authors. They have the knack of making the characters really human, with an ease that escapes even the most practised male author.'**

that drove most characters through their plots. In many stories, written by men, the professor would have a beautiful daughter whom his assistant would inevitably fall madly in love with. Ultimately the man was able to prove his masculinity by rescuing the girl, and she was his for life.

It was all very well for men to churn out such tales, but women steered clear of it, generally. The real break came with CL Moore. Readers of *Shambleau* in November 1933 could not have realised that CL hid the identity of 22-year-old authoress Catherine Lucille Moore. *Shambleau* introduced psychological horror to sf. The hero rescues a girl from a Martian mob, only to discover she is a loathsome beast herself. CL Moore was also the first female author of sword and sorcery adventures with her *Jirel of Joiry* series in *Weird Tales* which started in 1934. Catherine Moore married Henry Kuttner in 1940, and thereafter most of their stories were collaborations, under such pen names as Lewis Padgett and Lawrence O'Donnell.

Husband/wife writing teams in sf are not uncommon, and in fact at the time that the Kuttners were producing gems like *Vintage Season* two other teams were writing history. In 1939 AE van Vogt had married Edna Mayne Hull. In the early forties a dozen or so stories appear in Campbell's magazines under her name, in particular a serial *The Winged Man*. Doubtless they were collaborations, but when one compares the stories with those of her husband there is certainly a feminine touch in them. Van Vogt's own stories had very little female interest, but Hull's stories such as *Abdication* are packed with it.

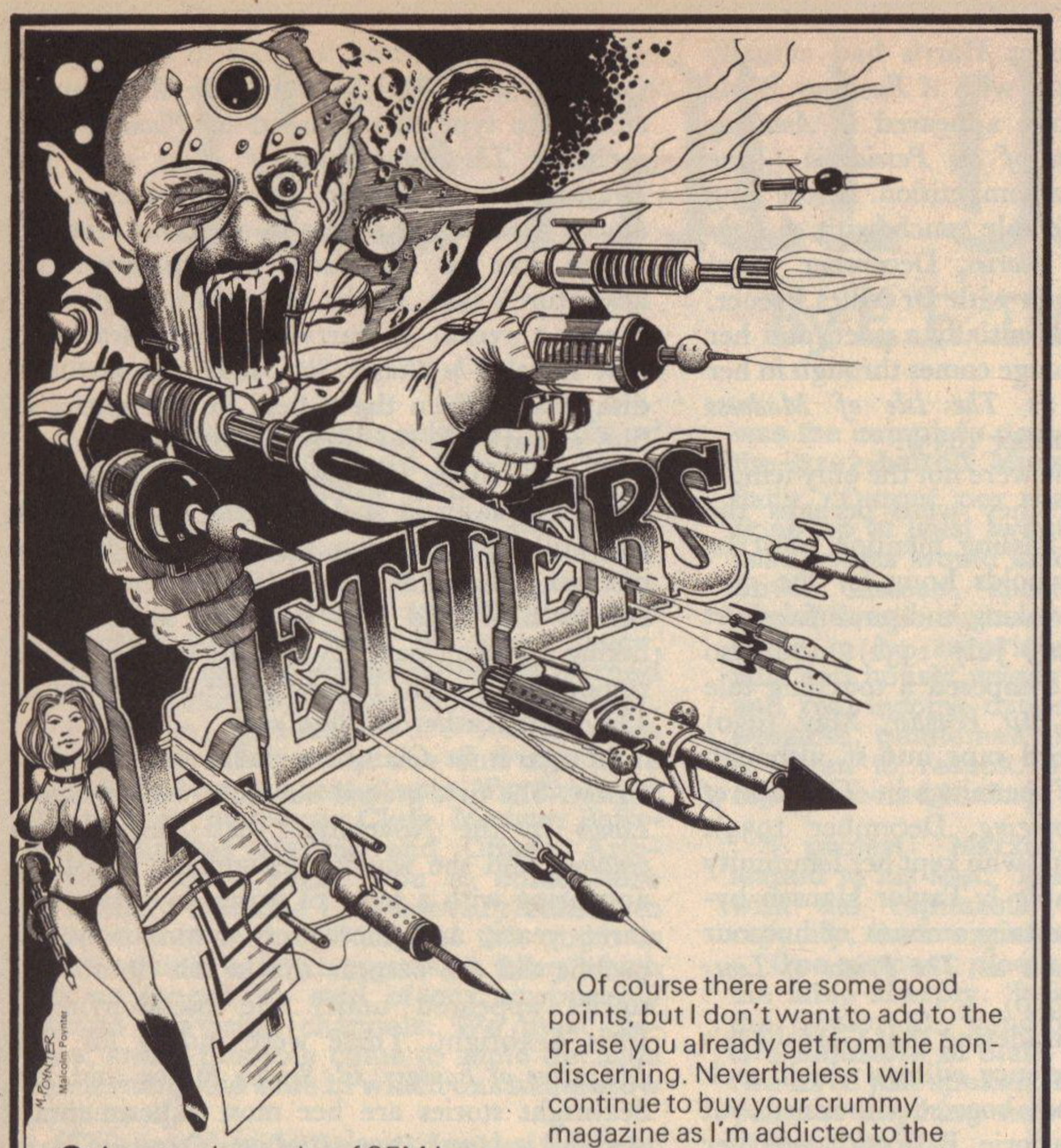
In 1946 Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett were married. Leigh Brackett had debuted in *Astounding* with *Martian Quest* (February 1940), and it is fair to say that the majority of her early fiction were of the space adventure type as published by *Planet Stories*, such as *The Beast-Jewel of Mars* and *The Dragon-Queen of Jupiter*. But nevertheless she always treated her stories in a serious manner. There was no flippancy, no adventure for adventure's sake. It was with great delight that I saw a recent *If* carrying Leigh Brackett's new novel *The Ginger Star*, since she virtually disappeared from the sf field for the glitter of film scenarios in the early 1950s.

It was chiefly this handful of lady authors who held sway in sf during the 1940s, which was still very much a man's world. But the changing shape of sf with the appearance of editors like Gold and Boucher, saw women taking a greater part. Two of the biggest names responsible for this highway were Margaret St Clair and Katherine Maclean.

Margaret St Clair is a particularly prolific writer. She first graced our field with *Rocket to Limbo* in the November 1946 *Fantastic Adventures*, and she was immediately in her stride appearing with a score of stories over the next three years, and thereafter continuously. So prolific did she become that a fair number of stories appeared under the pseudonym of Idris Seabright. These were mostly for *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* and the Seabright stories are her most experimental: *An Egg a Month From All Over* (October 1952) and *The Man Who Sold Rope to the Gnoles* (October 1951), are both evidence of how sf was becoming adapted to the female writing form. *F & SF* had a very slick writing policy. Boucher was looking for mature sf, with modern treatment. Unlike *Galaxy* and *Astounding*, *F & SF* was without doubt the most innovative and experimental of the sf magazines of this period. Is it not strange then that this same magazine should carry more female sf writers than any other? Besides Margaret St Clair (as Seabright), here could be found Mildred Clingerman, Evelyn E Smith, Kit Reed, Carol Emshwiller, and Joanna Russ. And all these writers have that same style in common. In many cases the fiction is hardly recognisable as sf. It is almost fireside fantasy, and yet there is always that underlying warning. That elbow-dig to remind you, 'Look out, these things aren't quite as pleasant as they seem.' Evelyn Smith is the craftswoman in this field, and a particular gem is her short tale *The Last of the Spode* (*F & SF*, June 1953), where it is hurled at you half way through the story that the three people having a conversation are the only human survivors left on Earth. And all one of them worries about is whether the tea will last. Whilst it might sound flippant, the real underlying message of the story hits you with a bang only sometime after you have read it. The utter futility of life and war. What would you do if you were one of three survivors? Ms Smith fitted her answer into a mere 1,500 words.

