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Larry Niven

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Vincent DiFate

Science Speaker:

Dr. Rosalyn S. Yalow



Acknowledgements

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And a very special thank you to the various professionals who have lent their names to the characters in our dramatic presentation!

And a special thanks to our staff.

Front cover illustration courtesy Vincent DiFate, Copyright © 1975 Pyramid Books.

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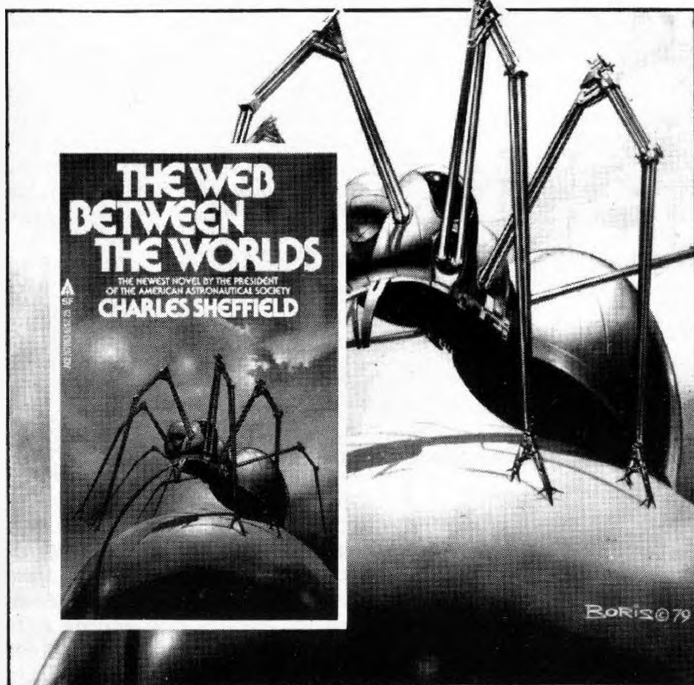
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An Appreciation of Larry Niven

by David Gerrold

It is easy to appreciate Larry Niven.

There is so much to appreciate.

Fortunately, appreciating Larry Niven is something I've had a great deal of experience with. It is not a difficult operation, and it becomes easier with each new Larry Niven story. But you already know that, of course.

However, what you may not know is that it is equally easy to appreciate Larry Niven in a variety of other roles.

As a host, for instance, Niven is extraordinarily gracious. I have yet to get more than four paces into the Niven vestibule without having a drink thrust into my hand. The quality of the liquor is always superb and always unwatered. (To non-drinkers this may seem a curious kind of judgment, but to most writers, alcohol ranks somewhere above hemoglobin on the list of precious bodily fluids to be protected against corruption.)

Larry's and Fuzzy's parties are always fun, always filled with interesting members of a variety of species, and the groaning board alone is reason enough to treasure the invitation.

The Nivens are also connoisseurs of fine cats. A Niven cat is second only to a Heinlein cat in wit and personality. (Don't take my word for it—I'm biased—I've unloaded orange kittens on Larry and Fuzzy so many times that they don't let me up the front steps unless I have both hands in the air and all my pockets turned inside out; ask a cat expert. Or ask a *Kzin*.)

Larry is also the possessor of a sly wit. This, combined with his—uh, tendency to candor, can make a conversation with Niven not unlike juggling gelignite. (A caution to young writers—don't ever ask Niven his opinion of your book. He'll tell you. And he will be clinically accurate.)

Larry loves his craft. This much is obvious. He enjoys the act of writing, of publishing, of *sharing* his visions; but this is only the expression of a deeper love—Larry Niven loves ideas. He loves to dissect them, take them apart and see what makes them work, then put them back together and let them run at high speed and find out where they will ultimately go.

Larry loves to discover new ideas, and share them with anyone who is willing to listen. In that, he reminds me of a small child on a beach, discovering one shiny new seashell after and bringing them back one at a time to his parent and saying, "Look what I found, isn't it pretty?"

And if you take the time to look through the same eyes as that child, you will see how lovely that seashell of an idea really is.

It is this love of *idea* that pervades Larry Niven's work, providing it with that same sense of old-fashioned wonder that is science fiction's special birthright. It is this skill at *ideation* that makes Niven a modern master in the field. (It also makes him a pain in the ass to collaborate with—he is always demanding that you be just a little bit better than you think you can.)

I must take advantage of this forum to make a point long overdue. Critics of Niven's work often say that it is weak on characterization, that Niven's people are not as well-developed as they should be. I find this a difficult criticism to believe. I've worked with the man. His sense of character is solid and acute—it is just that Larry's ideas tend to overpower not only his stories, but the characters in them as well. I mean, let's face it—how can any book *contain* the Ringworld in all its mind-boggling grandeur? Niven's ideas spill off the pages and into your head in such a torrent of wonder that any lesser characters would disappear entirely. Niven's characters—Louis Wu, Nessus, Speaker-To-Animals, Teela Brown, Halroprillalar, to name my favorites—are vivid and memorable. (And the proof of that is that I can still remember how to pronounce and *spell* Halroprillalar without having to go look it up.) (If I'm wrong, don't tell me.)

Niven is a joy to read. He is a joy to work with. And, for me, he is a special joy to sit and drink and talk with.

Or, to put it a more appropriate way . . . Larry Niven is an extra dollop of whipped cream in the Irish coffee of science fiction. ★

DOSSIER: LARRY NIVEN

Born: April 30, 1938, in Los Angeles, California, USA.

Father: Waldemar Van Cott Niven

Mother: Lucy Estelle Doheny Niven Washington

Raised mostly in Beverly Hills, California. A year and a half in Washington, D.C., aged 6-7, due to World War II, while my father was a Navy desk ensign.

