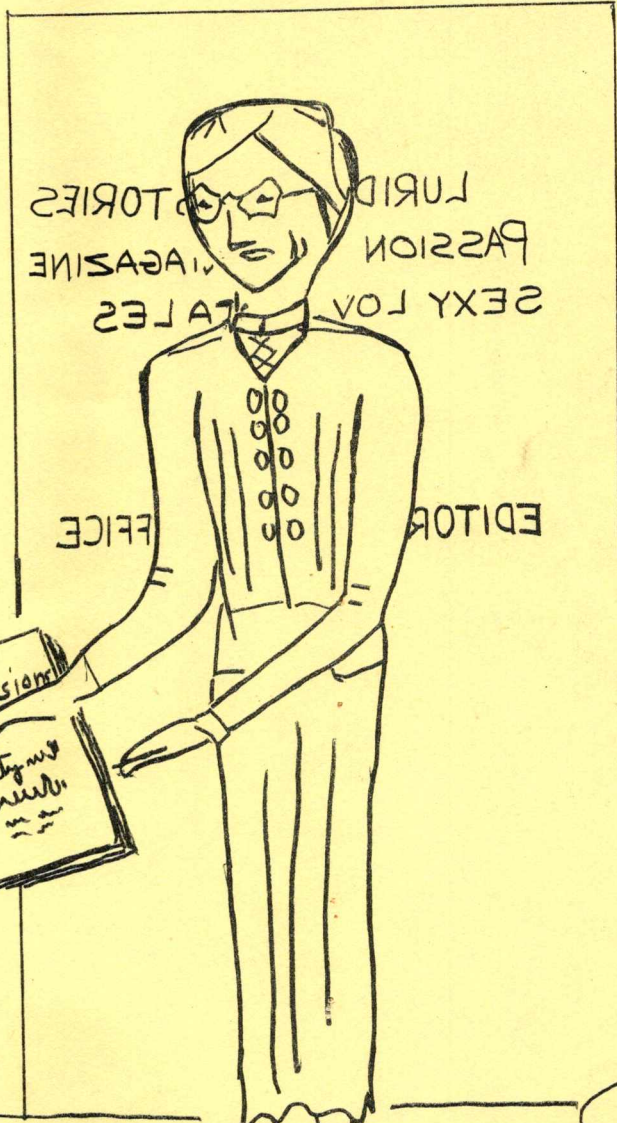


FAIRY TALES FOR

FABULOUS FAPS

9A22A9
MAGAZINES
INC.



I ASSURE
you, I
HAVE AN
EXCELLENT
IMAGINATION!

F A I R Y T A L E S F O R F A B U L O U S F A P S

A Oneshot

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between whom any page credit and/or discredit accruing should be divided equally. (Officials please note.) Opinions stated by one editor are not necessarily held by the other, and both reserved the right to change minds at the drop of a jaw. Consistency is not guaranteed.

Published for the November 1953 Mailing of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association by the male editor, to whom all complaints should be addressed. Compliments should go to Marion.

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Apologia, Errata, Etcetera

A three-week siege of 'flu, plus the forced postponement of my vacation, have turned what was to have been a leisurely proceeding into a frantic publishing and writing session that began at 4 PM on Saturday, throughout Sunday, and is being finished up (I hope!) on Monday evening before the mailing date.

One consequence of this mish-mash is the absence of any bibliographical data, which omission just did not occur to me until I sat down Saturday to write my first review, by which time it was much too late to do anything about it. However, nearly all the books reviewed have been published (or reprinted) since the close of WW 2. Those marked * above are, to this reviewer's certain knowledge, available in paperback covers on the newsstand or in the secondhand stores.

The verse on page 7 is by Anna Wickham.

RHD.

EDITORIAL

. . . . by Marion

A great deal has been heard, latterly, from certain quarters in Congress and elsewhere, about a possible censorship of books and magazines, from two quarters. Senator McCarthy wants to censor books which he considers communistic. And Representatives Kearns and Gathings want to censor newsstand magazines and pocket reprints which they consider impure or obscene. Unfortunately, both these absurd Congressional Committees are being taken seriously.

Since in today's world it is hardly safe to express an opinion of Senator McCarthy -- he might dig out an essay which I'd written in the seventh grade, and "prove" that I had Communist tendencies -- this editorial will confine itself to commentary on the other Congressional Committee.

