

C · H · A · T · T · A · C · O · N
XIII

This Program Book is dedicated to the memory of Polly Freas.
The world is a sadder place for her passing.

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Our Weapons Policy or Check Your Lasers at the Door

The practice of carrying or wearing personal weapons at conventions is one of the oldest traditions in fandom. ChattaCon respects this custom, and we would rather not do anything to interfere with it.

Unfortunately, in recent years, a few fans have created problems by abusing this custom and behaving very badly with weapons. Therefore, we have reluctantly adopted the following weapons policy. Please read it because it will be enforced.

- All knives, swords, axes, shiraken, and other bladed weapons, whether sharp or not, must be covered by sheaths, cases, reinforced cardboard, or some other protective wrapping. All blades or other small weapons, such as nunchukas, must be secured to the wearer's person or clothing in all public areas of the Holiday Inn or Convention and Trade Center, including the hallways, the lobby and all function rooms. Exceptions will be allowed for displays in the Dealers' Room and for Masquerade participants on a case-by-case basis.
- All functional firearms, pellet guns, lasers, sound projectors and other projectile weapons are absolutely forbidden. No exceptions will be given.
- Replicas, blasters, and zap guns are allowed. Any director, convention staff member or uniformed security guard may, at any time, require proof that a replica is not a real weapon.
- Anything can be used as a weapon. Therefore any object used in a dangerous or threatening manner or in such a way that it becomes a general nuisance to the attendees of the convention will be regarded as a weapon by Chattacon.
- Any weapon being carried or misused in violation of this policy will be confiscated and held until the convention is over on Sunday afternoon, at which time the weapon will be returned. Anyone who refuses to surrender a weapon when asked to do so by a Chattacon representative will be ejected from the convention without refund. If the violation is very serious, the Holiday Inn will also be asked to evict the violator from the hotel, also without refund.
- No assassination games will be allowed. Players will be ejected from the convention whenever caught. Please note that this item has been extended to include all Lazer Tag and similar games.
- Anyone who deliberately or negligently injures or causes property damage to the hotel, trade center, or their contents, will be ejected from the convention, will be ejected from the hotel, and may be subject to arrest and to civil or criminal prosecution.
- Interpretation and enforcement of this policy will be at the discretion of any Chattacon Director or convention staff member. In case of a disagreement about this policy, the decision of any two (2) Directors will be final.

All attendees please note: the civil authorities in this area have been known to take a dim view of persons carrying swords, knives, martial arts weapons, and/or large-bore particle accelerators. Please show some discretion when making excursions into MundaneLand. Please remember, when in Rome...

Post No Bills

The Holiday Inn has expressed some concern about the posting of notices in the hotel. There can be no posted notices in the lobby or restaurant level. You can post notices in the elevator areas of other floors, but only using masking tape or some other easily removed tape. Please do not use staples, glue, nails, or two handed battle axes to attach things to walls (please note that burying your axe head in a wall does not constitute peace bonding). There can be NO posting of notices in the Chattanooga/Hamilton County Convention and Trade Center except on designated easels. Please use discretion with your signs.

Consignment Auction

This year, Chattacon will be trying something a little different. At 3:00 PM on Saturday, Chattacon will hold its first consignment auction. A consignment auction, for those of you who don't know, is a chance for you to get rid of those things that have been cluttering up your closet for years. Got a painting you've never hung? How about game accessories for a game you don't have? Put it in the consignment auction. Our auctioneer will attempt to sell it based on its merits. You will receive the amount of money (less 15%) that the item sold for. Items will be accepted for the consignment auction at the pre-registration desk in the Chattanooga/Hamilton County Convention & Trade Center. Give it a try, you'll like it. If you haven't got anything to sell, come and see what you can find to buy!

Freas Work to be Sold Before Painted

At our art auction on Saturday, we will be auctioning off an item that is, needless to say, unique. Frank Kelly Freas, Hugo Award winning artist, will have a blank canvas for sale in the art show. We figure this canvas will be a prime buy for whichever lucky soul gets it. Kelly intends to paint a portrait of the buyer as a programming event on Sunday. Just think of it - your portrait done by one of the most famous artists today. Come to the auction and bring your checkbook.

Babysitting Services to be Offered

Chattacon will be offering babysitting services to the fans this year. We do not, as we go to press, have the number of the room where this service will be located. Please look for signs in the registration area for further information. Cost will be \$2.00 per hour per child. Please bring toys for your child. Meals will not be provided.

Masquerade

This year's masquerade will be run a little different than in past Chattacons. The masquerade will be divided into two categories - Costumes and Skits. The reason for the division of these two classes is to bring a greater element of fairness to the judging.

If you would like to enter this year's masquerade, simply fill out the entry form that you can obtain at registration. Turn in your completed forms at the Operations Suite (301) before 5:00 PM, Saturday. There will be copies of the rules available at registration.

Lost Badge Policy

If you lose your badge and want to immediately continue enjoying convention activities, you will have to buy a new one at the at-the-door rates. (yes, I know it's \$20). Of course, you can always keep checking with Lost & Found at the ConSuite for your badge, but if you do not replace it and it is not found, you will NOT be allowed into any convention activity. So, hang on to your badge.

The 1988 Deep South Science Fiction Convention

Deepsouthcon 26



Atlanta, GA
June 10 - 12, 1988

Guest of Honor: **GREGORY BENFORD**
Artist Guest of Honor: **FRANK KELLY FREAS**
Toastmaster: **JOE HALDEMAN**
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Plus

Celebrating 40 Years Of Fandom
in Atlanta & The Southeast (1948 - 1988)

with The Return Of The

COSMIC LEGION

featuring Fan Guests of Honor:

Jerry Burge
Hank Reinhardt
Walt Guthrie (tentative)



MEMBERSHIP: \$20.00 until May 15, 1988; \$25 thereafter and at the door.
Make checks payable to "Phoenixcon of Atlanta" and send to:

DSC 26/Phoenixcon 3
752 1/2 North Highland Ave.
Atlanta, GA 30306

An Un-Bio Sketch of Ronald Joseph Goulart Science Fiction Guest of Honor

by
Roy G. Bivens

What to do, what to do, when you're asked at the last instant to provide a biographical sketch of an author you admire, but have never actually met? It's a dilemma, to be sure, but fortunately there's an easy way out for the well-read essayist: consult your personal book stacks and see what somebody else has written about the man.

For someone like Ron Goulart, that's pretty easy. Turns out there's a wealth of information about him in print, if only you know where to look. First stop for me was Peter Nicholls' Science Fiction Encyclopedia (Doubleday & Co., 1979), where he's described as having been born in California during the Great Depression, and having worked in an advertising agency for a time before turning to writing as a full time vocation; the busy, sometimes convoluted California life-style and the concise, brash, and yet polished writing style that's required for the advertising business are reportedly a large influence on Goulart's unique brand of fiction. So says the book. And there's more: much of Goulart's science fiction examines the human condition from sometimes unusual perspectives, and often makes "... sharp satirical points about human nature and about contemporary America," and that quite often his story settings are "... urbanized, California-like planets, populated in large part by comic stereotypes." Well, it's no secret that the man writes delightful, funny, rapier-wit fiction, especially about how modern day man homo sapiens has been turned, not entirely willingly, into the future man homo mechanicus. However, oversimplified encyclopedia articles tend to make a person or a topic seem excessively dry; it's time to turn to a better source of information about Ron Goulart: his wealth of fiction.

Even for the casual book reader, it's not unusual to find that you have ten or even more Goularts in your 'permanent' SF collection. A quick inspection of my collection reveals the breadth of talent he's shown in the different types of books he's written. For instance, up there on the top shelf there's The Sword Swallower, already a classic, that introduces Ben Jolson and the Chameleon Corps; it's a sharp, zany, yet introspective view of late '60s America taken to an extreme. And over here there's Broke Down Engine, one of the best short story collections ever about future encounters between man and the increasingly complex mechanical world, especially at the Moment of Truth when things just don't seem to be working according to plan. And here, right within easy reach, is one of my favorites, When the Waker Sleeps, a wonderfully zany novel about what an unwilling time traveller might find the world has evolved into at increments of fifty years into the future. And there's much, much more: besides the science fiction genre, Goulart has done murder mysteries (Ghosting and Too Sweet to Die are in my stacks), novelizations (Capricorn One, among others), and even delved into comics (Star Hawks, with Gil Kane). Among his non-fiction are histories of the Pulp magazines and comic strips of the '30s.

You see, there's a lot more to Ron Goulart than can be described in a necessarily flimsy sketch of the man like this essay. It's pretty obvious that he's one of the best SF writers there is; just the act of writing this piece has made me want to get to know the man and his work even better, and as I said, I haven't even met him yet!

But I will, right here at Chattacon. In fact, I intend to have him personalize quite a few Goularts in my permanent collection, and I'll be there early at each of the scheduled autograph sessions. Hey, there; the line forms to the right!

Right behind me.

Jack L. Chalker

Fantasy Guest of Honor

by
Michael Dillson

Jack Chalker has been one of my favorite authors since I started reading material of this genre years ago. His works usually take the form of a fast-moving, high-impact adventure story with a sometimes serious undertone. What can I tell you about Jack that hasn't already been chronicled in dozens of fanzines, convention program books, prozines and anthologies? Probably not a great deal, so stop me if you've heard all this before...

Jack was born in Baltimore, Maryland on December 17, 1944. He began reading SF at an early age (Have you ever noticed all fans started reading SF at an early age?) and was already an active fan by 1958. He was one of the founders and first president of the Baltimore SF Society. His fanzine *Mirage* was nominated for the 1963 Fanzine Hugo. During all of this fannish activity, he managed to graduate in 1966 from Towson State College with a double major and a triple minor. In 1969, he added an M.L.A. from John Hopkins University.

At the end of the 1960's, Jack was in an unspecified location with an Air Force Special Forces Commando unit, where he worked as public relations specialist.

After leaving the Air Force, Jack tried his hand at teaching. By 1978 his income from writing topped his teaching salary, so he decided to become a full time writer. That same year, he was asked to be Guest of Honor at ParaCon at Penn State. This was to be a convention that Jack would long remember. The organizer of that convention was one Eva Whitley. She and Jack hit it off rather well and became fast friends. They were married soon after on a ferry boat on the Susquehanna River. (Ferryboats are a passion of Jack's. He can tell you the history of almost any ferry line in the country.)

Jack and Eva have become familiar faces at many conventions all over the country. If they aren't honored guests, odds are they are helping to run the con. Eva had to take a little break from this frenetic fan activity in 1981 to give birth to their son David.