Attended Hawthorne Public School (Beverly Hills); the Carpinteria School for Boys (Cate School, near Santa Barbara).

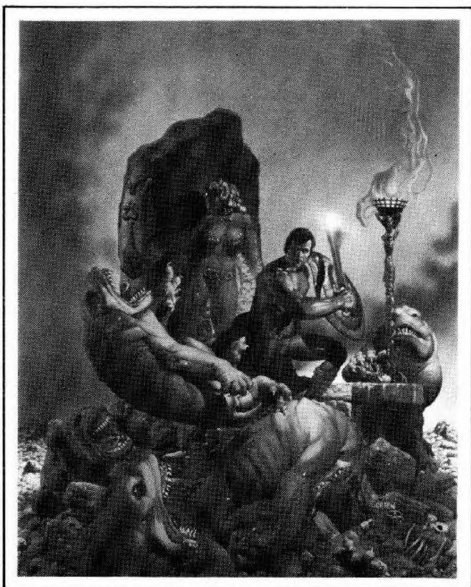
Entered California Institute of Technology, September 1956. Flunked out February 1958, due to having discovered a used book store jammed with used science fiction magazines.

Graduated Washburn University, June 1962: BA in Mathematics with Minor in Psychology.

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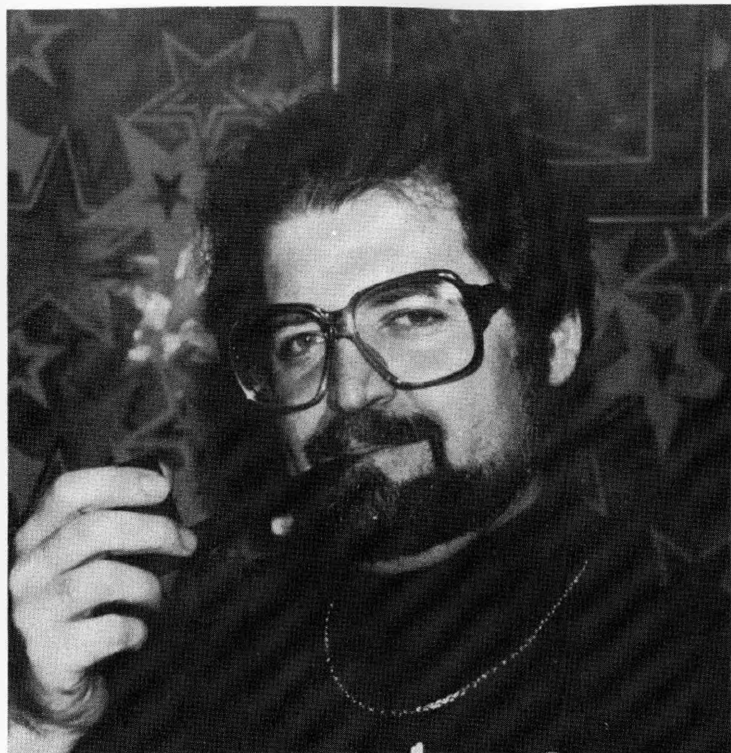


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Photograph courtesy of Larry Niven.

One year graduate work in mathematics at UCLA.

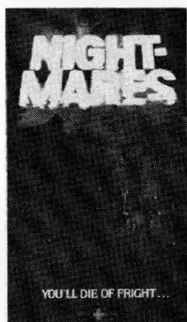
First story publication: "The Coldest Place," *Worlds of If*, December 1964.

Married Marilyn Joyce Wisowaty, September 6, 1969. No children. We reside in Tarzana, California.

I have written at every length, from 1000 words to 250,000 words. Most of my work is fiction, but there have been speculative articles, speeches for high schools and colleges, and a few television scripts.

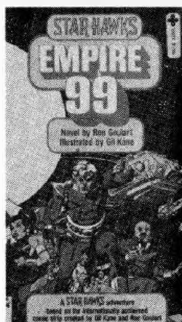
Awards: Hugo (or Science Fiction Achievement Award) for Best Short Story, 1966: *Neutron Star*. "Forrie" award, 1969, for service to the science fiction field. Hugo, Best Novel 1970: *Ringworld*. Nebula, Best Novel 1970: *Ringworld*. Ditmar (Australian, Best International Science Fiction): *Ringworld*, 1972. Hugo, Best Short Story 1971: *Inconstant Moon*. Hugo, Best Short Story 1974: *The Hole Man*. Hugo, Best Novelette 1975: *The Borderland of Sol*. Lens (E.E. Smith Memorial Award) for service to the science fiction field. Various Guest-of-Honor plaques. ★

