

A T O T E

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A TALE OF THE 'EVANS is the personalized fanzine of Th' Ol' Foo, E Everett Evans, of 628 South Bixel Street, Los Angeles 14, Calif. It is published for circulation through the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, with a few added copies for presentation to interested friends and relatives. I hope you will find something herein that will be either of interest to you, or perhaps bring a smile.

I am taking every chance possible these days, of expressing my sincerest thanks and appreciation of the wonderful gesture of friendship shown me during 1947 by RAY BRADBURY. This young man, a former active fan who is now reaching the highest heights of pro authorship, has shown his true greatness of character by taking a lot of his valuable time to help a struggling writer reach a better understanding of the mechanics of good writing.

Quite a number of you have seen the word he did on one of my attempts at a short story, wherein he dissected it word by word, showing what was wrong, and best of all, WHY it was wrong. Also, he wrote pages of general criticism, which not only I but all who have read it have gained a tremendous amount of new knowledge on how to put a story together so that it had all the essential elements of a good yarn.

Ray easily put far more effort into this work than would be necessary to write a new story of his own. One can never be too appreciative of such generosity of talent, and greatness of soul. Even so, he was but following in the footsteps of such men as Edmond Hamilton, Henry Kuttner and others, who gave Ray the same kind of assistance when he was first trying to write, while still but a boy.

I call this a true example of the Spirit of Brotherly Love and co-operation such as I preached in THE TIME-BINDER, and which some of you found so amusing. Perhaps it is, but to me it is one of the finest and most wonderful things that a human being can practice in life. It cannot but immeasurably assist and broaden one in his search for a greater expansion of his own personality.

Again and again, Ray, many, many sincerest thanks!

EVERY TIME I GO TO THE OPERA, IT'S ALWAYS "AIDA"

- or -

I THINK MAYBE I'VE BEATEN DOWN MY DEMON AT LAST!

I'm such a guy as really likes Classical music in all its forms, with the possible exception of some types of Chamber music. I especially like Symphonies and Opera.

Although I've done quite a lot of travelling, it hasn't been possible for me to see or hear very many operas, much to my sorrow.

In the winter of 1912-13 (I can't remember the exact date), I and three pals were in New York city during the Opera season. We were all USN Musicians, attached to the USS Wyoming. We were ashore on a week-end liberty, and after dinner one Saturday night were discussing among ourselves as to what show we would go to see. Eddie Sartain came up with a brilliant idea. "Let's us," he said, "go to the Opera!" It developed none of us had ever been to one before.

There was considerable proing and conning, but finally we decided that there was a slight modicum of sense to his suggestion, so we hied ourselves to the Metropolitan. Yes, we could get seats for that night...and yes, we found, after some mutual borrowings, we could afford to buy them. We did, and entered the beautiful edifice. The curtain rose, and we sat entranced through one of the greatest of all operas -- "Aida". It was magnificent! We were all thrilled.

Came World War I; came the Armistice, and I was sent to the Great Lakes station outside Chicago for my discharge. While there, I had a week-end leave in Chicago. At one of the Service Clubs I was talking to a lady at a desk, and she, noticing my Musician's rating, asked if I would like to go to the Opera. Said they had some tickets available for service men. I said, "Yes, ma'am, I surely would enjoy it." So she gave me a ticket, and I went.

The opera that Saturday was "Aida"!!

Years later. My children were growing up. My elder daughter and her husband were living in Chicago, and both going to the University of Chicago -- she for her Master's, he for his Ph.D. I went down to spend a week-end with them. They said, "We have a treat for you. We have tickets for the Opera." We went.

The opera that Saturday was "Aida"!!!

In deference to them, and knowing how much it meant in the way of financial scrimping for them to get those tickets, I kept still, except for my praise of the beauty of the performance.

But on the train going home, I went into a huddle with my own

personal demon, that little thingumabob that mis-manages my life.

"Look, Bub," says I. "What's this idea of always giving me my rare chances of going to the opera only when 'Aida' is playing?"

"I like 'Aida'," he says, chuckling in that satanically-mischievous way he has when he's making me do things I don't especially care about doing.

"So do I," I answers, "but too much is certainly a plethora. There's other good operas, you know. Like, for instance, 'Le Boheme'."

"I like 'Aida'," he says, and shuts me up.

The years pass along, as they have a habit of doing, and I come out to Los Angeles to live. They do not have their own opera company here, but the San Francisco company comes down occasionally, and so does the San Carlos Opera company. And this year of 1948 the Metropolitan company is coming out for the first time in many years.

The period during which the San Carlos company is in town, a close check of my financial statistics shows I'm not going to the opera. Then, out of a clear sky, one of my bosses (I have two) says to me one afternoon, "Evans, I know you like good music. I have a ticket for the opera tonight, but I can't make it. Would you like to go?"

"Gosh, yes," says I, happily, and clutched the precious pasteboard to my throbbing breast. That evening I shave carefully, put on my one fairly decent suit, and set out for the theatre. I show my ticket at the door, an usher takes me to my seat and hands me a program. I settle down, then glance at the printed page.

By shoving my fist half down my throat I keep from yelling out loud and disturbing the other customers. But sotto voce I'm calling that personal demon of mine names that even Hell never heard of before.

You've guessed it -- the opera that night was "Aida"!!!!

That night, after the performance, my demon and I had it out. I don't know how many rounds we went, but I'll admit I came out a very poor second.