I don't like Government by Congressional Committee. It smacks too much of that other bugaboo. You must remember that many of Hitler's original persecutions were supposedly for the purpose of protecting the Free German People against the danger of Communism. (the Bolshevik Menace, they called it then.)

Nor do I want Margaret Culkin Banning to pass judgment on what I may or may not read, whether it be psychology, anthropology, or, if it so suits me, plain old pornography. I simply do not believe it is sound thinking to insist that every common or mass medium must conform to the standards of purity of a straitly reared twelve-year-old girl-child. I do not watch television for the reason that I simply am not interested in the gutless entertainment presented -- gutless because it has been carefully examined to make certain that any children in the audience will not have their morals corrupted.

It is easy to say that the American mass mentality is that of a twelve year old. For that, however, I believe the self-styled arbiters of the public taste are at fault. If we were less disturbed about the possible "corruption" of childrens' morals, we might eventually produce a race of fully adult humans whose development was NOT caught somewhere in the groove between ten and fourteen.

No Congressman will admit that he personally felt impelled to go out and commit a sex murder after reading a girly newsstand magazine for investigative purposes, or to bludgeon the nearest policeman after watching a Crime program. The vast snobbery which assumes that the American public is more susceptible and less moral is distasteful in the extreme to one who believes, as I do, in the innate goodness of humanity -- when humanity is not stifled by New England's version of Petronius Arbiter with a degree from Vassar.

The crux of the Congressional argument appears to be that these allegedly obscene paperbacked books are cheaply available to adolescents and other unstable persons, and that many sex criminals are addicted to pornographic literature.

(next page)

Whether or not the books are really obscene is beside the point. The point is this: persons who desire pornography will obtain it, at any price. No logical purpose is served by making it a luxury item, sold in hard covers under the counter for ten dollars a volume. This merely drives the trade to the underground. Persons who desire pornography and can't buy it will usually either write it themselves or work off their accumulated tensions in some manner even less desirable than the perusal of erotica, undesirable as that is.

If pornography is to be sold at all -- and its history, coming all the way from the Greek Anthology down to today's girlie magazine, tends to give the impression that erotica is a particularly tenacious form of literature -- it may as well be sold openly.

But thus far we find that the epithet of obscenity rests upon the judgment of two or three individuals who are, to say the very least, not noted for broad-mindedness. Under this blanket title of obscenity they fling such oddly diversified items as the Oedipus of Euripides, Jack Woodford's Male And Female, and the Ulysses of James Joyce -- which is about on a par with indicting the Botticelli Venus along with a Place Pigalle postcard. In fact, one Senator is quoted as saying, "I don't care what's art. They're all nudes to me."

A large brunt of this investigation has fallen on several honest and worthwhile books formerly obtainable only on the closed shelves of the Department of Abnormal Psychology, fictional works dealing with the subject of homosexuality -- as well as on some imitations of these books which are frankly written for entertainment, and with several works which were produced as fictional portrayals of this subject as a tragically moving force in human relationships. Now these books are all over the newsstands. They can be bought by teen-agers, by psychology students, or by plumbers. Is this good or bad? Intellectuals say it is bad. Curious teen-agers whose parents tell them not to talk about such things, say it is good. The rest of the public hold varying opinions somewhere in between.

The mature section of the public might well read these books and form their own opinions. This 'zine has done exactly that. Our critical reviews are here presented; and I think the readers will agree with us that any attempt to place these books on the "banned" list is as absurd as it is vicious. Some of these books are better than others; a few are rubbish; there are none which I would call harmful, even to a pure-minded girl, twelve years old.

* * *

After a momentary silence spake

Some Vessel of a more ungainly Make;

"They sneer at me for leaning all awry:

What! did the Hand then of the Potter shake?"

Khayyam/Fitzgerald, THE RUBAIYAT

THE MIDDLE MIST

-- Mary Renault

If a more observant and realistically detailed writer exists than Mary Renault, I have yet to find her. In the creation of characters she has no equal. The reader finds himself squirming with the character when he or she does a naive or gauche thing, feeling genuine indignation when the character is snubbed, irritation when someone shows stupidity. Therein is the essence of vividness.