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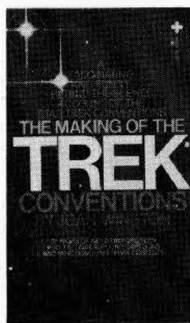
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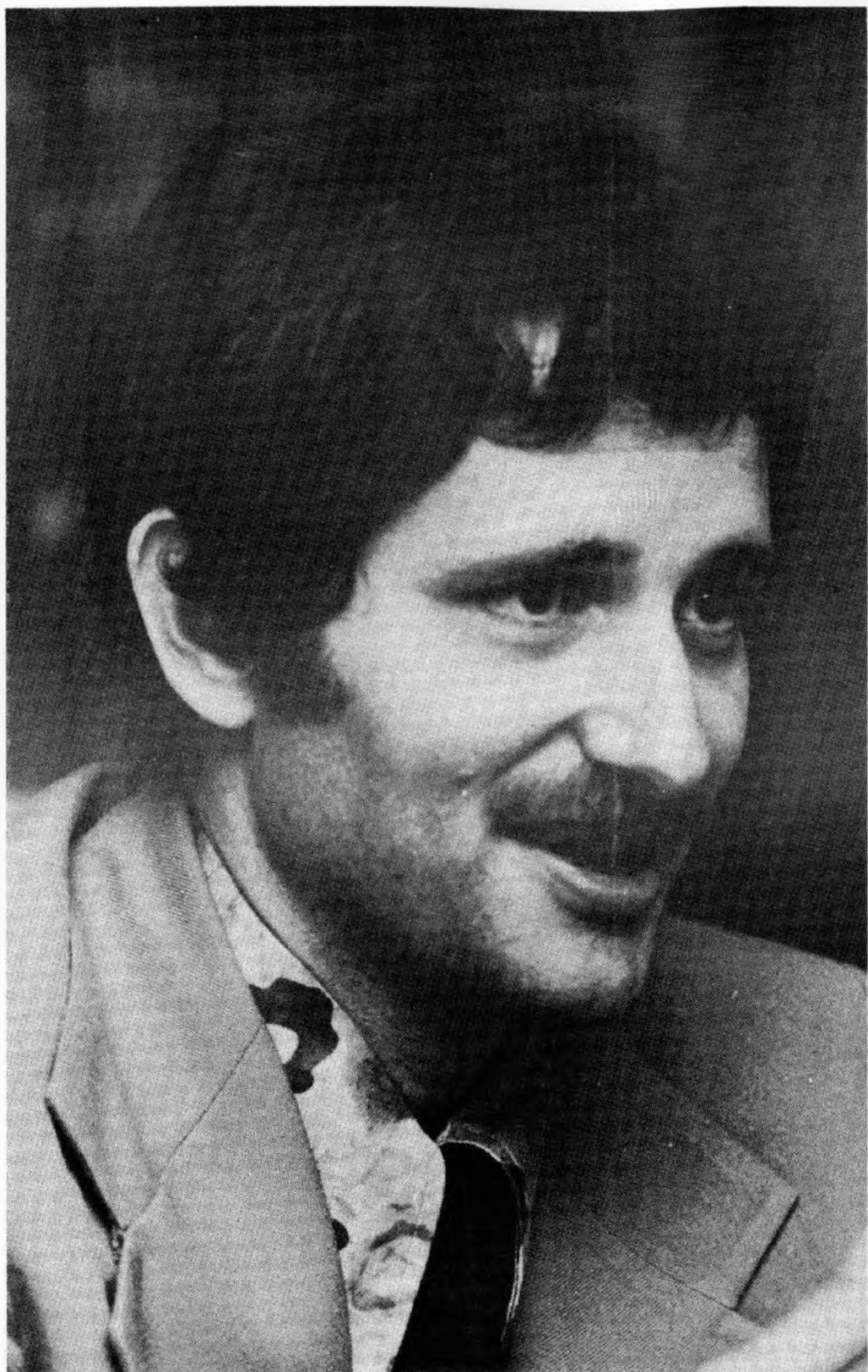
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Photograph by Jay Kay Klein.

Vincent DiFate: Hugo Award Winning Human

by Andrew Porter

I first met Vincent DiFate in the early 1970's, possibly at a Lunacon, though I'd "met" him through his artwork months before that. I'd been aware of the name and connected it to the word artist as early as 1969, at that year's World Science Fiction Convention, but consciousness of DiFate as a "capital A" Artist didn't impinge upon my brain until a year or so later. In late 1970, Vinnie's artwork began appearing in *Locus*; he had already developed into a regular interior artist for *Analog*. My own *Algol*, later to become today's *Starship*, was struggling along. I was constantly on the lookout for good artwork—from professionals like Jack Gaughan, who did artwork for fanzines. According to my files, the first issue I ever sent Vinnie was in 1969. The quality of those first offset issues must have impressed him. (Either that, or the lack of quality of the artwork in them.) Vinnie eventually sent me some artwork; I ran his wrap-around two color cover on my November 1972 issue. Since then, I've continued to use artwork by DiFate through the years, first black and whites, now color covers.

But my first impressions were of DiFate's black and white art which has a style that is distinctly its own. It is a very sparse, very simple line (but try to imitate it!) that does not imitate anyone else—a distinction I hold important in these days of Frazetta look-alikes and dozens of Chris Foss imitators. At the same time that DiFate developed the hard science look that characterizes much of his work, there are strange additions to the artwork that deserve a look. Strange, seemingly extraneous lines and "gobs" of ink make you realize that this is *artwork*; that it is illustration, not photographic realism like Bonestell excels in; certainly not technical rendering. The creativity of the artist is plainly visible. This is the personal vision of a future by someone who has both very strong ideas of what a future scene can and will look like and someone who has the very special talent for taking those ideas and turning them into concrete realizations that the rest of us can enjoy as well.

And yet, beyond the machinery there are frequently human values: figures against machinery, men in spacesuits, even portholes alive with

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the warm yellow glow of light fit for human eyes.

But of course you're all familiar with DiFate's artwork. He has been a professional science fiction artist since the early 1970's. First appearing almost exclusively in *Analog*, the power and value of his artwork, both on esthetic and commercial grounds, has enabled him to appear in first a few, then many of the media in which our beloved SF appears. Up against a very impressive array of talent—Michael Whelan, Boris Vallejo, Stephen Fabian and David Hardy—he surprised quite a number of people (perhaps most especially himself) by winning the Hugo Award as Best Professional Artist at last year's World Science Fiction Convention in Brighton, England.