There is no doubt that *F & SF* fostered some ingenious sf female authors. Apart from the above, Zenna Henderson ranks amongst the foremost exponents of the genre, particularly with her *People* series. *F & SF* certainly seemed to have the monopoly of authoresses. But not quite. Katherine Maclean debuted in *Astounding* in 1949 with *Defence Mechanism*. One time wife of Harry Harrison, she wrote a beautiful surprise-ending story with *Pictures Don't Lie* in the June 1951 *Galaxy*, and produced a *tour de force* with *Unhuman Sacrifice* (*Astounding*, November 1958). Critic and editor Damon Knight said of the author, 'her work is not only technically brilliant but has a rare human warmth and richness' (2). Judith Merril just pipped Katherine Maclean into *Astounding* with her particularly feminine story, *That Only a Mother*, (June 1948). My own favourite of hers is *Homecalling* from *Science Fiction*, November 1956, the strange story of the Mother-Bug.

*Continued on page 28*




As a regular reader of SFM I would like to suggest that you start to sell small-ads. I am sure that there are thousands of sf fans all over the country who, at one time or another, want a certain book or magazine which they cannot obtain anywhere. If they could advertise their wants nationwide then there would be a greater chance that they'd get it. So how about it?

My second suggestion is that you make the book reviews more provocative. At present they are dull, dreary and lifeless and I'm sure you can do better than that.
*B Johnston (Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria)*

***Ed:** Small-ads may possibly appear in SFM but this is the first letter we've had mentioning the idea. As for the book reviews, so far the brief paragraphs in the News page haven't even pretended to be reviews, they are just synopses. Starting next issue we will be including full-page book reviews which will become a regular feature.*

I am writing because I am fed up with all the guff talked about SFM, all I have seen apart from the comments of a few spirited individuals in the letters column has been a barrage of inane, ineptly chosen and undeserved adjectives such as: 'marvellous, good, interesting, delightful', etc., etc.

I was especially irritated by MH Langensiepen's letter, I too am a schoolboy, but rather more discriminating and I do not share the view that the magazine is 'on the whole excellent', in fact it is far from it. The stories are mediocre to poor, especially Peter Webb's *Investigation, Meeting, Destruction* (SFM Vol 1 No 7).

I agree with the fact that the magazine is inexpensive, although I could hardly expect it not to be seeing as it consists of poor stories, even poorer artwork (although you started off quite well), stupendously thoughtless or inaccurate reviews and a mediocre news service.

Of course there are some good points, but I don't want to add to the praise you already get from the non-discerning. Nevertheless I will continue to buy your crummy magazine as I'm addicted to the genre and to sf collecting and also when you go bust my SFM collection will hopefully become quite valuable (to those deluded enough to pay for it).
*MA Bowden (Brighton, Sussex)*

***Ed:** All criticism is valid if constructive and although I find your remarks acceptable I feel that if you were a sincere critic you would have been fair enough to specify the good points you referred to, in the same illuminating way in which you identified the bad points.*

I read with interest the remarks of TJ Parker in SFM Vol 1 No 8 and find myself thinking that he has things the wrong way round. He states of sf:

'It realises . . . that space and time are cages to thrash about in ever more hopelessly',
then claims that it is only the dream of 'cosmic brotherhood' that provides purpose. Nonsense.

Without the preoccupation that the problems presented by space and time gives man, he would become lost in an endless struggle with himself. It is not brotherhood that man seeks. Not yet. Not until he has learned to face up to himself, until he can be at one with himself, will mankind truly seek any form of brotherhood; for it is only then, armed with his experience of himself, that he will have sufficient knowledge to tackle the problems of understanding his brothers.

The works of Moorcock – notably the sagas of Elric, Erikose, Hawkmoon and Corum – illustrate this point clearly, and I suggest to Mr Parker that he reads these writings without dismissing them as fanciful and escapist.

I hope too that he reads *'Story with a Happy Ending'* and *'Sad Story'* by Brian M Stableford, both of which have appeared in SFM, for these also bring this point to light.
*M McGann (Fairfield, Liverpool)*

## Winners of Crossword Competition No 1

*Science Fiction Monthly Vól 1 No 7 featured our first sf crossword competition and offered as prizes three copies of Frank Herbert's new novel Hellstrom's Hive. The winners are, the authors of the first three correct entries pulled out of the post bag and are as follow.*

*KR Giddings, 22 Carnegie Road, St Albans, Herts AL3 6HL;*
*Neil Carter, 118 Livingstone Walk, Grove Hill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 6AN; and*
*Christopher Lawn, 69 Hill Crest Rise, Leeds LS16 7DJ, Yorks.*

**DO YOU need information on anything relating to science fiction? Readers' questions of general interest are dealt with in this feature by Thomas Sheridan, who has long been associated with the field as writer, editor and critic. Send your questions to *THE QUERY BOX*, *Science Fiction Monthly*, New English Library Ltd, Barnard's Inn, Holborn, London EC1N 2JR. They will be dealt with as quickly as possible.**

# THE QUERY BOX

**FORT THE SCEPTIC**
Who was Charles Fort, and what was his connection with science fiction, if any?
*SC Bidwell, Rugby*

Charles Hoy Fort (1874–1932) was a New Yorker who, starting out as a journalist, spent twenty-six years amassing published data and making notes on mysterious phenomena for which, so he argued, science had no real explanation; such as earthquakes, tidal waves, coloured rains, meteors, comets, lost planets—and what later became known as UFOs.

He had his own peculiar theories about such things which he presented, in powerful prose, in four books—*The Book of the Damned*, *New Lands*, *Lo!* and *Wild Talents*—published between 1919 and 1932, and assembled in *The Books of Charles Fort* (1941). He also wrote several fantastic novels which were never published, and invented a game of 'super-checkers'.

The first that science fiction heard of Fort was in 1934, when *Astounding Stories* upset its readers by serialising *Lo!* Then a few sf writers woke up to the fact that Fort's books were full of ideas for stories: notably his English disciple Eric Frank Russell, who based his *Unknown* novel, *Sinister Barrier*, on Fort's dictum, 'I think we're property'. For years Russell carried the British banner of the Fortean Society, founded in 1931 to promote Fort's philosophy of enlightened scepticism.

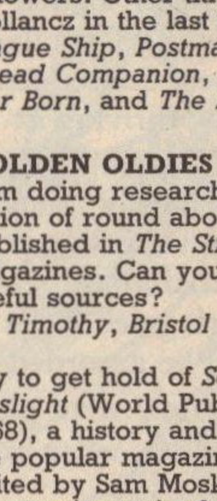
You may find the book *Charles Fort: Prophet of the Unexplained* (Gollancz, 1971) by Damon Knight, the sf writer, critic and editor, of further interest.

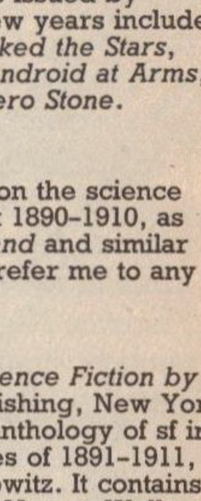
**WORDS AND MUSIC**
I am interested in the work of Julian Savarin, the only sf author I know of who is also a musician. I have his *Waiters on the Dance*, which is the first of a trilogy, and an LP with the same title, but cannot find the other two books. Could you give some information?
*KJ van Veen, Ramsgate, Kent*

Julian Jay Savarin is of French and Mayan descent, coming to the UK from Dominica. His first novel, published here in 1972 by Arlington Books, is part of *Lemmus: A Time Trilogy*, dealing with the gradual evolution of the human species. The other two books will appear under a different imprint: the first of them, hopefully, before the end of the year.

Some of Savarin's music has been presented in a record album titled *A Time Before This*; more should be forthcoming as his books are published.

**WITCH WORLD**
Can you tell me how many titles there are in Andre Norton's *Witch World* series, and whether this author has written any other books?
*Peter Farleyson, Bolton, Lancs*




Six titles have been published here in paperback by Tandem: *Witch World*, *Web of the Witch World*, *Three Against the Witch World*, *Warlock of the Witch World*, *Sorceress of the Witch World*, and *Year of the Unicorn*. Two others in the series are *Spell of the Witch World*, a collection of short pieces, and *The Crystal Gryphon*, a novel published here by Gollancz.