Because of this excellence of writing and character, it seems pitiable that such perfection is spent on plots which, in themselves interesting, add up to triviality. In *THE MIDDLE MIST* we have the story of a shy inarticulate, unlovely adolescent girl; Elsie Lane. A young and egotistical doctor flirts with Elsie, lightly, out of pity. Stirred by what she believes to be love, Elsie runs away from her turbulent home and joins her sister Leo on a houseboat.

Leo is a strongly unfeminine, boyish young woman, who maintains a household with a girlfriend, Helen. Miss Renault handles their probable relationship obliquely, by implication rather than statement; Helen and Leo, indignant at the young doctor's cavalier treatment of Elsie, decide to take a hand in subtly deflating his ego, and the result is several chapters of the most hilariously ironical by-play which I have ever read; mercilessly sophisticated, but never obvious.

Unfortunately, half-way through the book, Miss Renault stops telling Elsie's story and begins writing the story of Leo's gradual feminization through her love affair with a young writer named Joe. The second story is just as engrossing and fascinating as the first, but the switch of viewpoints is baffling and irritating, and Elsie is finished off convincingly, but still haphazardly.

In beauty of detail, humor and a light touch, *THE MIDDLE MIST* is an excellent book, and contains passages of positive genius. It is also mercilessly realistic, although never engrossing on the crude -- Miss Renault is above all else a lady, and her writing, while it is not staid or conventional, is disciplined and restrained, and very feminine. However, on the whole, *THE MIDDLE MIST* is an immature work, in the sense that it has not yet developed a sense of unity. One feels that the writer had two novels to write, and was trying to economize by putting them into a single book, under the pretext of making the heroines into sisters. However, it shows already the excellence which was to mature into the later, and much finer, *RETURN TO NIGHT*.

Reviewed by MZB

. . . The sexual organism also has its inner correlative, and this is bi-polar, for the inner man is androgynous. The sexual problem for the ordinary man or woman arises at the age of puberty, with the awakening of the sexual nature; the sexual problem of the . . . (devotee) . . . becomes again acute with the awakening of his bi-polar nature.

-- Claude Bragdon

QUATREFOIL

-- James Barr

Philip Froelich, young navy officer in trouble with the authorities, is aided by the older Tim Danelaw to extricate himself from the difficulties in which his entirely innocent companionship with an enlisted man has landed him. Philip, not wholly ignorant of his own nature, nevertheless resists for a long time the -- not advances, but the sympathetic atmosphere with which Tim surrounds him. However, they eventually become lovers.

The boy meets boy idyll is complicated by the actions of Tim's incredibly vicious wife, by the problems with which Philip must contend in his position as banker and hereditary grand seigneur of the small Oklahoma town that is his home, and by a blackmailing fellow officer who discovers their secret. All these are a little too conveniently resolved by Tim's death in a plane crash.

This has not been entirely unexpected by the reader; Barr's affinity for rain, and his murky writing, and predilection for spiritual forests of the night, lend to the book a presage of disaster. Perhaps this was intentional, perhaps not, but this reviewer was apprehensive of a tragic ending almost from the first page.

The theme and character of the book: that Death is never as strong as Love, pervades every sentence, but does not seem convincing enough to dispel the depression previously mentioned. However, in spite of this, I believe this to be one of the two or three best books on this particular background that I have ever read.

Reviewed by RHD

NOW you'll catch no more unicorns!

THE ILLUSIONIST

-- Francoise Mallet

Here again, as in *THE MIDDLE MIST*, we have a meticulous portrait of lonely adolescence in the form of a girl of fifteen. Also delineated with meticulous care are Helene's well-meaning but preoccupied and self-indulgent father, and her father's mistress, Tamara -- a violent and nervously abnormal woman.

The gradual growth of Tamara's perverse power over Helene, told in the innocently amoral narration of a young girl, presents a pitiless picture of adult selfishness and the guileless foolhardiness of the adolescent just awakening. It is one of the few pictures of Lesbianism which neither romanticize nor apologize. It is not pretty reading; it may raise chills on a few spines, but few books are more truthfully aware of adolescence. A first novel, it shows an adolescence which is very far from the haphazard and romantic concept of teen-agers held by most adults.

The book suffers, of course, in translation from the French; it sounds unpleasingly abrupt, and the conclusion, although logical, seems somehow contrived. Still, it is an excellent and honest story, dealing with a subject too often avoided or romanticized, and is not apt to tempt anyone to go and do likewise.