A side the general public does not see—nor many fans either—of Vincent DiFate is his championing of causes. Artists' Rights are an important area for Vinnie. He has written and told about countless times he and others have been ripped off (commercially raped, if you would) by unscrupulous art directors, editors, art agents, publishers. Now that he's a success (I'd say you're a success when you have more work than you can handle and a comfortable income, all without having to go out and hustle), Vinnie dedicates much of the little spare time he has available to righting wrongs done to artists, as well as trying to benefit the lot of all SF artists. In addition to his column, *Sketches*, which appears in my own *Starship*, where he covers a wide range of topics including art history, interviews with other artists, and the many eras of SF art, etc., Vinnie spends a considerable amount of time as Grievance Person for the Association of Science Fiction Artists. In a few short years, Vincent DiFate has gone from neophyte to accomplished professional. But he has not forgotten the hard work, the sometimes bitter lessons he has learned.

It's a measure of the man to see him painstakingly spelling out those lessons for new generations of SF artists. Not because he wants to be revered as a Grand Old Man of modern SF painting. Not because he wants to spare the egos and feelings of novice artists; in his many dealings, with artists as well as this writer, Vinnie has often been brutally honest. No, it is because there are things wrong with the business of commercial illustration, things that are humanly possible to change. In an industry that is frequently less than totally honest in dealings between producers and buyers, Vincent DiFate stands out as a crusader for honesty and truth. Through his efforts, it is possible that this small corner of commercial illustration will be a better place in which to work and live.

But Vinnie DiFate is not a caped crusader for truth, justice and the illustrator's way. He has a wife and two children to whom he is utterly devoted. Yes, Vincent DiFate: Certified Human Being. Who would have thought it possible? Like the rest of us, he is completely human, completely approachable (try it, here at this convention). He is a mere

(continued on page 42)



Photograph courtesy of Dr. Rosalyn S. Yalow.

Dr. Rosalyn S. Yalow: An Appreciation

by Harold Rifkin, M.D.

It is with great pleasure that I write these introductory paragraphs about Dr. Rosalyn S. Yalow. Her scientific achievements are already well-known and celebrated throughout the world. We are all aware that Dr. Yalow was the Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine in 1977; moreover, she was only the second woman to receive this coveted award in this category in its 79-year history. Additionally, she has been the recipient of many important prizes, awards, name-lectureships throughout the world, including election to the National Academy of Sciences, The Lasker Award, The Gardner Award, The Koch Medal of The Endocrine Society, the Lilly Award and the Banting Medal of The American Diabetes Association, the Middleton Award of the Veterans Administration and the past-presidency of The Endocrine Society.

Fundamentally, we are now all aware that Dr. Yalow has been honored for the pioneering work which she and her colleague, the late Dr. Solomon A. Berson, did in their collaborative development of a radio-immunoassay technique for measuring minute amounts of substances, such as hormones, in the blood and body tissues. Originally, the research focused especially on insulin and diabetes, but was soon extended to almost every branch of medicine and physiology, including studies with growth hormone, ACTH, parathyroid hormone, gastrin,



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cholecystikinin, and such non-endocrine areas as the measurement of Australian Antigen which has become so important in the screening of blood donors in blood banks throughout the world.

The results of Dr. Yalow's scientific investigations have already become part of the world's permanent heritage, but we must always be reminded by the manner in which they were performed. At no time was her research precisely programmed and targeted. She has always asked, and she continues to ask, pertinent and searching questions from all professionals with whom she becomes involved. She is the living example that conviction and confidence in the truth is mandatory and that one must continually ask and call for the facts, no matter what the price and whom it may hurt. She has not been awed by established dogma, no matter by whom this is enunciated and proclaimed. With her colleagues and students, she has continually fostered a pervading atmosphere of freedom of scholarly inquiry, which has allowed a maximum expression of individuality in all members of her research group. She has reminded us time and again that great scientific contributions do not necessarily come from the massive, heavily-funded research establishments, but that a dream and the pursuit of the dream with incredibly hard work, even in a relatively small scientific milieu, can lead to world-shattering scientific contributions.

Dr. Yalow's tenets and concepts have been transmitted throughout the years to countless students and colleagues. The recent Rosalyn S. Yalow Research and Development Award of The American Diabetes Association epitomizes a major goal of this great scientist, since it is presented annually to a young investigator whose work shows exceptional promise. It helps serve as a symbol of the admiration and respect we hold for Dr. Yalow as a scientist, a colleague and teacher, as well as an inspiration for present and future investigators.

Finally, a word about Dr. Yalow as an "ordinary" person. Over the last thirty-five years I have seen her not only in the laboratory, in the wards and clinics of a large general hospital, and at scientific meetings, but also at home, in the capacity of homemaker, mother, wife, hostess and friend. I have seen her clean her home, prepare and cook meals for special festivals, set a beautiful table, and converse easily with her family and friends about the everyday situations and problems of living in this turbulent world. She can become interested, inquisitive, warm, and sometimes even irritated and angry, as befits either the occasion or the discussion. I see her then only as a beautiful human being who is a family member and friend, and forget momentarily that this lady is a foremost scientist of our age. But after all, is this not the hallmark of greatness?