Andre Norton is the pen-name of Alice Mary Norton, an American who has been writing for forty years, sometimes under the name of Andrew North. Formerly a children's librarian, she is a keen sf fan, and though her stories are mostly written for young readers with a taste for colourful space adventure, she has many adult followers. Other titles issued by Gollancz in the last few years include *Plague Ship*, *Postmarked the Stars*, *Dread Companion*, *Android at Arms*, *Star Born*, and *The Zero Stone*.

**GOLDEN OLDIES**
I am doing research on the science fiction of round about 1890–1910, as published in *The Strand* and similar magazines. Can you refer me to any useful sources?
*LE Timothy, Bristol*

Try to get hold of *Science Fiction by Gaslight* (World Publishing, New York, 1968), a history and anthology of sf in the popular magazines of 1891–1911, edited by Sam Moskowitz. It contains twenty-six stories by Verne, Wells, Grant Allen, William Hope Hodgson and lesser-known writers culled from English and American periodicals like *Pearson's*, *The Idler*, *The Argosy* and *Black Cat*. A long introduction and notes on each story provide much background information, and show the role played by sf in the days before specialisation set in.

More accessible, perhaps, is *Worlds Apart* (Cornmarket Reprints, London, 1972), an anthology of interplanetary fiction edited by George Locke, reproducing the actual pages of *Cassell's*, *The London*, and other English magazines which featured space-travel stories between the years 1887–1912. The authors include George Griffith, George Allan England and George C Wallis—and the pictures are simply spiffing, by George!

**STALKING-HORSE**
May I appeal for help in finding a picture that appeared in the late 1940s? The drawing showed a canal on Mars with a British waterways style of barge on it: but the bargee and the horse pulling the barge were noticeably alien, both having their eyes on the ends of stalks.
*John C Rudge, Harlington, Middlesex*

I take it you're seeing a magazine cover rather than an interior illustration, which at least narrows the search. Even so, in the two years 1947–8, for instance, a dozen magazines published over 120 issues—and I don't have all of them. Can anyone with a photographic memory, if not a complete collection, help?

**QUATERMASS TRIO**
Who took the part of Professor Quatermass in the TV serials? Were the stories ever published?
*JS Stevens, Leytonstone, London*

The part of Quatermass was played by a different actor in each of the three serials—by Reginald Tate in *The Quatermass Experiment* (1953), by John Robinson in *Quatermass II* (1955), and by Andre Morell in *Quatermass and the Pit* (1958–9). The television scripts were published separately by Penguin Books in 1959–60.












# SCIENCE FICTION

NEW ENGLISH LIBRARY MONTHLY

Painting by Bob Fowke



# the Artist in Science Fiction

**By Julie Davis**

**Fowke, Robert 'Bob' Greg.**
**Born: 24 July 1950.**
**Educated: Eastbourne School of Art for one year; Somerset College of Art for three years.**
**Work includes: covers for Ray Bradbury's *Golden Apples Of The Sun* and *Earth Abides* by George R Stewart (both Corgi SF Collector's Library); *The Man Who Sold The Moon* and *The Puppet Masters* by Robert Heinlein (both Pan Books). His work also adorns the cover of Byzantium's album *Seasons Changing* (A&M Records) and he has designed several local posters.**

Bob Fowke's current work is characterised by his use of bands of colour which vary only very slightly from each other as they pass from, for example, pale blue to cobalt. He uses this technique to create a backdrop against which he places strange birds, insects, giant rabbits and the sort of towers and buildings that would fit into any Lovecraft story. He creates a strangely surreal effect which stirs the imagination and invites you to stand and stare.

Bob explained that it is only in the last few years that he has evolved this style:

'A few years ago I did an about-face. I threw away most of my previous work, stuff that I had done at college mostly, and started from scratch to find a personal style and method. I tried to learn from those paintings that I most enjoyed looking at; taking ideas on colour from one painting, composition from another and so on. I attempted to find out which paintings I really enjoyed, but I found this wasn't such a simple exercise, especially after an art school training.'

Strangely enough for an artist so heavily involved with futuristic themes Bob found himself most interested by the work of such Renaissance painters as Raphael, Bosch and Botticelli. He explains this incongruity like this:

'In many ways those old masters were illustrators; like today's illustrators they were commissioned to paint a particular subject and probably were allowed less freedom in the way they painted it than we are today. They were severely disciplined by the nature of their market. Compare the thousand ingenious ways they found to paint a Madonna and child with the multitude of different space ships painted today.'

Despite his admiration of the Renaissance painters he doesn't feel that he would like to have lived then:

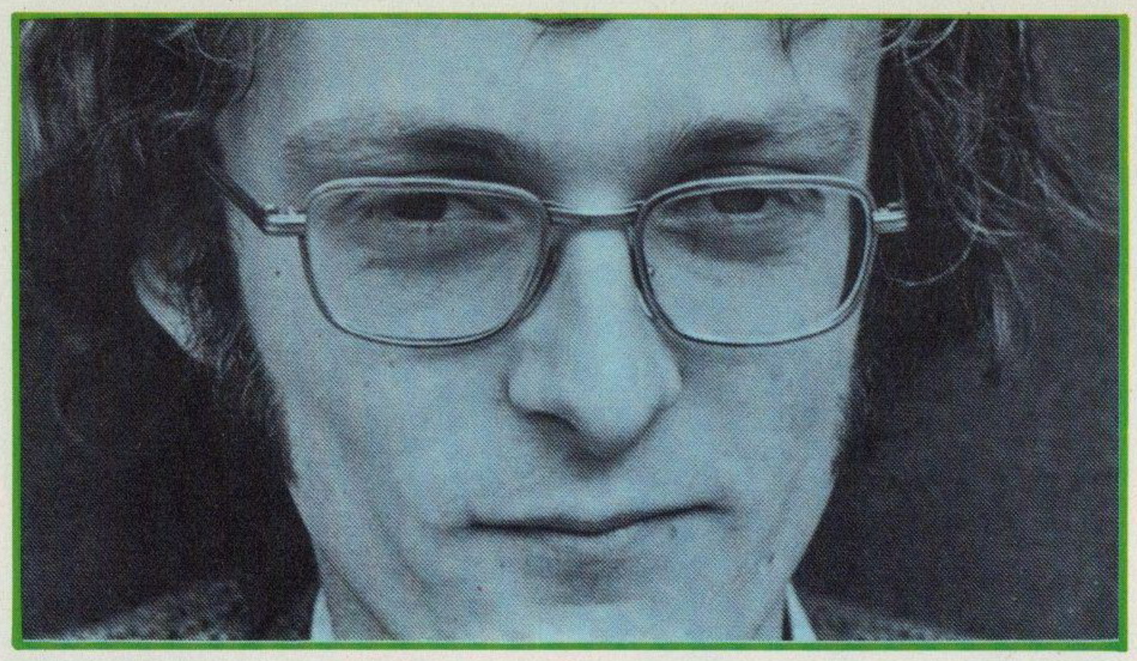
'Artists at that time were more dependent on their patrons than

**Record sleeve for SEASONS CHANGING Byzantium (A & M Records)**



we are today, although paradoxically their dependence was one of the reasons why they produced such good work. They had to respond to the demands of a thriving market, which is also the strength of science fiction illustration today. It's the demand that produces the artist and not vice versa. Indeed, since we respond to a mass market, we are stronger in that respect than they were. We have one major disadvantage however, no Medici prince is going to pay us gold sovereigns to work three years on a single space ship. If we did have that length of time I'm sure we should surpass the old masters, if only because there are more artists at work today.'