Jack is a many sided man. One of the many things he does well is acting as auctioneer. He has sold literally millions of dollars worth of fantastic art and collectibles since he first tried his hand at it at the 1969 Boskone. You can see him in action at our auction on Saturday night.

Jack's works have included fan writing as diverse as an annotated bibliography of H.P. Lovecraft to An Informal Autobiography of Scrooge McDuck. He is also responsible for a somewhat off-color spoof "study" of *The Necronomicon* under another name.

He was forced into the professional limelight for financial reasons. A temporary fiscal crunch led him to revise a manuscript (*A Jungle of Stars*), he had been circulating for years and submit it to Del Rey Books for publication. But it was his second novel, *Midnight at the Well of Souls*, that established him not only as a best-selling author, but as one of the leaders in mainstream SF. He has twice been a finalist in the John W. Campbell Award as Best New Writer, but lost out to C. J. Cherryh and Orson Scott Card.

Jack seems to be most at home with a multi-volume series. He really needs this to cover some of the truly amazing vignettes he has developed for his stories. Besides the "Well of Souls" series with which he first hit the market, his other connected series include "Lords of the Diamond," "Dancing Gods," "Soul Rider," and his two current series, "GOD, Inc." and "Rings of the Master." He also has a number of non-connected novels including *The Identity Matrix*, *Web of the Chosen*, a WWII novel *The Devil's Voyage*, and his most recent, a tongue-in-cheek-James Bond-ish-occult-SF-mystery-thriller, *The Messiah Choice*.

Jack is a prolific, three-book-a-year writer. If you wonder where he gets his ideas, just strike up a conversation with him. He is an overflowing fountain of ideas and observations on any subject you'd care to name. He long ago outstripped the ability of any one publisher to handle his output of books. His works have been translated into a number of foreign languages including Hebrew and Japanese.

We are honored to have Jack here as our guest at Chattacon XIII. I think you'll agree with me when I say that Jack L. Chalker is one of the best darn writers there is!!

Frank Kelly Freas Artist Guest of Honor

Kelly Freas grew up in southern Ontario, Canada. He also lived in upstate New York where he did commercial artwork throughout his high school and college days. He studied art at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania as well as other institutes of higher learning. He began his career as an artist working for a Pittsburgh ad agency and soon discovered that advertising lay-out and artwork were not the place for him. He learned he had much rather be doing freelance work, since the money was better, and the work itself was more fun. And so, that is exactly what Kelly has been doing for thirty years.

Kelly's first cover painting appeared on the November, 1950 issue of Weird Tales. Since then, he has been nominated for eighteen Hugo Awards for best professional artist, and he has won ten. Also, the Eastern Science Fiction Association has named Kelly Freas "Dean of Science Fiction Artists," a lifetime title. For many years, Kelly was the primary illustrator for Astounding Science Fiction. Readers of Mad magazine will remember that it was Kelly Freas who put Alfred E. Newman on the cover of Mad for over five years. He has done cover illustrations for many paperback book publishers and is, in fact, "THE SF Illustrator".

Kelly's artwork is a smooth combination of the romantic and the realistic. He can, in one expert stroke with the brush, inspire us and offer us a glimpse of what the future holds. Some of his memorable works include: that poor giant robot who didn't know his own strength, first appearing on the cover of Astounding and decades later on the Queen "News of the World" album, pretty girls, the mushroom component spaceships whose shapes scream for space flight, the anti-grav hair-do, the most entertaining slide show in fandom, the books Frank Kelly Freas: The Art of Science Fiction and A Separate Star, and many more works than could be listed in the confines of this program book.

Charles L. Grant Toastmaster

by Kathrine Ptacek Grant

We are, of course, talking about a man of distinct and unusual tastes.

Charlie was born during the War Years somewhere in New Jersey (the location seems to change with the telling and retelling of the birth epic) and has lived in lots of towns that he says he's now glad he moved away from. He attended Trinity College in Hartford, intending to become an Episcopalian minister like his father, but somewhere along the way (luckily for the field of dark fantasy), he changed his mind.

Charlie became a teacher of persons of the teenage persuasion, and after many years of rising each morning at six, had the luck to be fired, whereupon he turned to writing. He wrote his first short story, sold it to F and SF and was promptly inducted into the army and served two years in Viet Nam. He returned, took up writing again, went through assorted wives (we won't mention them) and meaningful life experiences, and then was directed by the hand of Fate to Denvention II where we met for the second time, and the rest, as they say, is history.

His writing is some of the best in the field, and he has the awards to prove it - two Nebulas (for the novelette "A Glow of Candles, A Unicorn's Eye" and for the short story "A Crowd of Shadows"), and three World Fantasy Awards (one for editing the well-known anthology Shadows, the second for his novella, "Confess the Seasons," and the third for his collection, Nightmare Seasons. In 1987, he received the British Fantasy Society Special Award for Lifetime Achievement. And he's had many more nominations, which just goes to show it isn't his agent and I alone who appreciate him.

He's the creator of the popular Oxrun Station, one of my all-time favorite places, in the novels The Hour of Oxrun Dead, The Sound of Midnight, The Last Call of Mourning, The Bloodwind, and The Grave. He has edited eight volumes of Shadows, anthologies entitled Fears, Terrors, Nightmares, Midnights, and there are more to come. As for short stories, at last count he has sold nearly one hundred. He has published over 20 novels under his own name, 4 under the name of Jeffrey Marsh, 4 under other names and 11 gothic romance books under another name he doesn't care to mention. He has also edited five collections and 21 anthologies.

As for future plans, when I spoke to him, he had just finished taking two weeks off for the holidays, but he says "In 1988, I'm partying all year 'cause I'm celebrating my twentieth year as an author."

I think he has every right to celebrate, don't you?

John Steakley

Special Guest

We had a bit of a problem getting a bio from John through the U.S. Postal Service. When press time rolled around, we needed a bio for him and we didn't have one. We desperately tried to get John on the telephone to get him to read us his biography, but to no avail.

We decided to try and garner some facts about John from members of our program book staff and other members of the Board of Directors. We got a few things.

John was born in 1951 in Texas. That's really all we could find out about his early life. We do know that you shouldn't insult Texas to his face.

We could find more on John's literary achievements. John started out writing for television and movies. His credits include screenplays for the TV series "Battlestar Galactica" and the motion picture screenplay for The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. He then turned to writing books. John's first book, Armor, was acclaimed a literary success. It was compared to the early works of Heinlein. He has since completed Vampires and the first book of Chasm.

John has been to Chattacon several times over the years and we are proud to have him here as our special guest.

A Biography, Hmmm....

by

Kevin A. Ward

I started drawing dinosaurs at about age three because I couldn't find enough pictures of them. About 1970, I became a lifetime science-fiction fan. -- in my language, that means I read the stuff; I didn't know about fandom. I drew spaceships and planetscapes at that time for the same reasons I drew dinosaurs earlier.

While majoring in Fine Arts in college, I learned a lot of fancy polysyllabic buzz-words but no painting or drawing techniques. When my instructor found some of my SF paintings stored in my studio along with the "serious" work I was doing for him, he wrote that my logic had been "obsolete since mankind climbed out of the trees." I knew then I needed no more lessons in Fine Arts.

I entered fandom about 1980. At my first art show, I sold all but one painting, most of them to some lady named Maurine, and also made the connections to have some pieces published in Future Life magazine. I have sold about 140 major pieces since then, a few to such notables as Frank Robinson, Larry Niven, and even to Leon Hendee.

Janet and I have run and worked on a lot of art shows in and around middle Tennessee in the past seven years, culminating with the World Fantasy Convention art show last October. We are proud to declare that one our swan song as far as running things (although Dave Shockley really did all the work), retiring now to concentrate on making art.

I won't mention all the awards I've won except a few that are special. My first awards were from no less than Chicon IV World Con -- Best SF in both peer and popular vote in the amateur category. After I started feeling guilty about winning too many amateur awards, I began entering shows as a professional. The awards still come in, but at a more realistic rate. My most recent awards include the Polly Freas Artist Award and Honorable Mention in Light Fantasy at World Fantasy Con (where it is an honor just to get in the door).

In spite of all this attention from my friends (or maybe because of it), I'm quite shy and nervous. I live as a recluse on a shoestring budget, seldom venturing from the house where I take care of three quadrupeds, listen to New Age music, read SF, or paint. At conventions, you might find me sitting in the bathroom -- it has the best light -- trying to get that one last painting finished for the show.

How to Survive the South

by
Charles L. Grant

It isn't easy for someone of the Northern persuasion to travel comfortably in the South; not at first, at any rate. Though one hears talk of Southern hospitality and the South's fabled tranquil way of life, there are also all those disturbing rumors of the Civil War still being fought by considerably more than a handful of diehards who believe that everyone from north of the Mason-Dixon line is a carpetbagger, a thief, and a goddamned Republican.

The hospitality part, I'm pleased to say, is never more evident than it is at southern conventions. The other part ... well, let's just say that I don't run down the main drag screaming out my name just to see if anyone remembers. And if your name happens to be Sherman, let me know where to send the flowers.

It does get very confusing. How is one to behave? How should one comport oneself where no one shrieks at you to get the hell out of the way, buddy, before your mother does a tap dance on the East River in her new cement shoes? How, in other words, does one deal with a group of genuinely friendly, eager to please, and basically wonderful people?

Well, in the interest of harmony and peace between nations, and after many years of travelling throughout just about all parts of the South, from Kubla Khan in Nashville to DeepSouthCon in Huntsville, from Archon in Missouri to cons in Georgia and Florida, I've put together a few helpful hints for you nervous Northern folk, ways to insure your survival without making too much of a fool of yourself. Some of them are based on on my own early foolishness (the more charitable among you will now refrain from comment); some are based on sharp, writer-type observations made through the walls of a glass filled with a Southern Comfort Collins, or a Bloody Mary.

All of it, however, is true.

1. In the first place, the name "Chattacon" has nothing to do with striking up friendly conversations with lonely prisoners in the state pen. It's a science fiction and fantasy convention, in Chattanooga, a city that has more bricks than it knows what to do with, so it puts them down in the streets, on the sidewalks, in buildings, and through windows. "You're a real brick" is not a compliment in this town. This hotel, however, and the convention center, are not made of brick. They're made of concrete. They look it. Except for the glass wall in front, and those horrid glass elevators that give you breathtaking views of the parking lot across the way.