Harold Rifkin, M.D. is Clinical Professor of Medicine, and Principal Consultant, Diabetes Research and Training Center, Albert Einstein College of Medicine—Montefiore Hospital and Medical Center, New York City. He is also a close, longtime friend of the Yalow family. ★



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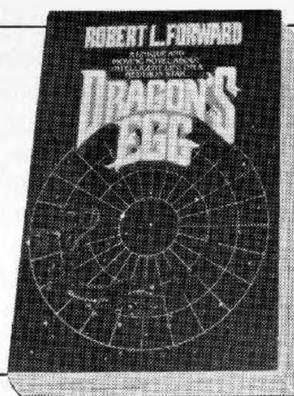
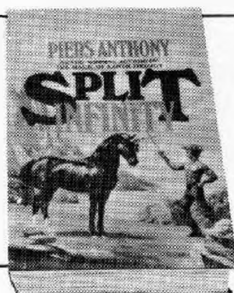
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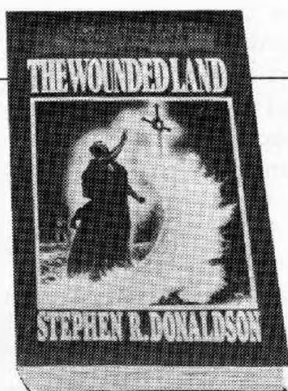
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Twelve years ago I spent a week in the Bay area south of San Francisco. There were two fan gatherings, and in between I guested with Ed and JoAnn Wood. Incredible place. The guest room was ten thousand books, floor to ceiling, precisely enclosing a bed and a desk. I tried to close the door the first night, and all the books started to topple on me. JoAnn came running. "You didn't try to close the *door*, did you?"

That first night was the first time I tried to describe the Ringworld to a fannish gathering. I was lucky. One of Ed's books had the correct formula for angular momentum. If I hadn't looked it up that afternoon, I would have made a fool of myself.

Ed thought I had.

"You stretch the mass of Jupiter into six hundred million million miles of area and you'll put your foot through it. It'll be as thin as typewriter paper!" he told me after the meeting. Not having the math handy in the back of his car, I simply told him it wouldn't. He said it would. I said it wouldn't. He . . . well, I wonder if he's convinced yet.

There was another fun moment before the book reached publication. My wife and I were driving Chip Delany to the airport. He asked what I was working on. Some antic whim led me to begin describing the Ringworld . . . without mentioning its size. Finally he asked, and I told him. Ninety-three million miles in radius and a million miles in diameter. He cracked up. "And they call you a hard science fiction writer?"

Twelve years.

I turned in the manuscript for *The Ringworld Engineers* in October or thereabouts, and I've been going antsy ever since. Waiting for the serial. The proofs. The hardback. The reviews. The \$30 acid-free hand-sewn hardback is out now, and the more mundane hardback should have reached Lunacon about the time I did, and *Publishers Weekly* did a good review . . . and I'm still antsy. But at least I can quit rewriting it in my head now. Once it's in book format, the compulsion goes away, almost.

by Larry Niven

This book means a lot to me.

Ringworld came out ten years ago. Ten years ago people started asking me about a sequel. I said there wouldn't be one. Nobody believed me.

"You left it wide open for a sequel," I was told. And I explained that Louis Wu would be returning to the Ringworld, but I would not.

And I went on with my career . . . testing my versatility every so often by trying things I'd never done before, nonfact articles, TV scripts, vignettes, collaborations . . . but the Ringworld kept tapping me on the shoulder.

In the halls at Noreascon, MITSFS students were chanting, "The Ringworld is unstable!" (Well, *I* knew there would be attitude jets. There wasn't room for everything in one book!)

During one of my speeches an audience member pointed out that the Ringworld is quite simple mathematically. Treat it as a suspension bridge with no endpoints.

Dan Alderson did some dynamic studies of the Ringworld. He pointed out that you could put several in a system, in different orbits and with different diameters. He also wrote of a solar system that contains four: three at right angles to each other, the size of Earth's orbit and rotating past each other on frictionless bearings, and a fourth the size of Jupiter's orbit, for Mesklinites, rotating at a good fraction of lightspeed.

I wrote an article on large structures.

Minneapolis fans wrote a ballad that included, "Oh the Ringworld is unstable, yes the Ringworld is unstable! Did the best that he was able, and it's good enough for me!"

Peter Weston passed the word from a British college professor: the tensile strength of the Ringworld floor needs to be on the order of the force that holds an atomic nucleus together. From such stuff you could make a garbage bag that would hold a thermonuclear explosion.

Fans kept asking about the sequel.

Freeman Dyson wondered why anyone would build *one* Ringworld. Wouldn't a lot of little ones be safer? I started wondering about that myself.

A high school teacher used *Ringworld* in class. Her students concluded that the Ringworld's worst problem is that all the topsoil would wind up in the bottoms of the oceans in about three thousand years. Definitely a problem.

I worried about Louis Wu. He'd been hit with a tarp. He *knew* what it felt like under the wire—

Two friends—Ctien and Dan Alderson, both computer programmers—finally solved the difficult problem of the Ringworld's *exact* instability. The Fist-of-God impact would grind the structure against its sun in three and a half years.