Bob's technique is simple, just gouache and water on white card, he tries to cover the card in a single coat of uniform thickness, and to keep the tints as clean as possible. This way, he believes, one gets the most brilliant colours. Once more he analogised with the old masters, comparing their methods to his own: 'Both work in a studio building up a design in pencil, charcoal or whatever, from reference photos, sketches or imagination, and then tracing the design through onto the final surface. In the old days it was called a cartoon. The main differences, apart from media, are



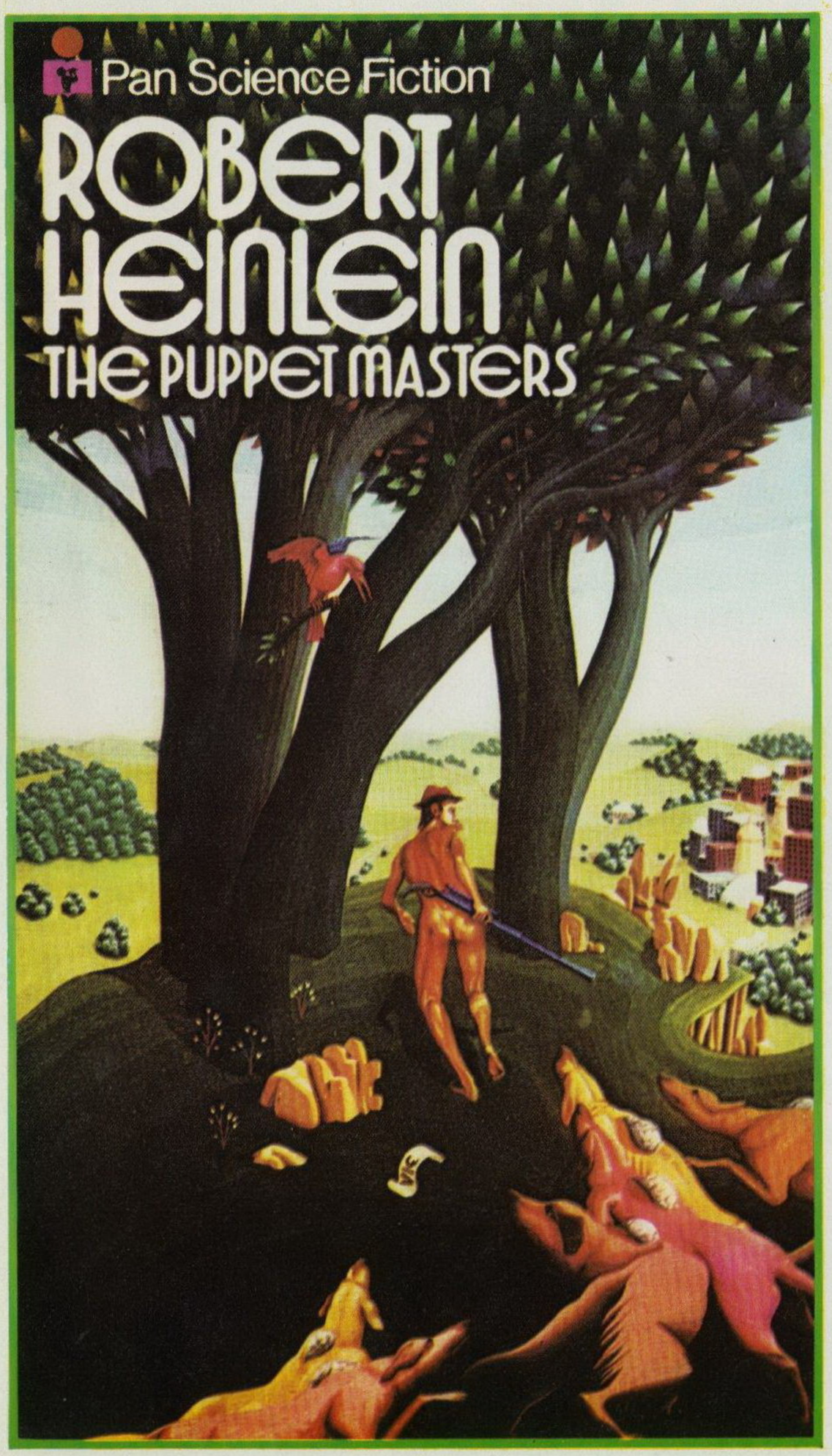
that we have more colours today, less time and more choice of content.'

If Bob ever uses reference it is as a starting point from which to draw living creatures, but in most cases he works from his imagination.

As for actually reading sf and not just painting it, Bob reads quite widely and recognises that the two extremes of the genre, the very good and the appalling, can both be enjoyable:
'I disagree with the books which have a vision of the future which is really just an intergalactic extension of present-day America. In fact generally speaking sf is strong on science but weak on sociology, as the name implies, which makes some of it rather incomplete. I should like to see a lot more satirical sf along the lines of *1984, Brave New World* and the work of Kurt Vonnegut Jnr.'

At the moment Bob is working on a book jacket, a children's story and a poster design, but of his plans for the future he says:
'My work and I are constantly diverging and I'm always struggling to re-unite them. I should like my work to be what I think other people would like it to be, so I have to constantly wrench it off one path and onto another; it should be less obscure.'

Bob Fowke's work often contains a lot of mythical imagery eg the garden scene, published in SFM Vol 1 No 2, almost begs to be analogised with the Garden of Eden. On this point Bob comments:
'A picture has to have impact at all levels, conscious and subconscious. The very survival of a myth testifies to its importance as a social and psychological image. Why, out of many thousands of western myths, is the story of Adam and Eve so very well known? That is the question that most interests me about any myth. By examining the ways in which the portrayal of a particular myth changes through many generations, it is possible to understand something of what it symbolises for us today. By seeing which myths are best known we can discover some of the general undercurrents of our society; the points of maximum response among the mass of the people. It's not necessary to follow the exact narrative line, so long as one utilises the undercurrents, the atmosphere—guilt, victory, love, suspicion—and the broad symbolic shapes by which that atmosphere is created. They can be used in scenes containing nothing but cars and space ships. That's the theory anyway; the practice is a little more haphazard.'




**Cover for THE PUPPET MASTERS published by Pan Books**



**Cover for EARTH ABIDES by George R Stewart published by Corgi Books**



**Cover for THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN by Ray Bradbury published by Corgi Books**

THE NEW ADAM by Stanley G. Weinbaum

See BACK COVER

# AMAZING STORIES



## SKELETON MEN OF JUPITER

By EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

FEBRUAR

**Did Edgar Rice Burroughs spend his youth swinging through the trees in the heart of the jungle or was he on Mars masquerading under the name of John Carter? In this article FRANK WESTWOOD, a leading authority on Burroughs, reveals ALL about the man who created Tarzan.**

Edgar Rice Burroughs



*Edgar Rice Burroughs, Chicago, 1916*

It was once said by Ernest Hemingway that, 'At some future date, perhaps twenty-five years hence, perhaps two or three times that, descendants of today's community of literary critics will evaluate the American authors of the first half of the twentieth century. The vast majority will be long forgotten by then; the remainder will be sorted out in the many-years-long process that determines who will survive and who will perish.' One of those whom I feel is qualified to survive is Edgar Rice Burroughs.

Throughout his life he received little if any critical notice, and what there was of that was unanimously unfavourable. He has been classed as barely literate, banned by narrow-minded librarians in some places, pilloried by critics in others, and described as being without merit of any sort—literary, moral or social.

Only in very recent years has some type of re-evaluation begun, but as yet it is far from complete and acceptance of Burroughs by any sort of authority is still some way off. On the other hand, wholehearted condemnation is no longer unanimous nor in many cases as unconditional as it was for so long. There now appears to be a revival of Burroughs' works. A steady demand has produced re-issues of many of his works, some for the first time in Great Britain—*The Mood Maid, Apache Devil, Savage Pellucidar* and *Llana of Gathol* to name but a few.

Burroughs always held in his writings that the English were the height of aristocracy, gentlemen of the highest type. Their manners—mental, moral and physical—were of course beyond reproach. These highly commendable qualities were personified by Burroughs in a certain John Clayton, who could rightfully take his place in the House of Lords as Lord Greystoke, although he was better known to the public as TARZAN!

Examples of Burroughs' life-long affection for the British way of life abound throughout both his Tarzan adventures and his other novels. For example in his novel *The Lost Continent* (*Beyond Thirty*) he introduces his hero to a country known as 'Grubitten'; similarly in *The Land That Time Forgot, Pirates of Venus* and in *The Outlaw Of Torn* the scene is set in England. However, Burroughs was not an Englishman, although his paternal grandparents were both of old English stock.

Burroughs never hid the fact that he preferred his mother to his father. He and his father differed on practically every subject throughout Burroughs' youth and adult years, a fact which coloured many of his later novels. In *Tarzan Of The Apes* Tubalt, foster father of the young white ape, hates Tarzan and Tarzan, in turn, never loses an opportunity to reveal similar feelings, but to Kala his foster mother he gives all his affection.