2. In the second place, Chattacon successfully maintains that delicate balance between a small, intimate convention, and one that sprawls all over the damned place, so you can't find the stupid con suite (which is around the corner from someplace, by the escalators that take you someplace else). Nor, now that I think of it, can you find the dealers' room because it's down the escalators from the con suite, which you can't find anyway, so you go to the panels which are across from the registration table which is by the escalators which take you to the dealers room. These are not, by the way, the same escalators that take you down to the lobby. Those suckers are down the hall by the elevators, and the place where, if you could afford it, you'd eat hotel food at a table overlooking the lobby that you can get to by the escalators that do not take you to the dealers room.

3. In the third place, "yawl" is not a boat. It's Southern for "all you guys". Likewise, "awl" isn't that round wood doohicky that carpenters use; it's either something you put in your car engine so it doesn't blow itself up, or it's "all". As in, "Put awl the awl in the car, Hank." Therefore, do not let on that you know that these people talk funny down here. It isn't their fault.

4. It is extremely bad form to make fun of Southern cooking, especially at conventions where the food, despite the committee's gallant efforts, is godawful. It is worse form to ask what the hell grits is. If you ask, someone will tell you. Forever. Then take you out somewhere and make you eat it. Whatever it is. The best you can hope for in a situation like this is an earthquake; the worst you will face is eating the stuff. Grin and bear it. Pretend it's research.

5. Do not expect to find naked barbarian women in the masquerade. The South is civilized. The South is couth. The South boasts some of the most beautiful women in the country (probably most of them), but they aren't naked. It's a rough life, but someone has to do it. And even if they were naked, they'd be naked with someone else, so why get up a lather about it? Just remember the good old days and pretend you're just as enlightened as the next guy. Then go get drunk.

6. Do not ask the people from Nashville what "swill" is. They don't even like Willie Nelson, the Philistines. Especially don't ask Ken Moore about swill. He makes the stuff, and he doesn't know either. And this is the

man puts wings on airplanes that you and I fly to get to places like this. I myself, at great peril to my life, have tasted swill. I do not want to know what's in it. You don't either. Trust me.

7. The best bar in the hotel is the one down in the lobby by the entrance. It has the most comfortable seats, the best view of the nuts going in and out and driving the staff crazy, and the perfect spot to place your bets on which idiot will try and run up the down escalator first. I've won a lot of money there over the years. I pick Uncle Timmy every time.

8. The worst bar is the one across from the gift shop. It has more seats, but it also has a sound system designed to reach the deaf in Lexington. It also has a live show on weekends. This also appeals to the deaf in Lexington because the deaf in Lexington don't have to listen to it. You do if you go in there; and if you go in there of your own free will, you deserve everything you get.

9. If you have to ask who Ernest P. Worrell is, you don't belong here. He is a great Amurrican and my hero. KnowwhutI mean?

10. Do not express amazement at the weather in January. They will tell you it's freezing. Ha. While it's true that Chattanooga was snowed in not so long ago, it's also true that their idea of snowed in, and our idea of snowed in, are two different things. When we get snowed in, we sit by the fire and wait until March; when they get snowed in, they wait a few hours and go home.

11. The Southern mundanes at this hotel are usually very polite. They don't stare right at you the way they would if they were in, say, Boston. They kind of look sideways at you without actually moving their eyes. Or they look over your head as if they're looking for a friend who's late for a lunch date. In either case, they've checked you out before you know they've checked you out, and as soon as you open your mouth they know you're a foreigner anyway, which answers all the questions they didn't even know they had but would have thought of the next time a Wookiee walked by.

12. There are a lot of barely teenagers at this convention. They run around a lot, smack into you, run on, and generally make pests of themselves. They also think they know how to drink. You don't, so why should they? Anyway, last year I discovered that sticking out a foot at a propitious moment does wonders for their speed, agility, and the local Red Cross. I wasn't caught once. If we stuck together, we might send them all back to Atlanta.

13. Don't count on listening to country music down here. They don't have it in Nashville, so why should they have it in Chattanooga? If you want, though, you can listen

to all those hoarse preachers whose shows seem to originate in their living rooms, with a congregation of about 6, Aunt May on the out-of-tune piano, the four daughters and the mother singing the hymns very loudly and enthusiastically and badly, and Uncle Bill over in the corner playing the one-string banjo and muttering "amen" whenever he remembers where he is, which is not down at the tavern where he wants to be but Aunt May is twice as big as he is so why fight it. These shows are wonderful. They beat Jerry Falwell all to hell, and I'll bet not one of them has an air-conditioned dog house for the coon hound trying to sleep under the porch.

If you want rock music, go to a quarry.

14. If you want to make friends with the locals and be sure you'll be asked back again, you must: a) ask Gerry Page about the joys of working for TV Guide; b) ask Wendy Webb about popping her bubbles; c) tell Maurice Dorris that you hate costumes made of packing crates and the underside of old carpets; d) suggest to Andy Offutt that editors really do care for writers, at heart; and e) give Bob Tucker a glass of Perrier.

15. Lastly, and most importantly, know that, of all places in the country that I've visited, only at Southern conventions are all the smiles for real, all the laughter without strings, all the company comfortable, and the welcome for strangers genuine and affectionate. If you don't have a good time at Chattanooga, it's your own fault, not theirs.



The Cosmic Hovercraft

by
Chad D. Ward

The Cosmic Hovercraft. The name was scrawled across the trunk in large purple letters. "The Cosmic Hovercraft," thought Bill. "How appropriate."

The '72 Ford Galaxy sped down the dirt road at over a hundred miles an hour, kicking up dirt and gravel as it lurched from side to side.

"Great," said Bill out loud but to no one in particular. "Here we are in a spray painted car, as stoned as two people need to be and he's doing over a hundred. Just wonderful." Jeff didn't respond.

"Say man, why don't you slow down a little." Bill looked at Jeff hopefully.

"We're flyin' dude, we're flyin'. We are at warp factor nine and entering enemy airspace." Jeff said all of this without taking his eyes from the road, giving Bill at least one thing to be thankful for.

The two of them had been out in the Hovercraft all afternoon smoking dope and looking for the Lost Planet of Loose Moraled Coeds. Along the way they had gunned down and run over several enemy warships. The warships were really mailboxes, but reality had blown out the window in a cloud of blue-grey smoke earlier in the afternoon.

"Klingons at two o'clock," Jeff would suddenly yell. He would then swerve towards the enemy mailbox which, if hit just right, would go sailing over the top of the car. They always did. Jeff had plenty of practice.

"Man," Bill said once again to no one in particular. He had been doing a lot of that on this particular afternoon. "I bet there has been more dope smoked in this car than in all of Colombia"; Colombia being the reputed homeland of the best marijuana. To Jeff and Bill it was almost like Eden. A dreamland paradise from which all goodness flowed. A land of sun, good music, beautiful women, and plenty of good dope. Bill was almost right about the amount of marijuana smoked in the car.

About 5:30 the Lost Planet of Loose Moraled Coeds had still not been found and Bill was getting tired.

"Hey man, let's quit for the day," he said. Jeff didn't respond, but the car began to slow. Jeff pulled to the side of the road and stopped the engine.

"Say dude, what are you doing?" Bill asked. Then he heard the siren that had been inaudible over the sound of Led Zepelin on the tape player. He looked back and saw the

Georgia Highway Patrol car behind them.

"Shit man, how long has he been there?" Bill began wildly stuffing a bag of marijuana under the seat.

"About ten minutes," said Jeff complacently. Bill's protests were ended by the trooper's presence at the window. The officer seemed to carry a cloud of air conditioned, mentholated air with him from the car. His uniform was clean pressed and spotless and he wasn't sweating, even in the sweltering afternoon heat.

The trooper tapped on Jeff's window. Jeff didn't respond. He just sat, trancelike, staring out the windshield and gripping the steering wheel tightly. The trooper tapped again; this time it was louder and more insistent. Bill reached over and rolled down Jeff's window for him.

"Let me see your license, son." the trooper drawled.

"I said, let me see your license." he said when Jeff didn't respond. "I'm not going to tell you again." Jeff just sat staring out the windshield, grasping the steering wheel, as if ignoring the trooper would make the problem go away.

Bill sat in the passenger seat and tried to smile. The trooper did not smile back.

"I look like I'm about to throw up," he thought catching a reflection of himself in the officer's mirrored sunglasses. He felt like it too.

Jeff reached into his back pocket and pulled out his wallet. The trooper's hand eased toward his revolver in case anything should happen. His hand caressed the worn leather with affection. Jeff flipped his wallet open, holding on to the bottom half.

"Beam me up Scotty," he whispered into a picture of he and his girlfriend at the prom. Bill started to cry.

The trooper's mouth fell open. Bill could see his dental work clearly. The officer peered into the smoke filled interior of the Hovercraft. Bill smiled weakly at him, tears streaming down his face and gurgling noises coming from the back on his throat. The trooper stared in disbelief at Jeff who was still whispering into his wallet. Then he turned and walked away shaking his head and got back into his car.

"Too much paperwork," Bill heard the man say just before the door closed on the patrol car. "Just too much weirdness and too

Continued on page 25

The Board and the Book

Bud Foote, Associate Professor
English Department
Georgia Institute of Technology
Atlanta, Georgia 30332

Wilmar H. Shiras had a story in the November, 1948, *Astounding Science Fiction* called "In Hiding." It was a well-done child-genius story which got itself anthologized several times and has become quite well known in its field. The child prodigy, Tim, has produced, among other things, a story patterned after a game of chess, in which the characters and their actions reflect the pieces and the moves of an actual game. He's never been able to sell it, Tim says somewhat mournfully, because chess-players don't read books, and nobody else would ever get the point.

In spite of this gloomy critical judgment, somebody else, namely John Brunner, did go ahead and write such a book: *Squares of the City*, published in 1965. The whole novel is a play-by-play echo of a game played by Steinitz and Tchigorin in Havana in 1892.

"The moves are all there," the author says in his afterword, "in their correct order and--so far as possible--in precise correspondence with their effect on the original game. That is to say, support of one piece by another on its own side, indirect threats and the actual taking of pieces are all as closely represented as possible in the development of the action." The White Queen's Rook, he goes on to say, is Bishop Cruz; the Queen's Knight, Luis Arrio; and so on. It would have made things easier for me if Brunner had gone ahead and reprinted the moves of the game; but he didn't, and I had to go look the game up.

There is a strange and complicated pleasure in a book like this one, reading the book, looking back at the game, moving the pieces on the board as the characters move about the book. I am not sure, finally, that the book succeeds as a piece of fiction; it is, I think, much too complicated, and one is obliged to hop in and out of the book much too often in order to understand what is going on.

(But I may be wrong. I had, I remember, the same feeling about *The Waste Land* and the first time I read it.)