Reviewed by MZB

THE CITY AND THE PILLAR

-- Gore Vidal

Jim Willard looked into the girl's sparkling eyes above her disordered dress. He heard the frantic gasps in the bedroom of the dingy apartment, where his shipmate was being matey with the girl's roommate. Unbidden, there swept over him the memory of the night less than a year before, of the ecstasies by the dying embers of the campfire by the river, with his highschool chum. "It was not dirty like this; it was not unnatural like this." The girl's wet, red lips suddenly revolted him; he seized his cap and rushed out of the room and down the stair.

Jim spent the remainder of his brief, tragic life rushing, from tennis pro to writing to kept man; from lover to male lover; from the frantic Hollywood merry-go-round to Central America to the Western plains to Greenwich Village; from tavern to Turkish bath to "gay" party to dingy hotel room; always seeking vainly to recapture the innocence and delight and ecstasy of that night by the river, and always falling short. Jim didn't realize that you can't ever go back because the "you" isn't there any more.

Eventually he manages a reunion with his companion of that night, only to find that the man, now 30, has forgotten the episode that meant so much to Jim. When it is recalled to him, he repudiates "that kid stuff", and Jim too, and the reunion ends in murder. The book ends with intimations of Jim's remorseful suicide.

It's readable (Vidal can put words together nicely) and not the least perceptive of the novels about the unwanted generation that grew up between the wars, and it's a probably not inaccurate picture of the upper circles of "gay" America. But it is extremely depressing in its prevailing griminess. You can buy it for a quarter; you might as well. More, no.

Reviewed by RHD

... the brief pleasure of the frightened in the arms of the frightened ...

THE SCORPION

-- Elizabet Weiraugh

This story bears a superficial resemblance to THE ILLUSIONIST and to THE MIDDLE MIST, being different to both in emphasis and in national character. As contrasted to the shy and stiff Elsie Lane, or the young but very French Helene, Metta Rudloff is very "German". That is, she is an intelligent, straitly brought-up young woman of a good, upper-class German family. Stifled by her conventional surroundings, she makes a friend of a beautiful and intellectual adventuress. The growth of intimacy between them is told with restraint and very good taste, and probably parallels the innocent experience of every repressed young girl who seeks at once a mother substitute and an intellectual equal who dares to be as unconventional as she would like to be. Through Olga's tragedy, Metta learns two important lessons; first, to live for herself without being stifled by conventions, and second -- and more important still -- that unrestrained Bohemianism and

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liberty are just as wearying as the stiff and stuffy world of the conventional. Metta, born in one deadly atmosphere, and led by interest and emotion into the other, finally strikes a balance which accepts the best of both.

The book is beautifully translated by Whittaker Chambers, and will stand up not only as a psychological study, but as an excellent and fascinating novel, which makes a deadly attack on two stagnant societies and all their hypocrisies and subterfuges, good and bad.

Reviewed by MZB.

I desire Virtue, though I love her not --
I have no faith in her when she is got:
I fear that she will bind and make me slave
And send me songless to the sullen grave.

THE SLING AND THE ARROW

-- Stuart Engstrand

Herbert Dawes, talented dress designer, lives with his wife Lonna in Southern California. He finds great pleasure, mixed with humiliation and pain, in imagining himself as a woman. This has many effects on his married life, for his wife is normally oriented, and consequently does not understand Herbert's feelings.

After a great many goings-on, and much soul searching by all hands, the book ends with the death of Lonna, the only likeable character, and Herbert's commitment to a mental institution. (He killed her when she became pregnant by another man.)

The theme of the book is best stated in this reflection of Herbert's: "God, how he hated women! But there had to be someone to love. One couldn't go around loving men" True, one has to love someone. But Herbert seems to have been behind the times, or to have had faulty upbringing, in these days when celebrated statistical reports indicate that more than a few men give way to their momentary off-key impulses. In the Kinsey era, one can very well go around loving men, so long as it is kept within discreet bounds. It seems rather drastic to kill the wife to prove oneself a man, as Herbert did. But apparently he hadn't read the right books.

If you've gained the impression that these were thoroughly unpleasant people, you're absolutely right. But then, Engstrand seems to specialize in unpleasant people.

Reviewed by RHD

Well, Mother! You're enough to start an Oedipus complex!