Edgar Rice Burroughs was born in Chicago on 1 September, 1875, the fourth son of Captain George Burroughs. Not very much has been recorded about him before his twelfth year, save that he attended the Brown School on Chicago's West Side just after his seventh birthday. When he was 12 a diphtheria epidemic broke out in the city and, much to Edgar's horror, his parents removed him from the public school and put him into an establishment for girls! On the outbreak of yet another epidemic the young Burroughs was moved to his brothers' ranch in Idaho.

Edgar took to the American West as a duck takes to water. It was there that he learnt to shoot and ride, eventually making a name for himself for his mastery of bad horses, particularly the locally notorious man-killer *Black Pacer*. This happy life in the West did not last, however, since a friend of the Burroughs family, passing through Idaho en route to Chicago, was so shocked by Edgar's stories of the thieves, murderers and bad men whom he had met, that he speedily informed Captain Burroughs of the young cowboy's exploits. Edgar's father lost no time in removing his son from these 'bad' influences.

Bundled off to Phillips Academy at Andover, Massachusetts, Edgar lasted one term exactly before he was requested to leave. Being dismissed from the Academy was a disgrace which made Captain Burroughs decide that his son lacked proper discipline. He therefore enrolled Edgar in the Michigan Military Academy at Orchard Lake, Michigan.

During his four years at the Academy Burroughs was taken under the personal wing of Captain Charles King. A graduate of West Point, he had fought both the Apache and the Sioux, receiving the Silver Star for gallantry. Under King's expert tutelage Burroughs became one of the Academy's top riders. He was the only non-senior among the handful selected by the Commandant to perform the exciting and extremely difficult Monkey Drill, consisting partly of bareback Cossack-style riding and Greco-Roman horsemanship. Burroughs remarked in later life that the Captain's outstanding qualities as a soldier, a cavalryman and a friend had been an inspiration to him.

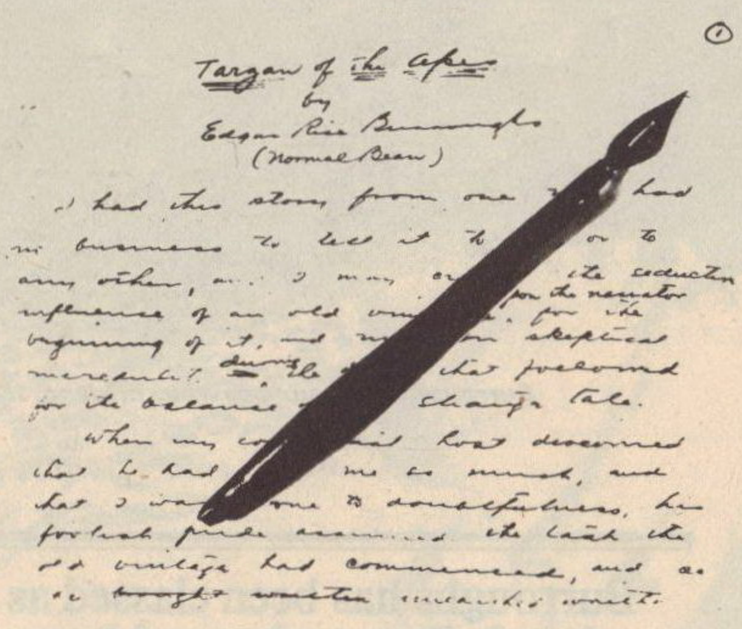
By now determined on a military career, in May 1895 Burroughs journeyed to West Point to take his entrance examination; he was stunned when he failed, and this also put a cloud over the head of his fiancée Emma Hulbert whose visions of a military wedding were fast fading.

During the summer of that year Burroughs took a job as a collector for an ice company in his parents' neighbourhood. In the autumn, on receipt of a call from Captain King, he returned to the Academy having been appointed Second Lieutenant, Michigan State Troops, and detailed to the Academy as Assistant Commandant and Tactical Officer, Cavalry. He achieved this even though there were other members of staff who had more experience. His other assignments were as Gatling Gun Instructor and Professor of Geology. The fact that he had never studied geology and knew nothing whatever about the subject seemed to make no difference. They needed a professor and picked him to be it.

Shortly after this Captain King was posted to another Academy and Burroughs, who had found his new position not as interesting as his last stay at the Academy, became very bored with the restrictions and lesser freedom which had not been so evident when he was a cadet. Somewhat disillusioned, he left the Academy. Still with a military career in mind he tried to obtain a commission with the army in China, but had to settle for the army fighting in Nicaragua.

Burroughs was all set for taking the rank of Lieutenant in that outfit when his parents refused him permission and he finally ended up as a private in 'B' Troop Seventh Regiment US Cavalry, the *Bloody Seventh* as it was called, after General Custer's Last Stand of 1876.

Part of Burroughs' term of enlistment was spent in chasing bandits along the Mexican Border, including the famous *Apache Kid*! He never caught up with the *Kid* but he and his outfit were involved in chasing the wily and fierce Apache warrior Geronimo! Apart from all this there was little or no adventure at Fort Grant where Burroughs was stationed, although *Black Jack* Tom Ketchum the outlaw was raiding towns in the vicinity, when Cochise


Tarzan of the Apes
by
Edgar Rice Burroughs
(Normal Bean)

*First page of the original manuscript of* **TARZAN OF THE APES**

*Left: Original cover for* **SKELETON MEN OF JUPITER** *by Edgar Rice Burroughs, published in* **AMAZING STORIES.**

*(All photographs courtesy of Edgar Rice Burroughs Inc)*

and Geronimo no longer held sway.

Burroughs' service with the Seventh Regiment, lasted less than a year since he developed a weak heart; he was discharged by favour as a private on 23 March, 1897. He returned to Chicago, but he must have been more than a little concerned about what lay ahead of him. Three questions loomed large before him: would he enter his father's business; would his sweetheart Emma say 'yes'; and were his adventures ending or just beginning? Two of these questions were answered fairly soon; Burroughs married Emma Hulbert in 1900 and went to work for his father in the storage battery business for $15 a week. This seemed hardly enough to live on so again Edgar left home, to join his brother Henry in Pocatello, Idaho, where he was set up in a stationery store. Unfortunately this venture also failed.

Burroughs then moved on to Oregon where he worked on a gold dredge, but the company soon went broke. Again his brother came to the rescue. This time he was instrumental in obtaining for Edgar the job of railroad policeman in Salt Lake City. Chasing tramps and hitch-hikers from goods wagons was not particularly well paid either and Burroughs and his wife soon found themselves almost perpetually hungry.

On being questioned concerning the early and hard years of his life Burroughs recalled, 'Neither of us knew much about anything practical. Then a brilliant idea overtook us. We sold our household furniture by auction. People paid us real money for the junk, and we went back to Chicago "first class"'.

From then on Burroughs determined to be a success, but Chicago treated him just as miserably as before. Forced to take a job as soon as possible, all he could find were openings for salesmen. The following months witnessed a conglomeration of horrible jobs. He sold electric light bulbs to janitors, sweets and chocolates to small shops and drug stores, and *Stoddards Lectures* (a publication) from door to door. He hated them all.

After deciding that he was a total failure he saw by chance an advertisement for an 'expert accountant'; he applied for the position, with TJ Winslow who manufactured waterproof coatings for doors, sashes and blinds. Burroughs got the job. He recalls this about it: 'The break I got in this instance lay in the fact that my employer knew even less about the duties of an expert accountant than I did.' He remained with the company for little more than one year before leaving of his own accord.



Burroughs, ever conscious of his late start in the business world and bursting to achieve success, saw potential in mail order houses and so took a job that brought him to the head of a large department—the stenographic department of Sears, Roebuck & Co. While the salary was only slightly higher than the amount he had been earning before, Burroughs felt that it was an important step in his business career. His salary was raised after two years which made Edgar and his wife better off than at any other time since their marriage.

1908 was an important year in Burroughs' life. His first child, Joan, was born on 12 January, and he quit his promising future in the advertising agency business to start his own company. As luck would have it, though, things once more did not work out the way he planned. At this time Sears, Roebuck offered him a new position if he wanted to return. Had Burroughs accepted this offer there is no doubt that he would have been fixed for life, and would probably never have written a story. He was penniless again with no job and no money, and his second child Hulbert was born on 12 August, 1909.