In any case, the book is, I think, well-nigh unique. The only other thing like it is the chess game in *Through the Looking-Glass*, and in that crazy and helter-skelter game, as Tim says in Shiras' story, the pieces' moves

have nothing to do with real chess moves.

If we turn the question around, however, and ask how many books have furnished raw material for board games, we find any number of examples, beginning, I suppose, with the Uncle Wiggle Game I played as a young child. Do you remember it?

The bad Pipsisewah
Shivered and shook,
But Uncle Wiggle
Three hops took.

Uncanny, isn't it, how great poetry sticks in the mind?

If I remember well, there was a Sherlock Holmes game several years ago; and if you will open any recent issue of *Analog*, you will be offered any number of *kriegsspiele* based on science-fiction future history. I suspect that more of these games would be based on identifiable novels were it not for considerations of copyright and royalties.

Now, what I want to suggest is that there is a kind of fiction which has very close analogies to board games--which can, in effect, be seen as a kind of board game. And, if you will entertain that idea, I should like further to suggest that there is some sort of relationship between the appeal of the board game and the appeal of what we might call board-game fiction.

I say suggest because I have found myself unable to come to any hard-and-fast conclusions about the matter; and so, in a typical academic cop-out, if I cannot illuminate, then I shall attempt to be provocative. Some of you may find something in all this about which we can profitably argue later over a beer; and thus before I leave Chattanooga I may find out what I really mean by all this.

All right: I shall take it that the essence of the board game is either the occupation of significant territory or the movement of a piece or pieces over a significant trajectory, or both. You may know a board game which falls outside these boundaries, but I don't; it covers everything I know from chess to go to Chutes and Ladders to Monopoly.

Now, if that is what a board game is, then what kind of fiction is most like it? I think that it is the sort of fiction which makes us feel

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Chattacon XIII Hours of Operation Function Rooms

Art Show:

Friday	2:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Saturday	10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Sunday	10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Dealers' Room:

Friday	12:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Saturday	10:00 AM - 6:30 PM
Sunday	10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

ConSuite:

Friday	12:00PM - 11:59 PM
Saturday	12:00 AM - 6:00 AM
	7:00 AM - 11:59 PM
Sunday	12:00 AM - 6:00 AM
	7:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Registration:

Friday	12:00 PM - 10:00 PM
Saturday	10:00 PM - 4:00 PM
	After-Hours Registration in room 301.

Gaming:

Executive & Director's Rooms	24 Hours
Registration area	after close of Registration

Masquerade:

Saturday	10:00 PM - 12:00 PM
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Dance:

Friday	10:00 PM - ???
Saturday	12:00 AM - ???

Video Room:

See Schedule on page 17

Filksinging:

Green Room	12:00 AM - ???
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Chattacon XIII Video Schedule

Friday	3:00 PM	Destination: Moonbase Apha
	4:35 PM	Masters of the Universe
	6:25 PM	Little Shop of Horrors
		JAPANIMATION FESTIVAL #1
	8:00 PM	Lupin III: Caliaastro Castle
	9:40 PM	Firetripper
	10:30 PM	Fight! Iczzer-One!
Saturday	12:05 AM	Dirty Pair: The Movie
	1:30 AM	The Toxic Avenger
	3:10 AM	Howard the Duck
	5:05 AM	Starchaser: The Legend of Orin
	6:55 AM	Dr. Who and the Daleks
	8:15 AM	Flight of the Navigator
	10:00 AM	Aliens
	12:20 PM	The Last Voyage of the Starship Enterprise
	12:30 PM	Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home
	2:30 PM	Critters
	4:00 PM	The Stuff
	5:35 PM	When Worlds Collide
	7:00 PM	Big Trouble in Little China
8:40 PM	Closed for Masquerade	
		JAPANIMATION FESTIVAL #2
Sunday	12:30 AM	Super Spacefortress Macross
	2:25 AM	Project A-Ko
	3:50 AM	Area 88
	5:30 AM	Scanners
	7:15 AM	Fright Night
	9:00 AM	Conquest
	10:35 AM	The Quiet Earth
	12:05 PM	Max Headroom: 20 Minutes into the Future
	1:05 PM	Young Frankenstein
	3:00 PM	VIDEO ROOM CLOSED

F R I D A Y
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6:00 PM		Opening Ceremonies			
7:00 PM		Writing Believable SF I: Generalizing Ideas J. Chalker, J. Roberts, C. Grant, S. Webb	From Printed Word to Illustration K. Freas, D. Chaffee	Other Fanzines, Other Fandom N. Lynch, S. Rose	
8:00 PM	The SF/Comics Connection R. Goulart, J. Schwartz, G. Lillian III	Blood on the Armidillo's Snout A Reading J. Page	Fanzine Editors Panel: 'Pub Your Ish' D. Lynch, W. Tucker, C. Proctor P.L.C.M.T. Lane	AUTOGRAPH SESSION J. Chalker, S. Webb, J. Steakley C. Grant	ASFA MEETING
9:00 PM	CLOSED FOR DANCE TEARDOWN	CLOSED FOR DANCE TEARDOWN	CLOSED SFWA MEETING	Good VS Evil: A Discussion J. Steakley	
10:00 PM	DANCE	DANCE		Good VS Evil	
11:00 PM	DANCE	DANCE		Evil VS Good	

TIME

Plaza A
Holiday Inn

Plaza B
Holiday Inn

Meeting Room 1
Convention Center

Meeting Room 2
Convention Center

Meeting Room 3
Convention Center

11:00 AM	Sex and the Single Alien (Slide Show) K. Freas	SCA Event	The Next 10 Years in Space R. Montgomery (NSS)	Starting a Fanzine: A Primer N. Lynch, D. Tompkins, C. Proctor, T. Lane	Breaking into the Art World K. Ward, A. Clark, M. Maxwell, D. Hughes
12:00 PM	CLOSED FOR SETUP	Shire of Vulpine Reach	Getting Published I: Thrilling Slush Pile Tales or How to Be Rejected J. Page, C. Grant	AUTOGRAPH SESSION R. Goulart, T. Deitz, J. Roberts	NolaCon II: The 1988 WorldCon A Preview G. Lillian III, D. Dolbear
1:00 PM	1st Hour: D. & N. Lynch, C. Williams, M. Dorris, R. Lee, J. Chalker, D. Johnson, F. Bray, C. Proctor, R. Goulart, W. Tucker 2nd Hour: J. Page, E. Whitley, P. Malloy, A. King, M. Weber, J. Schwarz, G. Lillian III, D. Dolbear, G. Robe, J. Page, R. Webb	CLOSED FOR SETUP	The John Steakley Hour J. Steakley	Filmaking in Tennessee: The Curse A. King	ARTIST WORKSHOP
2:00 PM	Costumes I Have Known and Loved M. Dorris, S. Thorn		Time Travel: SF or Fantasy? Dr. R. Foote (Ga Tech)	The Art of Kevin Ward (Slide Show) K. Ward	
3:00 PM	A SFPA Family Album: 25+ Years of SFPA G. Lillian III, D. Dolbear, P. L. Caruthers-Montgomery, J. Page	CONSIGNMENT	Writing Believable SF II: Developing Interesting Char's J. Chalker, R. Goulart, W. Tucker, T. Deitz	High Intensity: The Art of Doug Chaffee (Slide Show) D. Chaffee	
4:00 PM	Fifty Years of Superman	AUCTION	Getting Published II: Marketing Yourself	AUTOGRAPH SESSION	

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5:00 PM	CLOSED	CLOSED
6:00 PM	GO EAT	GO EAT
7:00 PM	Guest of Honor Speeches R. Goulart, J. Chalker, K. Freas, C. Grant	SETUP FOR ART AUCTION
8:00 PM		
9:00 PM	CLOSED FOR MASQUERADE SETUP	ART AUCTION
10:00 PM	MASQUERADE MC: C. Grant	CLOSED
11:00 PM		
12:00 AM		

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TIME	Plaza A Holiday Inn	Plaza B Holiday Inn	Meeting Room 1 Convention Center	Meeting Room 2 Convention Center	Meeting Room 3 Convention Center
11:00 AM	An Hour or So With Ron Goulart	Bud Foote: Symposium Dr. R. Foote	August Comics: *A Little Bit of August in January D. Smith	Star Trek: The Next Generation, Worth the Wait? B. & B. Laks, J. Brooks, K. Scott	INFORMAL ARTIST WORKSHOP
12:00 PM	R. Goulart	Getting Published III: Keeping the Wolves Away Survival Skills for Young Writers S. Webb, C. Grant, J. Steakley		Banter, Beauty & Composition: The BBC's of Great British SF TV Series N. Lynch, E. Giffey, S. Rose	INFORMAL ARTIST WORKSHOP
1:00 PM	Out of My Head J. Chalker	Writing Believable SF III: Devising Good Plot Lines R. Goulart, T. Deitz, W. Tucker		Booze, Babysitting & Ballistics: Trying to Please Everyone at SF Conventions L. Hendee, G. Robe, S. Francis	INFORMAL ARTIST WORKSHOP
2:00 PM		CLOSING CEREMONIES			

August Comics

Chattanooga's Comic Company

PAUL BURKE

CHIEF EDITOR/PUBLISHER/PRESIDENT



DINO SMITH

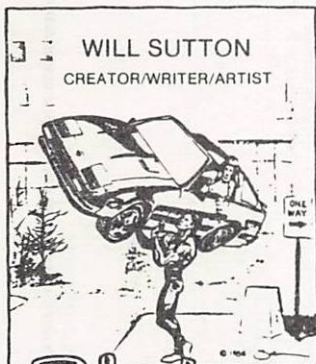
CREATOR/WRITER/LAYOUT

EMIL LYON

WRITER/EDITOR/RESIDENT GENIUS

LORENZO LIZANA

ARTIST



WILL SUTTON

CREATOR/WRITER/ARTIST

Stormbringer

future projects coming by...

PAUL MARTIN

CREATOR/WRITER/INKER

ERIC PHILLIPS

ARTIST

JOHN HOLMES

ARTIST

TEDDY WHITTENBARGER

INKER PENCILER

Come by and see us

Maurine Dorris: An Odyssey

by
Barbara Harmon & Janet Ward

It was a dark and stormy night. Lightning crashed noisily across the forboding landscape.

"Into the shed!" cried Maurine, pulling hard on Lemon Drop's steering wheel, and coaxing the old car out of the pouring rain. The three women huddled together for warmth, Janet crying softly to herself as Beth arranged their only blanket across the younger woman's shoulders.

They had started that morning from Nashville to join their friends for a weekend of merriment in Chattanooga. "You'll love it," Maurine had assured the other two. "We'll have fun!"