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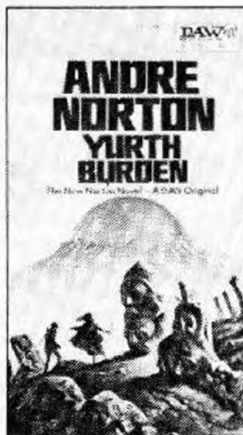
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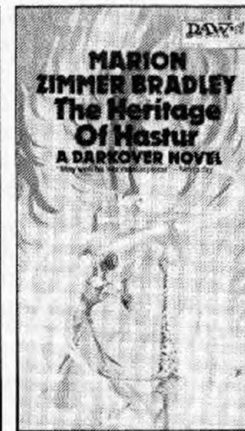
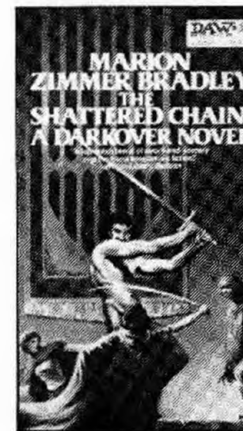
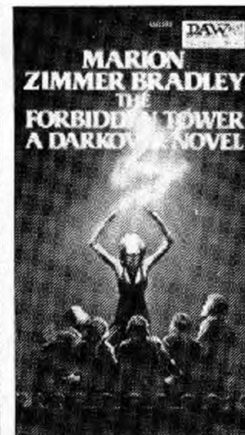
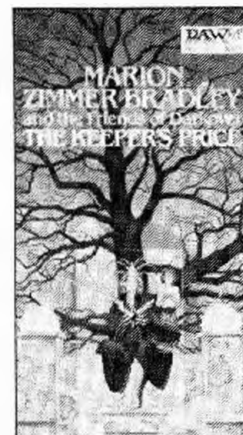
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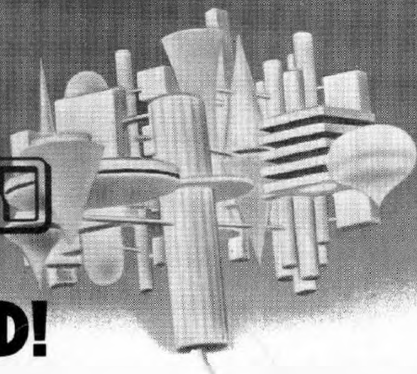
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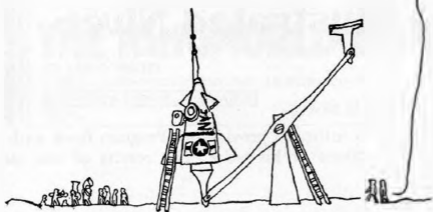
A World Out of Time. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Hardcover. First printing: 1976. ALSO: New York: Ballantine Books. Paperback. First paperback publication: 1977. ★