In a state of despair, with four mouths to feed, Burroughs had to pawn his wife's jewellery and his own watch in order to buy food. In later years Burroughs remarked, 'I loathed poverty, and I should have liked to put my hands on the man who said that poverty is an honourable estate. It is an indication of inefficiency and no doubt more. To be poor is quite bad enough, but to be poor and without hope, well the only way to understand it, is to be it'. He also says, 'I got writers cramp from answering blind ads, and wore out my shoes chasing others. At last I got placed as an agent for a pencil sharpener firm. I borrowed office space, and while sub-agents were out trying unsuccessfully to sell the sharpeners, I began to write stories.' That was in 1911.

In 1912 *Under the Moons of Mars* and *Tarzan of the Apes* appeared. It is impossible to relate at any great length the numerous and fantastic worlds of Burroughs' creation within



*Burroughs in 1912 dictating a novel*




*Selection of newspapers which have published some sort of Tarzan feature*



*Burroughs as a young cowboy in Idaho, 1891*

**"Burroughs has been classed as barely literate, banned by narrow-minded librarians in some places, pilloried by critics in others and described as being without merit of any sort—literary, moral or social".**

the context of this article, but suffice it to say that not only were his stories fantastic and entertaining but they can also be described as prophetic in some instances.

The pencil sharpener business in which Burroughs had worked during the writing of his Martian novel didn't show much promise so he managed to obtain a job with the stationers Champlin-Yardley through the agency of his brother Coleman. With the success of his first story Burroughs decided to make writing his career, but was cautious enough in this instance not to give up his job.

During the autumn and winter and on into the spring of 1912 Burroughs spent most of his evenings researching at the Chicago Public Library. His third novel *The Outlaw of Torn* was completed in December 1912. Meanwhile Burroughs' salary did not pay his expenses; poverty was once more overtaking him and he was sustained only by the hope that he might make a living writing fiction. He searched around for a better job and in the spring of 1912 he obtained the post of department manager for a business magazine.

1913 was a year of trial for Edgar Rice Burroughs, on 28 February, thirteen days after the death of his father, his third child John Coleman was born. Burroughs who had decided to devote all his time to writing was still a long way from his goal. The only income upon which he could depend was from the sale of magazine rights. Had he failed to sell a single story during these trying months he would have found himself once again penniless. However he was fortunate enough to sell all his stories!

There is no doubt that Burroughs worked extremely hard to make a success of his new career. In 1913 he wrote some 413,000 words. This fantastic achievement produced *The Cave Girl, The Monster Men, The Warlord of Mars, The Eternal Lover, The Mad King, At the Earth's Core, The Return of Tarzan* and *The Mucker,* which when published by Methuen in Great Britain was sold as two separate novels. The first book bearing the same title as the American edition, *The Mucker*, and the second half of the American edition entitled *The Return of the Mucker*, was published in this country under the title of *The Man Without a Soul*. From this time on Edgar Rice Burroughs started to reap the fruits of his labour.

Between 1915 and 1925 he wrote two science fiction novels which are regarded generally as his greatest contribution to the field. Both are triologies. The first *The Land That Time Forgot* consists of the title book, written in 1917, *The People That Time Forgot,* 1917-18, and *Out of Time's Abyss,* 1918. These three novelettes, which can be read independently, deal with a U-Boat, a strange pre-historic land and a people whose evolutionary process would have more than amazed Charles Darwin!

The second trilogy, published under the title *The Moon Maid*, contains as in the first trilogy, the title book *The Moon Maid*, which was serialised in *All-Story Magazine* from 5 May-2 June, 1923, *Under the Red Flag,* which was re-titled *The Moon Men* in *All-Story Magazine* from 21 February to 15 March, 1925, and lastly *The Red Hawk* which is the concluding novelette, serialised by the same magazine from 5-19 September, 1925.

In the mid-twenties Burroughs was leading a quite dignified life and proving to be a good businessman, but those were the days of the increase of taxes when 'to be poor assures one of an easier life than being rich', so Edgar Rice Burroughs, author, became Edgar Rice Burroughs Inc. The Corporation, charted under California law on 26 March, 1923, listed ERB as president owning a quarter of the stock and his daughter and two sons owning a quarter each. One unfortunate venture in which Burroughs invested money was the Apache Motor Company of California, established to manufacture an airplane engine capable of developing more than 300 horsepower, but it was a failure. Nevertheless Burroughs remained undaunted, and continued to write. In 1926 he moved to an English-type residence, and in the following year he built a beach house at Malibu; later a studio was added and Burroughs moved there in 1931.

It was about this time that Burroughs signed a contract to have his famous character Tarzan serialised in comic strips. It was drawn by Hal Foster of *Prince Valiant* fame and then by Burne Hogarth. The strip was a great success.

Some time after Burroughs moved to the ocean retreat colony of Malibu, he was elected at a town meeting to its higher political office, that of 'Mayor', an honorary title for the term of one year. He assumed office on 13 September, 1933. The following years saw more success for Burroughs and more new stories, though they also brought trouble with publishers—reprints, lapsed copyrights etc, and also the break-up of his marriage and subsequent divorce from Emma Hulbert who had shared 34 years of life with him. Burroughs later married Florence Dearholt and the couple embarked on a forty-day honeymoon to Hawaii in April 1935.

Burroughs travelled to and from Hawaii many times before the outbreak of the Second World War. It was at this time also that the couple decided to move to Hawaii for an indefinite period. Whilst there he had a heart attack from which he recovered. On 18 March, 1941 after six years of marriage Florence and Edgar separated and she returned to the mainland and filed for divorce on the grounds of mental cruelty.

On 7 December, 1941 the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour. The Chief of Intelligence was Brigadier-General Kendall J Fielder who was responsible for all security and censorship. All correspondents had to be accredited to his office. Burroughs was asked to write humorous stories for the *Advertiser* which he did. He also joined the Business Men's Training Corps, a semi-military Home Guard, composed of men too old for military service. They were issued weapons, given target-practice and in general received basic military training. Many of Burroughs' stories were about his experience on hikes, guard duty and so forth. The public and particularly the military loved them. He wrote a daily column which was entitled *Laugh It Off*. Towards the end of February, 1944 he went to Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands, and later as the guest of Brigadier-General 'Ted' Landon he flew on many missions from the Bomber Headquarters at Kwajalein. Having been a correspondent for the Army and Air Force Burroughs now completed his record by reporting from a Fleet Oiler Convoy.

Burroughs' last report, written as he approached his seventieth birthday appeared two weeks before Japan surrendered unconditionally. Having finished with the war, Edgar returned to California to attend the funeral of his first wife Emma who died in 1944. In his late forties Burroughs contracted Parkinson's disease, which was followed by a heart attack. After this Edgar lived quietly in Encino, about ten minutes walk away from the offices of ERB Inc.