The day had been bright and cold, but since dark the rain had been their constant companion. Their food had not lasted as long as they had intended, and now even the puffed wheat and cheese popcorn were gone. A few stale M&M's and some blue Yukon Jack were all that remained. They were still many miles from the convention site. The car was sluggish after Monteagle and might not survive the trip.

"Well, Beth," said Maurine, "we've run into some bad luck, but look at the bright side - we'll still make Chattacon for the opening ceremonies."

Beth frowned. "And what about poor Janet?" she asked. "I don't think she's going to make it."

"Oh, I'll be fine," murmured Janet. "Just get me into a hot bath and I'll be ready to boogie 'til dawn!"

After much mutual encouragement the women were again ready to face the night. They inched Lemon Drop onto the unpaved road they had been following since Maurine made a wrong turn off the interstate near Tacky Town. There were fence posts, barbed wire, and an occasional mailbox, but absolutely no indication of where they were.

Suddenly, a soft yellow-white glow appeared to their left. Maurine let the car coast along, then turned abruptly onto a side road and stopped. The three stared for several minutes. The glow began to brighten and change until Maurine was nearly blinded by the light in the misty air. The other women waited for Maurine to make the first move.

"Say," said Maurine, "look at the lights outlining that low building just like Christmas lights on a stage. And over there - gee, I wish I could remember where I've seen this before."

"Oh," said Janet, "it looks just like heaven.

Well, no, maybe more like the Confederation masquerade stage at the Marriott in Atlanta."

"I know exactly what you mean," said Beth.

Maurine carefully opened the car door and stood watching the changing scene. Quite suddenly, a rush of leaves swirled around her, pulling her from the safety of her car. "Hey," she called to the others, "let's go see what's going on. Maybe they need some help," she added. There was no response from inside the car.

Alone, she made her way toward the glowing, shifting lights. As she approached, she could hear voices calling to one another. "Watch out for the Blob," cried someone, "She's going over the edge!" Maurine moved quickly toward a pink fitted sheet filled with balloons. "Easy, easy," she said calmly, "Just a little to your right - that's it. You'll be okay now." The Blob moved gratefully away. Maurine turned back, only to see a crowd of people trying to get an enormous box up on the stage. "This Robby the Robot thing weighs a ton," said someone. "We'll never get it up there. What happened to the forklift?" Again Maurine calmly solved the problem, guiding them to the ramp. They, too, were appreciative of her help.

Then, slowly, the mist cleared from around her. She was in a large open space, surrounded by black curtains, with creatures of all sizes and descriptions. First, a tall green animal with six legs, a long tail and a large pointed head with whiskers came to her, standing at her shoulder and rubbing her arm, as if for comfort. Then a short gray-headed woman came by, carrying several glasses of water and some straws, looking harassed and mumbling to herself. "Well, if they wanted safety pins, they should have brought safety pins!" Several young people all dressed in black satin and silver studs argued heatedly in a space slightly removed from the others. "Can't you ever do anything right?"

A small trim man in brief vest and spandex tights moved toward Maurine. He smiled, but before he reached her, he was joined by three women in harem pants. They jingled away. Beauty and the Beast drifted past, holding hands, interested only in each other and the Walkmans they wore.

Maurine walked slowly through these characters who waited for -- for what? Why did they line up like that, looking anxiously toward her. She moved suddenly away,

frightened by the intensity of those around her. She turned quickly and a feeling of other-worldliness came over her. She felt she was looking through a clouded mirror.

The mist came swirling back, just in time to cover her as she slowly fell into oblivion.

.. ..

Consciousness finally returned. She was lying in the ConSuite at Chattacon. Her friends were anxiously watching her fight her way back to awareness. "What - what happened," she asked. "Where am I?"

Several voices assured her that she was all right. But, what in the world had happened? She sat bolt upright, looking frantically about

her. "I have to go!" she cried. "I have to get back! I must get back!" She ran from the room.

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That was nearly a year ago. No one has actually seen Maurine since then, although there have been rumors that she led the World Fantasy Convention to its brightest day in Nashville. But these are merely stories to amuse the children on a rainy day. As for those of us who loved her best, we like to think that she has indeed found that unmarked back road, that country lane where she had left ... Shangri-La.



CHATSFIC . . .

A LITTLE BIT OF CHATTACON,
EVERY MONTH!

MEETINGS ON THE THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

Work in Progress

by

Chad D. Ward

Sitting in one's bed on a Sunday morning eating doughnuts, drinking coffee, and reading the comics page, despite the odd picture it must conjure up, is a very comfortable thing to do. It is one of my favorite things in the world to do. It is a ritual that I follow almost obsessively.

What I didn't need that particular Sunday was a visitor. I didn't need one so badly that I didn't answer the door the first six times the bell rang. It was only on the seventh that I was annoyed enough to actually get up and answer it. What the hell was someone doing interrupting a Sunday morning ritual? Didn't they know that this day was sacred, whatever one's particular religious observances might be? Jerk.

"The world is ending," the man on the other side of the door said conversationally.

"Nice day for it," was the only reply I could think of at the moment. And it was a nice day for it, until he showed up. Why couldn't he just let the world end, if that was indeed what it was going to do, in peace?

"The world is ending, brother, and I want you to be one of the saved." The man was dressed in a shabby raincoat of the Salvation Army variety and heavy black boots from the same source. His face had not had intimate contact with a razor for quite some time and his cheeks sank in where there were gaps in his false teeth where the real ones had fallen out since the last time he had seen a dentist, presumably sometime during the war.

"Is there any particular reason you want me?" I asked. "Have I done anything that makes me more worthy of salvation than the guy next door, or will just anybody do?"

"Brother, the end is near," the man said ignoring my question. That was all right, though. I wasn't really sure I wanted it answered anyway. "Don't get caught without the Lord," he continued.

And then the little man began to dance on my front porch. He shuffled from foot to foot bouncing up and down like a child that has to go to the bathroom very badly. "The end is near," he said again. The man turned and walked away, but not soon enough to save what was left of my morning.

I really felt like going back to bed though there were several things I needed to do during the day. My night's sleep hadn't been very restful. I had been subjected to several nasty dreams. A few of them I remembered, but the rest were already gone into the hidden reaches of my subconscious where only oc-

casional flickers of them surfaced to remind me not to eat tacos so close to bedtime. Freud would have had a field day with me after a full course meal at El Rancho.

One dream in particular stuck out in my mind. It had been a weird one all right. I had dreamt that I was having a conversation with a man with a forked tail wearing a business suit. I could sense a double maxi burrito cackling in the background over that one, a masterpiece of subconscious artistry exact down to the smell of brimstone in the air. It had left a very lasting impression; I could still smell traces of it in the house, or thought I could anyway. Lord, what a night.

I went into my office to start the day's work. My office isn't really an office, except to the IRS, but I'm not telling. My office is really my study, my sanctum sanctorum, my fortress of solitude. It is the only place in the house that I feel really at home. Three walls are lined with books from floor to ceiling. The fourth is occupied by my desk and computer. This is where I do most of my work. I have a job at a publishing house and I even have an office there, but my study at home is where I really get down to business. The rest of the house is rather spartanly furnished, but like I said, my study is where I spend most of my time.

I go in to the office at the publishing house almost every day and write memos, push papers, and do some editing, but I save the best stuff to bring home to work on. My boss doesn't mind as long as the work gets done and I don't make him look bad by spending too much time at the coffee machine.

The green plush carpet felt good under my feet. That carpet cost me quite a lot, but my peace of mind is worth it. I padded across the floor in my bare feet to my desk and sat down at my computer. My computer, my pal, my boon companion. It is always there, but never in the way. It never interrupts unless it is very important. It may seem strange to think that way about a buff colored chunk of on/off switches, but since I'm relatively antisocial any way, it fills my needs for friendship rather nicely.

I sat down and said hi to Bert the computer cactus. Bert is the only living thing, besides me, that has ever seen the inside of my study. He sits beside the monitor of my computer and watches as I work. He doesn't interrupt and he doesn't argue when I tell him my reasons for cutting or changing a piece of the story that I'm working on. I always tell him

what is going on. It helps me to sort out my reasons so I can present them coherently to some writer who is foaming at the mouth with his desire to pull my hair out for cutting a section. It's almost always the "best section of the book, the part that explains everything." No matter how much I change or cut, each piece that I excommunicate from the author's holy work is always the best. Talking to Bert helps me to be able to tell the rabid author why, although the section may be the best thing he has ever written, it needs to be cut. I wonder what I would do without Bert. Probably talk to the walls.

That morning's candidate for the editorial chopping block was a science fiction novel, my specialty. "...And then, blood gushing from every pore, the troglodyte from Antares opened his gaping maw and, in one fell swoop, bit Carla's head off." Oh God, I thought, not another one. Ever since film makers had seen fit to make beings from outer space look like green body builders with their skin flayed off and thrown in some extra appendages for good measure, authors had taken it as their cue to do the same. It sells, right? Not with me it doesn't.

The book wasn't badly written and in its present form could possibly have sold at another publishing house, but I refused to be responsible for continuing the nauseating trend. I ran my red pen through what was obviously "the best part of the book, the part that explains everything. Can't you see that the monster just needs to be understood. Can't you feel the anguish as he bites her head off?" No, I couldn't.

Why did monsters from outer space, the living dead, or whatever the author had dreamt up to scare the hell out of his characters and, hopefully, his readers, have to be so disgusting. I can understand the gut reaction to gore, but to me clean, sterile, antiseptic death was infinitely more frightening. I remembered my dream about the man in the gray business suit. Now there was an excellent candidate for a horror novel. Clean, well dressed, what more could one want from an executioner?

"I thank you, but your sentiments are misplaced. I am not here on nightmare business."

Excuse me? Bert, did you say something?

The man standing at the door to my study cleared his throat.

I turned and my nocturnal visitor was there, the double maxi burrito's revenge in full living color. This time he was dressed not in a business suit, but in an equally fashionable gray track suit. There was even a sleeve in

back for his tail.

My mind reeled, my tongue fell out, my jaws flapped incoherently. Whoa there, get a hold of yourself, I thought. This can't be real. I must still be dreaming.

"No Mr. Ward, you are not dreaming. I am very real and I am here on business."

Just stand still, maybe it will go away, my mind told me. No, better yet blink rapidly and gape. No, pour yourself a stiff drink, you're going to need it. As none of the other suggestions seemed to be working I opened my desk drawer and pulled out the bottle of no-label moonshine that my brother sends me from Tennessee and poured myself a tea glass full.