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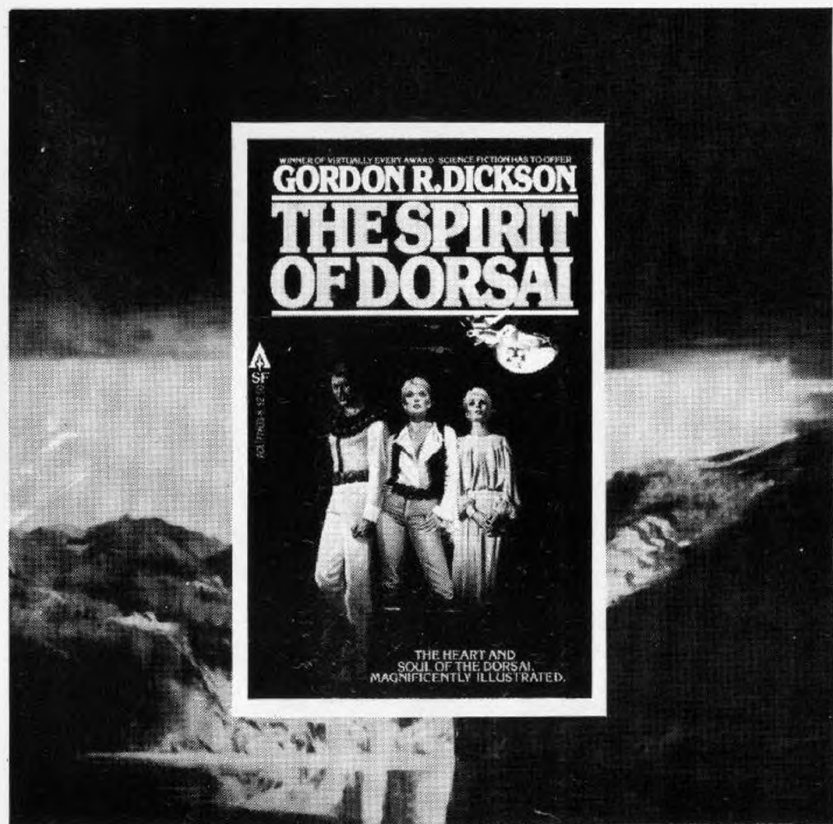
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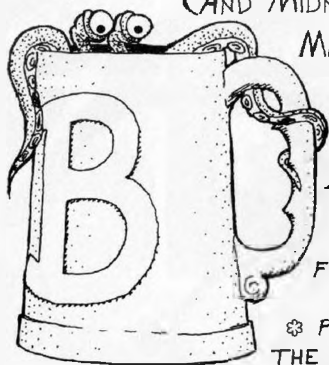
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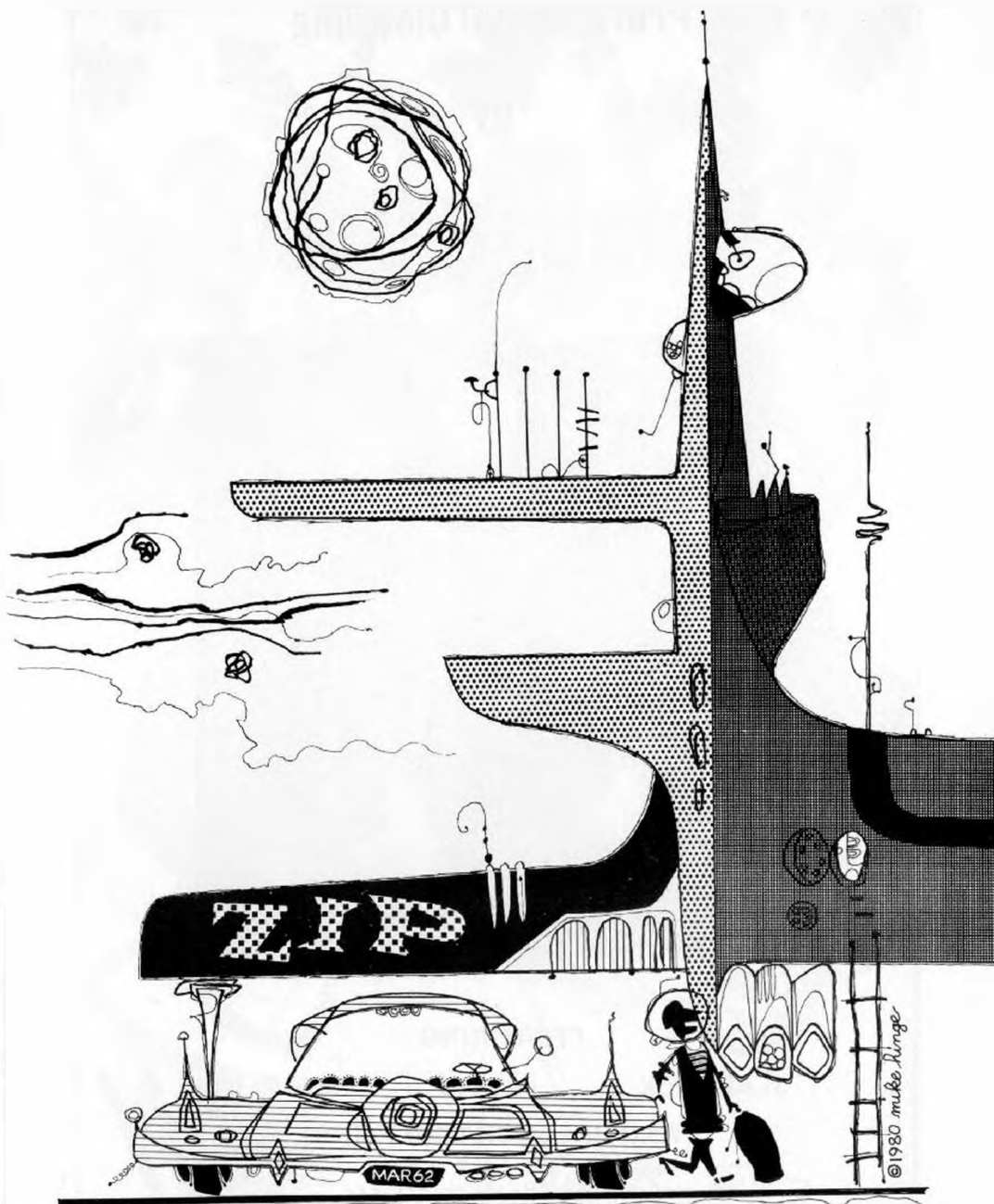
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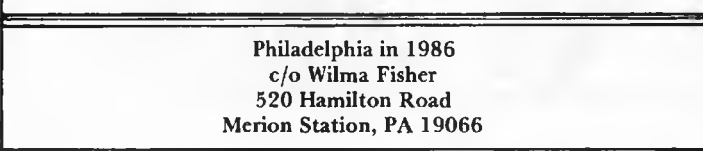
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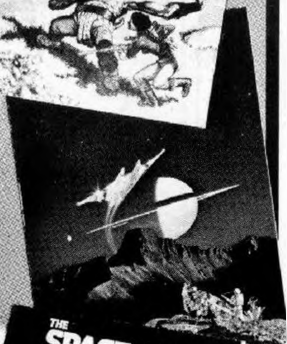
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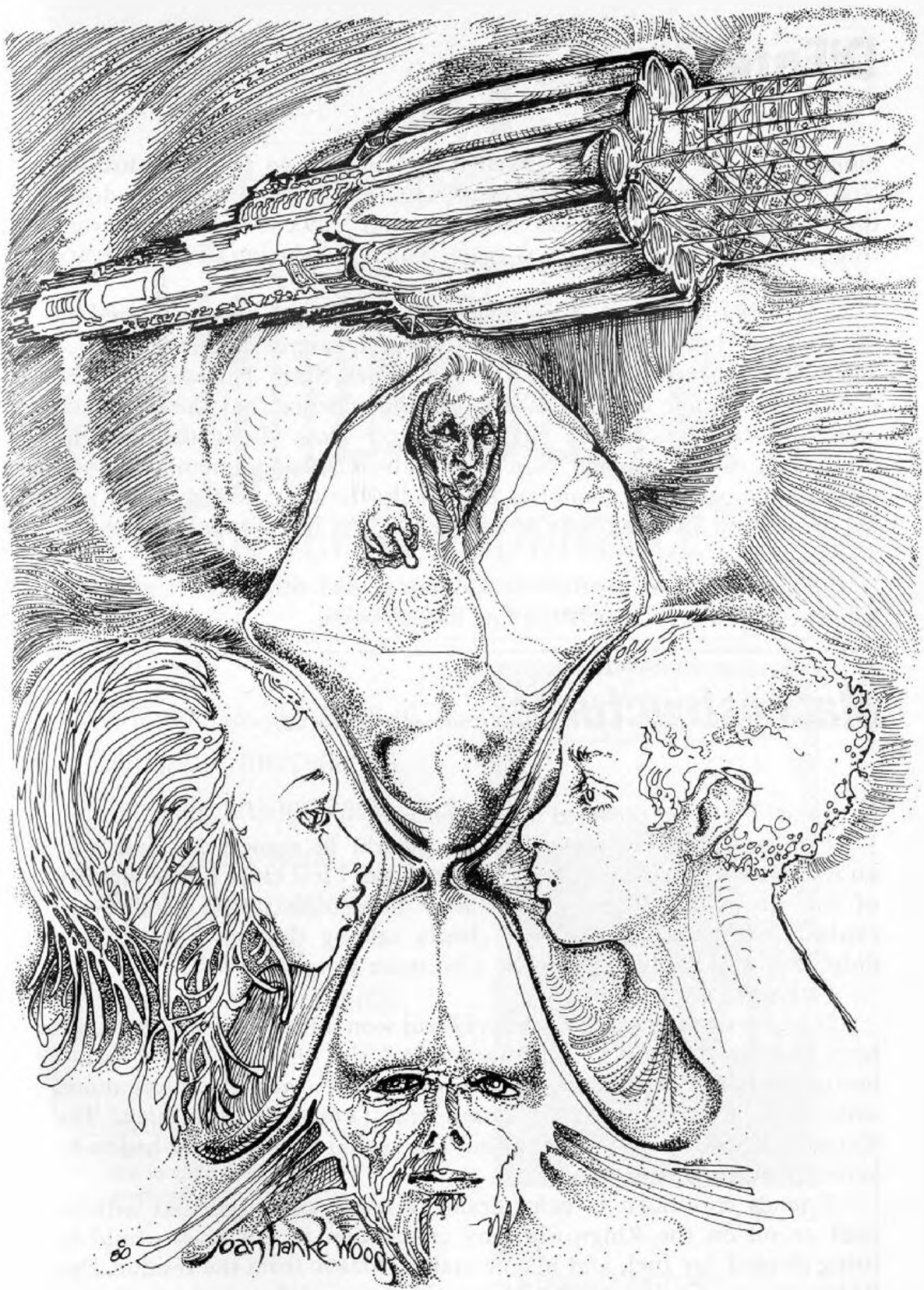
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mortal, like the rest of us. (Even Nixon had to go to the bathroom; Nixon's mistake was in not knowing when to flush the evidence down the toilet.) I have it on good authority that Vincent DiFate has *never* forgotten to flush the toilet. A good Italian upbringing will do it every time . . .