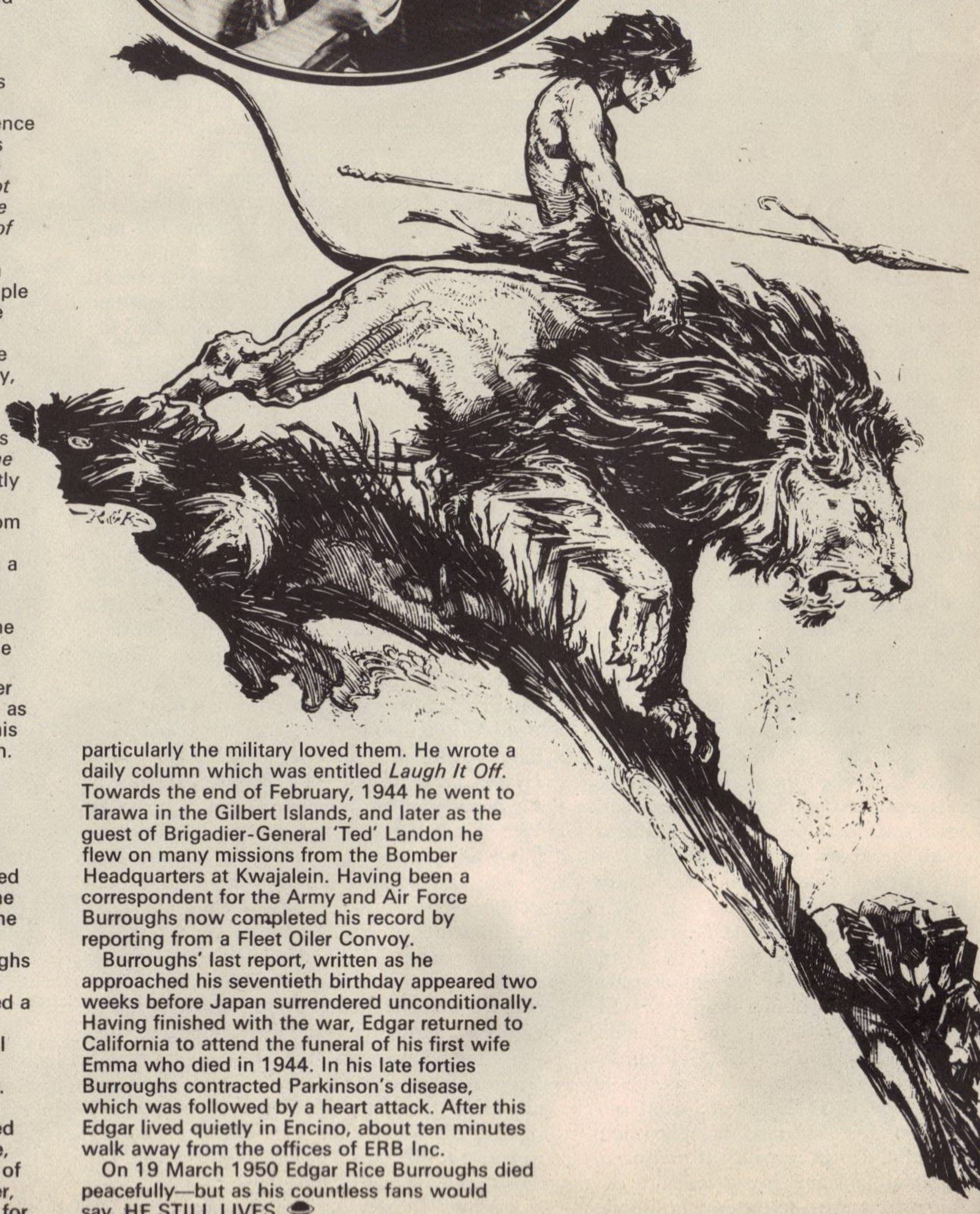
On 19 March 1950 Edgar Rice Burroughs died peacefully—but as his countless fans would say, HE STILL LIVES.

*James H Pierce in* **TARZAN AND THE GOLDEN LION, 1927**



*Elmo Lincoln and ERB on movie set of the first Tarzan film, 1918*





# THE FEMININE FEATURE

*Continued from page 19*

Judith Merril became notorious as the American voice of the British 'new-wave' in the mid-1960s, and was renowned for her science fiction anthologies. She got underway with *Shot in the Dark* published by Bantam Books in 1950. Up until then only Donald Wollheim, Groff Conklin and August Derleth had made great headway in the editing field, and consequently Miss Merril was wielding a true pioneer banner. Female sf editors were a very rare commodity. Mary Gnaedinger had been put in charge of *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* from its first issue in September 1939, and edited all its issues until its demise in June 1953, plus two companion magazines. She edited competently and wisely, and although she was directly answerable at one time or another to Alden Norton and Ejler Jakobssen, she was virtually in full command of the magazine. Similarly Dorothy McIlwraith was brought in from *Short Stories* to take over *Weird Tales* when the new company purchased it in 1940 and Farnsworth Wright resigned. The entire magazine changed radically, but nevertheless it still published some remarkable stories, particularly those by Ray Bradbury, and not to forget those by Margaret St Clair, Mary Elizabeth Counselman and Alice-Mary Schnirring.

In 1947 Margaret, wife of William Crawford, found herself collaborating in producing *Fantasy Book*, and later *Spaceway*, and March 1950 found Beatrice Mahaffey as Managing Editor of *Other Worlds*, under the erratic eye of Ray Palmer. But as far as anthology editing was concerned Judith Merril was one alone. She went on in 1956 to start her regular annual collections of the *Year's Best SF*, which lasted for almost a decade, and in that process she completely reshaped the definition of science fiction. Just a mere flick through one of the anthologies would show the variety of pieces she chose. When the 'new-wave' hit the shore, Judith Merril was only too anxious to dive in.

The mid-fifties saw the emergence of writers of the calibre of Marion Zimmer Bradley, and Kate Wilhelm. Ms Bradley, a fan from her earliest years, had made some tentative sales of poetry and short fiction since 1951, but she really hit her stride with fiction like *Centaurus Changeling* in none other than *F & SF*. Recently her fiction has been a rarity, and consequently it is generally a boon to discover.

Kate Wilhelm is now the wife of Damon Knight, and ranks as Harlan Ellison's favourite authoress. Her first story, *The Mile-Long Spaceship* appeared in *Astounding* in 1957, and over the next three years she produced a wealth of gems, such as *The Last Threshold*, and *Gift From the Stars*. These days her fiction inevitably appears in Damon Knight's *Orbit* series, such as *Baby, You Were Great* in *Orbit* 2. Kate Wilhelm somehow has the knack of overpowering you with a story. The first recognition of this ability came in her 1962 story *The Last Days of the Captain*, which tells of the evacuation of a planet prior to an alien invasion.

That story appeared in the November 1962 *Amazing Stories*. Marion Zimmer Bradley was in the same issue, and it so happens the magazine was edited by another female, Cele Goldsmith. In my eyes Cele Goldsmith should receive a Hugo as Best Female SF Editor for what she did to revive *Amazing Stories* and its companion *Fantastic*, after the depths to which it had been dragged by Paul Fairman in the mid 1950s. By 1962 the two magazines were publishing some of the best sf to be found. Besides discovering Roger Zelazny, Thomas Disch, Piers Anthony, and publishing some particularly way-out pieces by David Bunch, Harlan Ellison, Henry Slesar and Robert Young, she moulded the magazine into something to be proud of. She by no means ignored her own sex. Apart from regularly printing the Misses Bradley and Wilhelm, she discovered Phyllis Gotlieb (*A Grain of Manhood*, in *Fantastic*, September 1959) and also Ursula K LeGuin (*April in Paris*, in *Fantastic*, September 1962). Since then Ursula LeGuin has risen to be one of the great names in sf, winning both the Hugo and Nebula Awards for her novel *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), the Hornbrook Prize for her fantasy *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968), and she came runner up for the Hugo award for both novel and short story in 1972 with *The Lathe of Heaven* and *Vaster Than Empires and More Slow*. Quite an impressive record, and Ms LeGuin does not stop there. Each year she produces a remarkable crop of science fiction and fantasy, which I for one lap up far too quickly. It is not easy to pin point her secret. She has the ability to tie the reader in with the characters. The people who inhabit her fictional worlds are real, human, and have depth. This is true with many female authors. They have the knack of making the characters really human, with an ease that escapes even the most practised male author. Somehow, Ms LeGuin has that art down to a 'T'.

And suddenly we are up to date. The 1970s has an army of female sf writers, and somehow I have not mentioned the half of them. I said above that Ursula LeGuin won the Hugo Award. She was however not the first female author to carry off that award. Anne McCaffrey had that pleasure. Ms McCaffrey has had a gypsy relationship with sf over the years. She will be found with a vignette in a 1953 *Science Fiction Plus*, but it was with *F & SF* (again) that she found her stride in 1961 with her series about the sentient ship, *The Ship Who Sang*. This was followed eventually in 1966 with *The Ship Who Mourned* in *Analog* and *The Ship Who Killed* in *Galaxy*. Then in 1967 came her new series beginning with *Weyr Search* and then *Dragonrider*. It was the latter novel that earned her the Hugo Award. Read the book, and then figure out how a man would have handled the human/dragon symbiotic relationship.