Once I had a grip, however tenuous, on myself I turned back to the man in the track suit and stared some more. For some reason the Stones' song Sympathy for the Devil began running through my head.

The man in the track suit began laughing as if reading my thoughts.

"Sympathy indeed, Mr. Ward. I need no sympathy. As I said, I am here on business."

"So this isn't just a social call," I finally managed to stammer. Oh lord, what have I gotten myself into? What have I done to deserve this? I was still hoping that the image would vanish into smoke any minute, but that was rapidly losing its plausibility. As if this whole thing were plausible to begin with.

"No, Mr. Ward, not a social call. I rarely make those any more." Oh great, a devil with no friends.

"So what can I do for you?" I asked. Well that certainly was a stupid question, the sarcastic portion of my mind said. I wondered if Emily Post had any rules of etiquette for dealing with the supernatural. Don't be rude was the best I could come up with.

"I am, as you no doubt have already guessed, Asmodeus Mogart, the great Satanus, Ashmadai, Lucifer the fallen light bringer. In short, Mr. Ward, the devil." A briefcase appeared in his hands and he crossed the room to my desk.

"How interesting," I said. I wanted to ask "How's business?" The sarcastic portion of my mind had obviously gone out of control.

He had crossed the space between the door and my desk and was unpacking the briefcase.

"I have a business proposition for you Mr. Ward. A very profitable business proposition that my computer tells me you would be in the best position to accept." So the devil had a computer? I looked at my own computer and was not reassured. I wondered if the great Satanus had a cactus too.

The interior of the briefcase had offered up what appeared to be a contract.

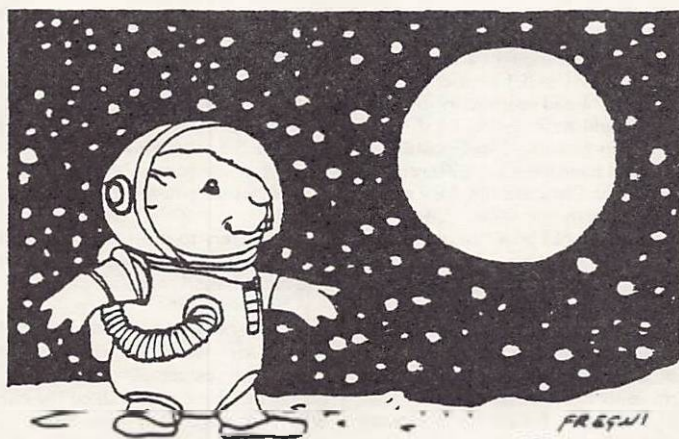
"Uh, excuse me, but," I managed to stammer through my shock. "I'm sorry, but I'm not

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in the market to sell my soul." I was terrified. How do you turn down the devil?

Lucifer laughed heartily as if what I had just said was the funniest thing he had ever heard. I was embarrassed. Was there something wrong with my soul? Why didn't he want it? I began to get defensive.

"No, Mr. Ward, I have all the souls I need for the moment. What I want, though, is for you to write my life story."

I was relieved. I was more than relieved. I think I actually fell off my chair and into the floor. I didn't have to sell my soul after all. I wonder what I could have gotten for it?

Satan waited patiently as I gaped a little longer. He wanted me to write his life story? Why? was the question that I was most concerned with. Not only why he wanted me, but also why he wanted his life story written. Didn't most people already know it? Difference of opinion with the management, confrontation with the big man himself, fall from grace, and all that?

"So you want me to write your life story," was all that came out. Satan just stood impassively in front of my desk and nodded. The only sign of irritation was his tail flicking impatiently back and forth, weaving hypnotically like a snake that had been charmed from a basket and was not at all happy about it.

"Yes Mr. Ward. I want you to write my life story," he said when it became apparent that I was not going to add to the comment. "I picked you because of your writing and editing skills and because of a certain doctoral thesis that you wrote."

My thesis? I hadn't thought about that in years. I wondered if I still had a copy lying around some place. I had written my doctoral thesis on what would have happened if Satan had won the war in heaven. I had postulated that nothing would have been any different except the names, that Christian theology would have turned out exactly the same. "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss." to quote The Who, and I had.

Despite the unorthodox topic and some very unhappy professors in the English department I had survived the oral and written challenges and had gotten my doctorate.

"You chose me because of a paper I wrote seven or eight years ago?" I asked.

"Yes, Mr. Ward. I had my computer search through all of humanity to find someone who might be sympathetic to the topic of my life history and who had the requisite skills. There were and are thousands of candidates. I chose you, however, because of your experience in writing."

I thought the offer over. One thing seemed fairly to leap to mind as a reason to refuse. "If I choose to accept this how will it affect my standing? You know, my chances

for getting in to heaven." I had been dubious about the afterlife before, but an encounter with Satan himself can quickly change a man's mind. Would writing the devil's biography disqualify any chance that I might have at achieving heaven, or was the cause already lost? If the devil knew about my thesis wouldn't his competition also know? What would the celestial hosts think about my idea that if Ashmadai had won the war in heaven nothing would have changed?

"As far as I know, Mr. Ward, you have led a relatively blameless life, aside of course from the usual lies, adulterous thoughts..." *Oh god.* I thought, *he knows about Lola.* Lola was my boss's wife. Whenever she was in the office I always thought that she was trying to pass secret signals to me. A blink, a nod, a dropped handkerchief. All were part of my fantasy that she would one day fall to her knees in front of me and proclaim her undying lust. "...slightly perverse actions, and so on and so forth. I'm sure that you are more familiar with the list than I am." He looked at me sternly.

"As you know, Mr. Ward, I am not the world's most fanatic being on the subject of morals. I am, however, very familiar with the rules of what is, and what is not, acceptable behavior for entry into my competition's so called pearly gates. As far as I can tell, you have not violated any of the rules so flagrantly that you would be denied access."

I was overjoyed, I was ecstatic, I was going to heaven. It was a good thing to know.

One thing still bothered me, though. He hadn't answered my question.

"The answer to your question, Mr. Ward, is that in all likelihood you will get into heaven. As I said before, I have all the souls I need for the moment so the loss of yours is of no great consequence."

"What do you mean 'in all likelihood'?" I asked.

"Contrary to most religious doctrines," he said, "entrance to heaven is granted on a relative merit basis."

"Excuse me?"

He sighed and started over. "To put it simply, Mr. Ward, goodness is graded on a curve. My esteemed competition knows all beings that have ever walked the earth and exactly how good they have been. Of course people like the saints throw off the curve somewhat, but there have been several thousand, even millions of people out there worse than you. The chances are that you will get into heaven."

"So, you mean by doing the work that you do, corrupting innocents and drawing people from the path of righteousness, you are actually helping me to get into heaven?" I was astounded. Satan himself was helping me to get

into heaven. Now there was something to write home about.

"Don't get moralistic on me Mr. Ward. I have my job to do and I do it well. I have my place in the cosmic scheme of things. As a matter of fact, you are right. I am, in a way, helping you get into heaven. To be perfectly honest, I am helping a lot of people get into heaven. Without me there would be no goodness."

Well that one was a new one on me. Without Satan there would be no goodness. Without heat there would be no ice cream. I was a little skeptical.

Satan seemed to be reading my mind again. "Think about it, Mr. Ward. If there was nothing to compare goodness to, no frame of reference, there could be no goodness at all, at least no way of deciding what goodness is." He paused for a moment as if considering some weighty decision. "You see, we all have our place in the grand scheme of things. My job is to provide a reference point to judge by and a way to weed out the undesirables. It has been my misfortune to be subject to bad public relations by the closed minded. They refuse to see that I do indeed have a purpose. Everyone, including my esteemed adversary, needs competition to survive. It's the way the universe is set up."

I had heard the idea before. There can be no God without a Satan to balance things out. It made sense to me, but then again Satan was also supposed to be the father of all lies. What to do, what to do. The momentousness of the event was just becoming clear. Who else had ever been asked to write the devil's life story? No one that I knew of. I was the first. I was a pioneer, and explorer into the unknown. Kind of the Jaques Cousteau of theology. Me, Chad Ward, historian of the underworld. Oh sure, others had tried. Dante Alighieri, Homer, Jerry Falwell, and I suppose Milton had some good ideas, but I was the first to get my information straight from the source. What a deal.

I was quite possibly gambling with my immortal soul here, this was no time to be unsure.

"But, there is still a doubt that I will get to heaven?"

Satan sighed again. He seemed to be getting impatient with the conversation. "Yes, Mr. Ward, there is still a doubt. There always is. But, unless an entire generation of saints comes along, you should be all right."

I was relieved, but I am also very practical and I had some very eager creditors. "You said that the proposition was profitable. How profitable?" I was on shaky ground here. I didn't want to upset Satan. Who does? I felt like I was on my first job interview. I didn't know quite what to ask for, what he would

consider fair. I didn't want to ask for too much and blow the whole deal.

"What would you consider fair, Mr. Ward?" This was just like my first job interview. They asked, "what would you consider fair?" If you went too high you ran the risk of pricing yourself right out of the market, if you went too low they got a better deal than what they were expecting and you got cheated. Since I didn't know what the going rate for satanic biographies was I decided to go high.

"I want my own publishing company." I said. He is going to drag me, kicking and screaming, off to hell right here and now. I thought. I was too presumptuous. I was going to die and no one would notice except Bert. I wondered if the devil would leave some soulless husk here on earth to do my job for a while and then die quietly so no one would notice my passing. Once again my mind had gone quite out of control.

Satan didn't even consider the offer.

"Done," he said. "You'll need that anyway, just to publish my story. What else would you like?" He was grinning at my naivete. I had gone too low and now I looked like an idiot. What did I want? Money? Cars? Beautiful women at my beck and call? I honestly didn't know.

"Could you give me some time to think about it?" I said. I wanted to research the topic. What had others gotten out of the devil? I needed to check my limits.

"Of course, Mr. Ward," he said. The evil grin from my dream was back and I didn't like that one bit. "I can give you all the time that you need. I'm in no hurry. I am very glad that you have accepted my offer." Suddenly, so was I. No telling what might have happened if I hadn't. That grin didn't bode well.

Satan then disappeared in a proverbial puff of smoke. "Do be sure and call if you need anything," was the last thing that I heard from him that day and for some weeks to come.

damn much paperwork to deal with it." The car sped off into the impending night.

Jeff suddenly became animated. "Say man," he said pulling a cigarette from behind his ear. "You hungry? I'm about to starve. Are you okay? You really don't look so good." Bill nodded and threw up into the glove compartment.

"Aw man, what d'you go and do that for?" Jeff asked as he aimed the Hovercraft at the nearest Burger King.