Yes, DiFate the man. How many of us can forget how he tapped on the rock of Mount Vernon and acrylic paint, premixed sprang out? Or when his car broke down on the New York State Thruway, and he didn't have a dime on him? Was it just coincidence that the tow-truck operator was a closet SF artwork freak? How about the time he threatened to kill me—and didn't? Yes, those are good memories, fond memories. Important memories (especially the time he didn't kill me) for me and for all of us. Silly memories, maybe, but certainly warm and human ones.

Fellow fans and professionals, humans and otherwise, I give you Vincent DiFate. A fine artist, a fine human being. ★

Macrostructures (continued from page 22)

Jesus! I'd never dreamed it was *that* bad!

I started thinking about the Ringworld in earnest . . . and, you know, there were things *nobody* had noticed. I left clues to the identity of the Ringworld engineers, but *why* they built it still needs some explanation. Halrloprillalar was clearly talking through her hat; *she* didn't know. And there had to be a *lot* more Ringworld races . . .

I started a sequel after all.

It was a scary project. *Ringworld* had won a Hugo and a Nebula. I'd been learning for ten years; how could I risk showing that I hadn't become a better writer? Big structures are not a new thing any more, what with *Rendezvous with Rama* and *Orbitsville* and *Titan*. The Ringworld itself isn't new any more. The sequel to *Ringworld* had to be *better* than *Ringworld*.

Friends continued to help. Frank Gasparik suggested that with no coal or oil on the Ringworld, any civilization at our level would be using alcohol for fuel, and maybe making plastic from the residue. Dan Alderson gave me data on the Ringworld meteor defense.

And now it's done.

There will be no more *Ringworld* novels. I said so last time; maybe this time you'll believe me. Have I ever lied to you before? ★

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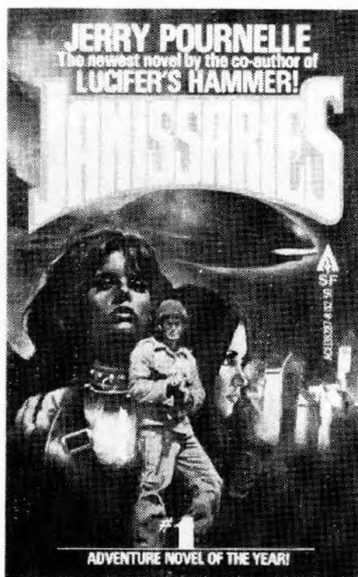
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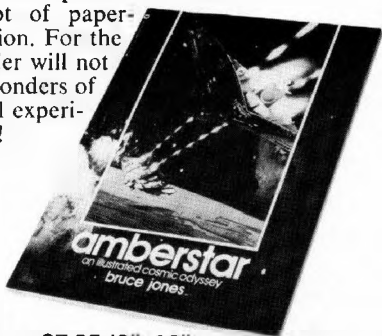
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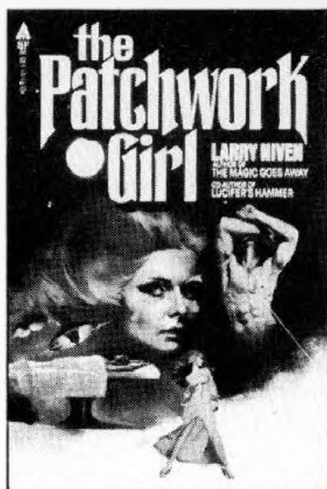
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