Already the list of female authors/editors is impressive. What is more overwhelming is that nearly every new magazine or anthology seems to contain a powerful story by a female. One name to watch is Pamela Sargent, still in her twenties, who has sold over a score of stories to a variety of editors. Once again *F & SF* featured in the early stages, although most of her sales have been to original anthologies.

Fortunately Britain is not totally forgotten. We also have our female sf authors. Hilary Bailey, for instance, the wife of Michael Moorcock. She first appeared with a short story *Breakdown* in the October 1963 *New Worlds*, and followed this with a startling piece, *The Fall of Frenchy Steiner:* a tale of a Britain overrun by the Nazis in a future where Germany won the War. Since then she has appeared erratically, but *F & SF* as ever, has been a home to her pieces. One such, *The Little Victims*, is a particularly powerful piece about children. That tale appeared in the November 1967 *F & SF*, and the same issue carried *Nothing Much to Relate* by Josephine Saxton. The editor's blurb claimed that Ms Saxton's name was new to the field. In actual fact she had appeared two years previously in the British magazine *Science Fantasy* with *The Wall* a fascinating short tale which kept me thinking long after I had read it. Ms Saxton has since sold many stories to *F & SF*, perhaps her best to date being *The Consciousness Machine* (June 1968).

Daphne Castell also made her name in *Science Fantasy* and *New Worlds*. After *Dear Aunty*, a not too memorable story in 1964, she came up with a particularly likeable piece, *Emancipation*. Several other worthy stories appeared, but the demise of the British magazines caused her disappearance from the scene. I was therefore doubly delighted to see her pop up in the October 1973 *Amazing Stories* with an inspiring yarn, *The Sun-Hunters*.

The loss of the British sf magazines, in particular *Science Fantasy* resulted in the disappearance of several bright female talents. Names such as Patricia Hocknell, Pamela Adams, and more recently Joyce Churchill. All have graced British magazines and left particularly memorable pieces.

There is little doubt that when science fiction began to mature it became a ripe field for the female writer. When the emphasis was put on the effects of science and society on people, then women came into their own. Their ability to grasp feelings and emotions has broadened the field of science fiction, and the growth of the field has allowed females to experiment further. This snowball effect has speeded the development of science fiction, and without doubt improved the field.

And in case you wish to label me a supporter of female emancipation let me just prove I am not alone.

> 'Whenever the question of women writers writing about men comes up, I usually point to the obvious talents of women like Ursula K LeGuin, Leigh Brackett and Lee Hoffman. They have written about men and women, sexual reality, and have betrayed no "feminine bias" or weakness.' Ted White. (3)
>
> 'I concur with Harlan Ellison; much of the best writing in science fiction today is being done by women.' Brian Aldiss. (4)
>
> Writing specifically about Sonya Dorman: 'It is a kind of writing *only* a woman can do . . . It deals with reality in the unflinching way women *will* deal with it.' Harlan Ellison. (5)
>
> And about Mildred Clingerman's *First Lesson: 'F & SF* has published a considerable number of stories by members of the fair sex, and many of those stories might well have been written by men. The following tale, concerning the nature of love and faith, could have been written only by a woman . . .' Robert P Mills. (6)

The last quote in particular emphasises the versatility of female writers. Not only have they a select style of their own, but they are also capable of vying men at their own game.

Oh, and just to prove that it isn't only young ladies who write science fiction (Mary Urhausen was 20 when *In Another Land* was sold to *If*), the May 1973 *F & SF* carried *Murder in the Transcontinental Tunnel* by Miriam Allen de Ford. Ms de Ford was born 21 August 1888—and no living male sf writer can beat that.

We've got to hand it to them, the science fiction field needs women.

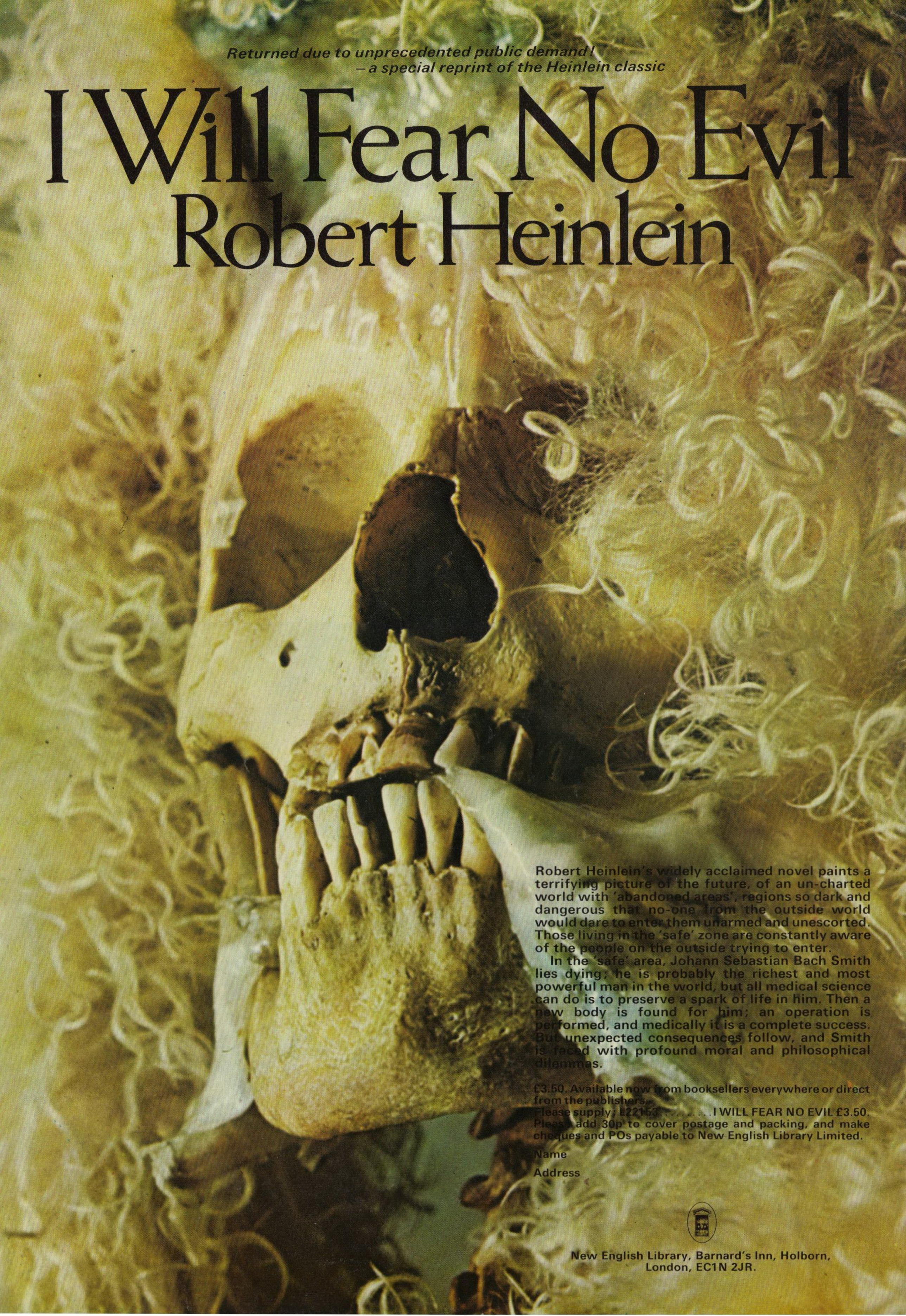
1) From *Penguin Science Fiction* edited by Brian Aldiss (Penguin Books, 1963 edition). From the Introduction, page 9
2) From *A Century of Science Fiction* edited by Damon Knight (Pan Books, 1966 edition), page 189
3) From *Amazing Stories*, May 1972 (Ultimate Publishing Co NY). From *The Future in Books* column by Ted White, page 110
4) From *Billion Year Spree* by Brian Aldiss (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973), from the chapter '*Yesterday and Tomorrow*', page 306
5) From *Dangerous Visions* edited by Harlan Ellison (Berkley Medallion, 1969 edition), page 72
6) From *A Decade of Fantasy & Science Fiction* edited by Robert P Mills (Corgi Books, 1964 edition) page 274

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