"Klingons at 9:00 and the Cosmic Hovercraft is on the move. All you aliens better watch out," he said as the Ford lurched across the road at the Klingon warship cleverly disguised as a yellow mailbox.

the need of a map or diagram in order fully to understand what is going on, a map or diagram on which we can locate, in spatial terms, what characters are occupying what spaces, or going through what movements, at a given moment. When I read *Lord of the Rings*, I found myself continually turning back and forth from text to map, wishing that I had a big map of Middle-Earth and a bunch of pieces so that I could shove Gandolf and Strider and Treebeard and Frodo around the board.

But surely, I can hear you objecting already, that is not anything like playing a board game: in a game of backgammon or parchisi or whatever, the future is uncertain, and moves can happen however. But on your map of Middle-Earth, you are not at liberty to send Frodo off to Mirkwood instead of to Mordor. And that's quite right. In that respect, reading a board-game book is not like playing a board game. It is, rather, like replaying a board game—one of the chess games, for example, in the *Sunday New York Times*. Or one of Morphy's lavish and baroque creations. In the same way, when I move Tolkein's pieces around his Middle-Earth, I am replaying a game Tolkein has played already.

A board-game book, then, really needs a map. Or it needs a floorplan, or a diagram, or whatever, because where and when different things pieces are are central to an understanding of the book. The most obvious examples come from detective fiction—any one of hundreds of English country-house mysteries would do. But let's take the early Hercule Poirot novels of Dame Agatha Christie, almost everyone comes complete with floorplan—*Death in the Air*, *Murder on the Orient Express*, and so on. In his early years, Poirot had a marvelous grasp of space and time, and in the exercise of that grasp he solved his mysteries; as he aged, however, he became more and more like Miss Jane Marple, falling back on psychology and a knowledge of human depravity as his sense of space and time began to falter.

My spatial sense has always been pretty tottery, and my ability to visualize shakier still; and if you are anything like me, I defy you to try and sort out those early Poirot mysteries without a map.

Sometimes you need a map and the book doesn't give you one, and that's awful. Sometimes, if the territory is fictitious, the whole business gets so desperate that you give up and draw the map yourself. I have made a nice map of the planet Winter from Ursula LeGuin's *Left Hand of Darkness*, and while the book is only a semi-board game, and mostly doesn't need a map, I feel more secure with it by my side.

If the territory is real, you have to trudge

out and buy a map. Almost every serious reader of *Ulysses* ends up with a map of Dublin, pushing Bloom and Stephen around so he can see just how that little dance went on that fatal Bloomsday.

Now that dance business may just possibly explain part of the appeal of board games and board-game books. Because, among a whole lot of other things, *Ulysses* is a dance; you see Bloom and Stephen move around Dublin, fatally destined to collide, unknowingly approaching each other, ignorantly passing each other by, moving away and back again, until their final meeting.

Something of the same sort of dance goes on in a chess game, particularly, say, when you replay one of those elegant Morphy games. Now, when I talk about dance, I crawl out on a very fragile limb, because it is an art of which I know little and understand less; but I'll risk it, because it may give me another way to understand board-game books. You could dance *Ulysses*, but not *A Portrait of the Artist: Lord of the Rings*, but not *The Hobbit*, which is, as the subtitle says, simply "There and Back Again"—except, I think, for the battle scene at the mountain. People have, of course, danced *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and you could dance the middle acts of *King Lear*, but you would play hell dancing *Hamlet*, unless you did it allegorically. And you could dance Nora's Christmas tree-piano-mailbox routine in *Doll's House*, and you could dance any comedie de boulevard ever written, because they are all hide-the-live-body board games.

It is not just a matter of movement, and it is not just a matter of place. Finnegans Wake, even though it is firmly anchored in Dublin, is not a board game. Most picaresque novels are not board games, because the movement is all, while the wanderer's destination is almost never significant. And in *The Canterbury Tales*, while the destination has symbolic significance, the precise location of the travelers is of little importance.

In the field of science fiction, LeGuin's *Dispossessed*, Blish's *Cities in Flight*, Clement's *Mission of Gravity*, and Niven's *Ringworld* all have elements of the board game. Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* does not. Nor is Asimov's *Second Foundation* a board game. It is a shell game.

In detective fiction, again, there are a couple of unusual examples. *King Oedipus* has to play a board game that is decades old when the play begins, has to play it almost to its end before he recognizes himself as one of the pieces. Ross McDonald's *Lew Archer* does very much the same thing in book after book; the present action in an Archer book always consists of a replay of the past. One of my colleagues has wittily suggested that the California detective novel, typically is played

on a map of the United States, with the board tipped to the west; and the action almost always involves watching everything that's loose slide out of the Midwest into California, the pieces bumping into each other as they go.

Or consider the novels of Rex Stout. Nero Wolfe, who has obviously read his Sophocles, flatly refuses to become a piece on the board. He will not leave his house nor deviate from his schedule; prospective clients may circle him from now until doomsday, waving blank checks and singing won't you, won't you, won't you, won't you join the dance, but he always mutters pfui and goes off to his orchids.

Or almost always; once in a great while he will venture out of his brownstone and onto the board, but the results are almost always catastrophic. His chosen method is to remain out of play, sending Archie out onto the board to assemble the pieces and move them onto Wolfe's board, arranged as Wolfe wants them arranged. Have you ever noticed how detailed Stout's descriptions are, when he is dealing with the lineup of suspects in Wolfe's office? Who is sitting in what chair, next to whom? Like the lineup for a game. Then, and only then, Wolfe moves in--as a player, not as a piece--and plays his own game out.

Let me offer a final example, before anybody asks why I have left out Faulkner's Yoknapataupha County books. I think the whole saga became more and more board game as it went along, perhaps with Faulkner's drawing of the board for the Viking Portable Faulkner as the watershed. I believe the difference between the last Snopes book and the first is partly that the last is much more of a board game.

Now, you will note that--with the exception of the books by Joyce and Faulkner--all of my examples have come from popular fiction or from outside the twentieth century. Let me try to account for that. Obviously, the most serious mainstream fiction of our century has been concerned with the inward journey, the interior territory; and even when that voyage and that territory have been reflected in outward movement, that movement is mostly pointless and ill-defined. Consider, for example, Ship of Fools or On the Road, or movies like Easy Rider or Vanishing Point: nobody with good sense would think twice about following them on a map.

A physicist might say, I suppose, that here we see a movement from a Newtonian universe--which is forevermore a board-game universe--to the universe of Heisenberg, in which nobody can ever tell where anything is or when or where it is going. A shell-game universe, in fact.

On the other hand, a sociologist might say that in our day, movement had become so fre-

quent and territory so temporary as to become meaningless. I board a plane in Atlanta, fly to Florida, read a paper, fly home, and have no sense of having gone anywhere.

And the concept of one's own turf is increasingly being left to big inner-city children who will, in adulthood, discover that they have no home in this world any more. Increasingly, we lose all sense of meaningful occupation of territory or of meaningful movement. By way of contrast: on a 19th-century family Bible from my wife's Carolina family, in which otherwise only births and deaths are recorded, there is a notation under one name: GONE TO ARKANSAS. Now there is meaningful movement for you.

Finally, a psychologist might find himself interested in what these board-games do for their authors. Probably very much what board games do for the rest of us: give us hegemony over territory, however temporary, however illusory. A Portrait is a book about a man who has not yet taken control of his city; Finnegan's Wake is by an author who can make anything into a symbol for anything else; but in Ulysses, reaching out from exile, Joyce takes command of his native city. Nero Wolfe, in real life. Same, perhaps, with Faulkner and Oxford, Mississippi, though he came home to do it. Turn it into a game board that you can play, and then it belongs to you. But motives like these make less and less sense in a world where fewer and fewer people seem to come from anywhere.

In any case, whatever the rationale, it seems apparent that the twentieth-century experience is ceasing to be an experience which can be represented on a board. John D. McDonald's McGee novels are partly board game; but most of the new detectives are almost never the sort of space-merchant that the early Poirot was; and the new science fiction grows increasingly inward. In many ways, it has been said, Ulysses is the end of an era. At any rate, in the terms we have been using for the past few minutes, Joyce seems to be the last mainstream author exactly to reflect an inner voyage in a precise exterior correlative--a board game, in fact--as Dante had done it six centuries before.

Possibilities

by
Chad D. Ward

The tree shone resplendent with the love that had gone into it.

"Linda would be proud," David Gilman thought as he stepped back to survey his work. With the thought of his ex-wife came thought of his daughter, Cori. The two of them hadn't been getting along since Linda had left him three years before.

"If anything can get her back, this will," he thought as he placed the last present under the tree. The plainly wrapped box was the result of a year's hard work and research. It was the crowning glory of a long career in transdimensional physics. If his colleagues at the University had known what had gone into its creation he would have been laughed out of the scientific community. They had all wondered at his long hours at the lab's computer terminal and the all-hours visits to the library, bringing back dusty leather bound tomes. David would not even tell Ed, his closest friend and Cori's godfather, what he was working on.

"Just a little research that I'm doing for myself. I'll let you know if anything interesting comes up," he would say when asked about the project. Finally they stopped asking.

David's crowning glory, the masterpiece he could not share was the reduction of magic to a mathematical formula; a way to bend the very fabric of the universe. Even he was not sure how it worked, only that it did. He was not even sure of all that it could do. It was too close to Christmas for him to do much research.

David had always been a casual student of the occult. He had programmed the computer at the lab to search for a correlation among all the varied elements in the data he had provided. It had found one.

The very air around the present shimmered in anticipation of its opening.

David Gilman awaited the coming of Christmas morning with the eager restlessness of a child experiencing his first visit from the good Saint Nick. He could hardly wait for Cori to open the present he had made for her.

Morning finally came, and with it the traditional Christmas breakfast. It was one of the only holdovers from the time that all three of them would gather and talk before opening any presents.

"You look beautiful," David told his daughter as she sat down across the table from him. "Just like your mother used to look in the morning. I always wondered how she did

it." David smiled at the memory. His daughter's voice brought him quickly back to the present.

"Do you have to bring up that woman?" Linda Gilman had been "that woman", to Cori, at least, ever since she had forfeited the title of mother by leaving her and her father for a man in the History department three years before. Cori had been the woman of the house ever since. "It's Christmas, dad, don't ruin it." She could never understand how he could still love a woman that had hurt him so much, hurt them both so much. "I'm nothing like her, so please stop comparing us." The rest of breakfast was finished in silence.

She softened somewhat when she opened her presents; the new clothes she had wanted and a few new albums.