I brooded -- oh, how I brooded. Long, and as carefully as is in me to do, I thought of ways and means to see and hear some other opera besides "Aida".

Now please don't get me wrong. I think "Aida" is one of the greatest and most beautiful operas ever written. The music is superb, the drama is intense, and the blending of the two shows artisanship of the highest calibre. The orchestration is magnificent, and the pageantry is probably the most colorful and exciting in all operatic lore. It is a wonderful piece of work.

But I, personally, would like -- just once, at least -- to see and hear some other opera. There MUST be other fine specimens of the operatic art. I hear them talked about -- I even hear them on the radio Saturday afternoons during the New York Metropolitan season, and often evenings on the music hours of our local radio stations. But I want to SEE another one.

Especially, I want to see "La Boheme", which is, as far as I know them, my favorite opera. Probably because I like its highly emotional music. (Same reason that Tscholkowsky's Fifth is my favorite Symphony.)

So I try what black magic I know; I implore Sathanas-Beelzebub to give me relief from his minion; I call u on the name of dread N'gah-Kthun; I even try to evoke the mighty Essence -- Sufrani. To no avail.

But at last, after a lot of the best thinking of which I am capable, I come up finally with a plan that I think might possibly do the trick. If it kills me, and it probably would, I'm going to give it a try, at least.

So, comes a Saturday evening, I hie me down to Main street, and wander along its sordid lengths, listening very carefully to the cacophonies coming through the open doors of the various bars that line the street.

From one comes some of the most horrible sounds I've ever heard that were supposed to be music. I goes in. There is a two-piece cowboy (?) orchestra, one of the men playing a "gittar" and the other scraping on a "fiddle". Interspersed with their playing they sang (?) cowboy laments. I knew immediately why cowboys were indigenous to the wide-open spaces. It must be for safety's sake.

Anyway, I endure the harsh looks of the bartender while sipping as slowly as possible at my 35¢ "coke", shuddering internally and externally every time that unholy duo opened their mouths and gave out with their caterwaulings.

"What's the big idea of all this?" my personal demon suddenly wakes up to inquire.

"Why, isn't this 'Aida'?" I ask, all innocent like, widening my booful big blue eyes.

"You know damned well it isn't! Get us out of here -- quick! Ten minutes ago would have been better."

"Nooo," I temporize, "I think I'll stay a couple of hours and revel in this heavenly music."

"Your sense of direction is all mixed up," he snarls. "I said let's git, but pronto."

"If I do, can I go to hear 'La Boheme' when the Metropolitan company sings it here?" I ask, hopefully but doubtfully.

"Yes, you can go to the opera," he says, "if only you'll get out of here before they start yelping again."

I almost fall for that, but not quite. "I didn't ask if I could go to the opera," I reminds him. "I particularly asked if I could go to hear 'La Boheme'?"

"They're gonna play 'Aida'," he said slyly.

"'La Boheme'," says I, firmly.

"No," he says, emphatically.

"Oke, we stay here," says I. "Oh, look. Goddy, goody, they are getting up to sing again."

There was silence within until the duo sang (God save the expression) about two notes.

"All right, all right. You win! You can go to hear 'La Boheme'," the demon yells. "But get going!"

I got, and fast!

At the LASFS clubroom, while we were publishing SHANGRI LA, he even helped me make the financial arrangements necessary for such an event. I matched half dollars with Bill Cox, and won. I played poker with Walt and Gus, and won. I had the two-fifty. I went right down and bought my ticket.

But until the final curtain comes down, I'll be expecting the manager to come out front and say, "Friends, we have a wonderful treat in store for you tonight. We have decided to change the program, and instead of giving you 'La Boheme', we are substituting that wonderful masterpiece 'Aida'."

ohIhopenotohIhopenotohIhopenotohIhopenotohIhopenotohIhopenotohIhop

I've also been taking lessons recently from E Mayne Hull in plotting, scene building, furtherances and hindrances, and all the other technicalities of writing. I think I've really learned the most important lesson about short story writing, though. I KNOW I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT WRITING! Now that I've learned that, I can try to forget all that I thought I knew, and start learning what I ought to know, and thus maybe in a few more years I'll get to be a writer at last. It's lots of fun, though, and I'm really having a grand time trying. The story that Eredbury helped me to write (it's really more his than mine, even if I did have the original idea, and typed around forty-fifty thousand words before I finally got the final 5500)--has sold to VEIRD. For those who might be interested enough to watch for it, the title is "THE UN-DEAD DIE". It's really quite a nice little yarn, even if I do say so as shouldn't. If any of the rest of you want some help in your writing, I can strongly and honestly recommend the services of E. Mayne Hull as teacher and critic. She's really terrific!

On through the dark'ning mystery of night
I trudged my lonely way, nor sought
Frequented highways; knew no fear
Of mystic things that might waylay
Me on my nightly journeyings.
Thus, when I was accosted by a strange
And ghostly figure I but paused
To see what service I might give to him
If he should ask. My breath grew faint
When he, in sepulchral tones,
Demanded of my blood. Could this be one
Of those whom tale and tale had called
The Vampire? My blood was chilled
And suddenly I knew true fear.
But then he struck a match, and I could see
'Twas but my doctor, and he,
Knowing my blood type, and needing same,
Was looking for me, that he might, perchance,
Use me to give a transfusion.

PORTRAIT OF A FAN ABOUT TO START A FUED



ME WORRY ?