"Thanks, dad, these are great," she said when she was done. "I'm sorry I snapped at you before, but you know how I feel."

"I understand," he said. "Anyway, that's not all I have for you. There's one more to open." David handed her the box. Its unadorned white paper made the cheerful holiday wrappings strewn about the floor seem cheap and gaudy.

She opened it greedily; surprises were few and far between in the Gilman household. Her face fell when she saw that it was only a transparent cube.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Just something I've been working on at the lab. Call it a wish cube if you like, I do."

"Oh dad, it's not another one of your projects is it?" She looked at the cube doubtfully. "Remember the last one, when you tried to make one of those supermarket door openers for the garage? The first time you tried it the power was out for a week."

"No, it's nothing like that. Look closely."

As his daughter watched the shifting colors in the cube, David thought of the long hours spent at his computer, the visits to second hand book shops, and the inordinate amount of time spent at the University library in his search for the right formula. The computer had provided the information he needed, but it had taken many tries to get the right combination of variables. He had spent several days rechecking his data, but he had finally succeeded beyond his wildest imaginings.

David watched his daughter's face as the mists in the cube coalesced into a shape that somehow looked familiar but was not quite

recognizable. He wondered what it was that she saw. He knew what he would see if he looked directly into the cube. He had spent many hours doing just that before wrapping the present, every time the picture was the same. He saw his wife; he saw what might have been. Linda was calling him to join her. She was even more beautiful than he remembered. It had taken great effort just to wrap the present, much less give it away.

"What do you see, Cori," he asked eagerly leaning forward in his chair. He wanted so badly for her to see the same things he had seen.

"Just shapes and colors, it's really pretty. Thank you. I'll just take all this stuff up to my room." David sat back and wondered.

She did see something, though, and she saw it again as she sat the cube in the center of the desk. She saw freedom. Freedom from her father and his constant reminders of her mother, the deserter. Freedom came in the form of a man. Beautiful and always changing, he was everything she had ever wanted. He had been created by her and for her through the cube. He would take her away. Her father would never understand something like that, that was why she had not been able to tell him the truth. That was why she had left him alone with his thoughts among the discarded wrappings. He would not understand.

Cori spent days in her room talking to the man in the cube. It had come as a complete shock that she could communicate with him. She had been lying on her bed half asleep when she heard him calling to her. He was perfect. They would sit and talk for hours about what it would be like when they were together. He would take her away and give her everything she had ever wanted. He could, he said, because he could do anything with her by his side.

When she was not talking to the man, Cori was trying to make ends meet on her father's paycheck. It had been her mother's job before she left. She had once confided to Cori how little her father made. Now she knew only too well.

"I don't understand why your father doesn't ask for a raise," Linda had said during the conversation. "He is head of the department and he is making less than some of the younger professors. Sometimes that man makes me so angry I could just up and leave. When I ask him about it he tells me that his work and his family are the only things he needs to make him happy. What about what I need? He was going to be somebody when we got married. When he was made head of the department over people that had been there a lot longer than he had, I thought we were finally on our way. That was ten years ago and he is still making about the same amount of

money now that he was then. Sometimes I envy the fact that he is happy where he is, but he seems to have forgotten us."

Deep down inside Cori agreed with her mother's assessment. She remembered the note that Linda had left on her pillow the night she had left.

Dear Cori:

You must try to understand how I feel. If I don't do something for myself now it will be too late. I love your father but I have my own life to lead. You are a young woman now and can take care of yourself. I hope you will make a better decision than I did at your age. I don't want you to go through the same things that I am.

Take care

Mom

Cori had never shown the note to her father.

David rarely saw his daughter during the day. She was in class and he was at the lab. Cori saw to it that she never had one of his classes. The only time they spent together was when she would come down from her room to fix dinner for the two of them.

One night over a meal of some sort of hamburger and noodle mix—Cori had never quite gotten the hang of the kitchen—David asked his daughter if she had ever seen anything in the cube that he had given her. She was too ashamed to answer so she sidestepped the issue and asked him what he saw. David told her that he saw Linda calling to him.

"I think the cube shows what might have been if something, one small event, had not happened or had happened in a different way," he said. "I think that at each turning point in a person's life there are several different ways a situation could turn out. The cube shows the way that is, or was, best for the person looking into it." He continued to speak not seeing the look of distaste on Cori's face. "Right now at the lab I'm working on a way to get to that alternative point shown in the cube. If I can cross over into the 'might have been' I can be with your mother again."

Cori's green eyes were half closed and the level of her voice dropped slightly, the only sure signs that she was angry, just like her mother.

"She left you, can't you accept that? Can't you just face reality instead of trying to change it? Maybe mom had a cube of her own and it showed what having a real life might be like." Cori stormed upstairs before David could stop her. He followed her upstairs to try and explain but the door was locked when he got there. David could hear her talking to someone through the door. "I'm not like her, I

won't be, but I can't stay here the rest of my life. I need something more." David wondered who she might be talking to. He didn't know much about her life outside the house, not much at all. He went back downstairs to the dirty dishes and his dreams of Linda.

As the days passed David adjusted to his daughter's absence. She didn't even come down to fix dinner any more. He had eaten TV dinners by himself when Linda had left him and Cori was too upset to come out of her room. Now Cori seemed to have left him and he was eating Chunky Sirloin Burger and Tater Tots again. Each day was a new microwaveable delight.

As the Winter ended and Cori's last quarter in college began, she started spending less time in her room. She seemed to be going out more often with her friends and David wondered if one of them might be the person he had heard her on the phone with. There was no way of telling. She even began eating dinner with him again and their life settled back into the routine that it had been before Christmas. A life of mumbled greetings and halfhearted conversations about the weather.

One day David returned home a little earlier than usual and found the house empty. Work at the lab had not been going well and it was beginning to look as if he would never find a way to cross over into the world of the cube that he so desired.

He went up to Cori's room to look at the cube to see if he could find any of the inspiration that was so lacking when he tried to work at the lab. It took a while to find the cube. It had been hidden under a pile of sweaters that Cori had outgrown and hadn't worn since puberty had taken its toll on her wardrobe several years before. David was surprised to find that he didn't see his wife when he looked into the cube. It had become attuned to Cori during the time that she had spent with it.

Instead of Linda he saw what Cori saw. He saw a man sitting alone on a high hill surrounded by the ruins of what appeared to be a castle. Then David understood whom Cori had been talking to the night of the argument. The cube somehow transmitted emotions as well as scenes and soon David was crying as he began to understand what the man in the cube was feeling. He was still crying when the picture in his masterpiece faded back into mist and the only thing shown was his own reflection.

A week passed before David had the courage to ask Cori about the man on the hill. Her face was set as she answered him.

"Well, dad, I thought about what I said to that night about facing reality and decided that I could stand to do a little of it myself. I'm a grown woman now, I should know better than

to chase impossible dreams. They are too unreliable." She was able to hold off the tears until she left the room.

When David went to bed that night he found the cube sitting on his dresser.

He began to work full time on the problem of crossing over into the world of his dreams. His entire day was spent either with the cube or at his computer terminal researching the elements that had gone into its creation. He lost weight neglected his classes and other work until he was finally forced to take a leave of absence, "for reasons of mental and physical health," or so the memo read. He was forbidden to use either the lab or the University's computer. His best friend Ed was made temporary head of the department.

David was not to be daunted. He worked at his computer at home. It wasn't nearly as powerful as the one in the lab, but it would do. He became obsessed with the idea of crossing over and the promise of hope that it held for him.

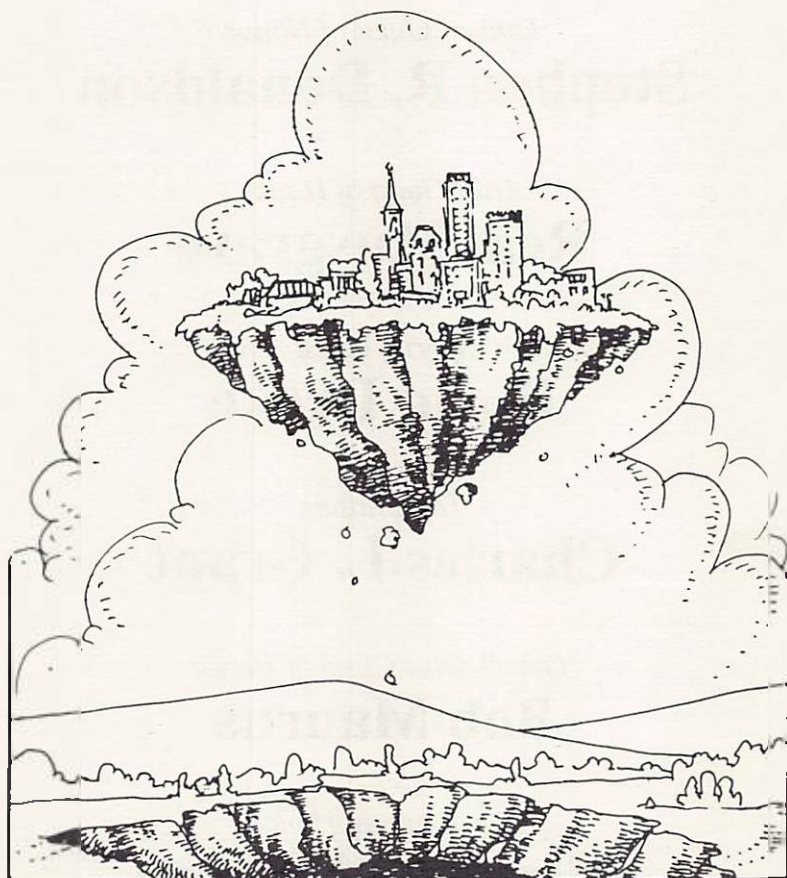
"I'm very close now," he told his daughter one morning over breakfast. "I'll be with her soon."

Cori had a hard time not saying anything about her feelings on the 'cube project' as she had come to call it. She was working and seeing her father less often, so it was easier to forget her own experiences with the cube and pretend that it was just another one of her father's crazy ideas.

One Spring afternoon Cori decided to surprise her father. She had gotten a raise at work and wanted to take him out to lunch to celebrate. He was spending all of his time at the computer and it was difficult to get him away, even for meals. She thought a lunch out might take his mind off the project for a while.

She found him slumped over his computer. Even from where she was standing at the doorway she could tell that he wasn't breathing. When she went closer she could see that he was clutching the cube so tightly that the edges had cut into his fingers. He was buried in his best suit with the cube and a picture of Linda by his side. Linda didn't attend the funeral, but Cori knew that it didn't matter any more. They were all free now.

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