QUEER PATTERNS

8

-- Lilyan Brock

It is a puzzling and frustrating experience to read a tale which has all the elements of a good novel, but which adds up to nothing; wherein the whole is far less than the sum of its parts. QUEER PATTERNS is such a novel.

This story fails to be convincing because the writer was evidently writing about things of which she knew nothing, for persons who knew even less. In competent and excellent prose she writes a slickly turned out piece of hack which is ostensibly a novel of the theater, but which portrays this world from the wrong side of the footlights. The protagonist is an "actress"; Nicoli is a "famous playwright"; and the author is obviously an interested playgoer who has never been backstage and was simply grabbing at a romantic setting for a love story.

All this would not matter so much if the human relationships were convincingly drawn. They aren't. It is supposed to be the story of a young actress, Shiela Rowan, and the interweaving patterns of her many loves. But the figures are all puppets; Philip Rowan, the handsome-young-actor; Alison, the Important Businessman; Jo Trent, the Brave Little Nurse; and so on and so on. Not one of these "characters" has a single quality apart from his type. An artificial and contrived plot robs them of the remnants of spontaneity, and there is not even a saving touch of humor to redeem the story from its agonies piled on more agonies. It is not tragedy. It is not even mellerdrammer. It is not even a good failure. It is simply a trashy novel which purports to be "realistic" and sensational, but instead is simply prissy, romantic and ridiculous.

Reviewed by MZB.

"My brother, my sister, the two horned moon, the double edged axe, my lover, my loved one"

--- Cretan invocation.

THE JUDGEMENT OF PARIS

-- Gore Vidal

The blurb says that Vidal has restated in modern terms a tale from Greek mythology, and that he has done very well with it. Not being familiar with the myth, I am unable to judge the truth of either of these statements. On the surface it is an account of a young American's Grand Tour of Europe, before he settles down to marriage and law career.

Philip is an unusually perceptive young man who, while not himself homosexually inclined, is not repelled by those who are, which is extremely fortunate for him since his grand tour is confined to the lunatic fringe of France, Italy, and Egypt, where he encounters conspiratory Royalists, ineffectual communists, various titled trash, and a large proportion of deviates.

In spite of the above (next page) and the title, the book is not a love story. It is a novel about a young man who goes through the pages of this book, finds a certain attachment with it, and they are described, provokes more than one, and reads without involve-

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In spite of the extremely unsavory and pathetic people who move through these pages, the sardonic detachment with which they are described provokes more chuckles than sadness. One reads without involvement, as if viewing the occurrences through peepholes in the ceilings. If this were actually the case, instead of being a figure of speech, it is to be feared your reviewer at one point would have betrayed himself with loud guffaws. This is the hilarious episode when Philip attends the ceremonial robing of "the only functioning hermaphrodite in Paris," who decides each morning whether he/she is Augustus or Augusta and is dressed accordingly. "No one," says Philip's host, "can imagine what must go through that lonely head in the Hour of Decision."

Despite the unimpassioned, skirt-withdrawing behavior of the chief character, one gains the impression that the author has a very real sympathy for the deviates in this book, and that he would like others to share this sympathy. But it's so darn hard for this reviewer to feel sorry for people who actually have the good fortune to live in, or even visit, Europe that in his particular case he fails.

Reviewed by RHD

" . . . your clothes is gonna burn slap off jist as soon as the gates of hell open up for you, and you'll be naked as a jay-bird, naked as the day you was born, and you'll be regrettin the day your ole sweet Maw brought you into such a world where you thought by the time you was twelve or fourteen you could strip-off and jump in sin with jist anybody who was willin to strip-off and jump in sin with you"

James Weldon in THE NAKED HEART

FINISTERRE

-- Fritz Peters

Here we have the Freudian novel with a news/ant. Rich in symbolism, FINISTERRE is a sensitive but unemotional story of a teen-age boy deprived of normal surroundings and yet expected, by demanding parents, to remain normal.

In Matthew Cameron we have a picture of bewildered childhood and adolescence. His parents are separated, and the boy is given to the custody of his pretty but unstable mother, who takes him to Paris. His loneliness is mitigated only by the easy and undemanding friendship of Scott, a young American friend of his mother. When Scott drops Matthew to marry a French girl, Matthew is sent to boarding school. Here a sulky interlude is interrupted by an almost fatal swimming accident, from which Matthew is rescued by a young instructor, Michel Garnier.

The relationship into which Matthew and Michel are thrown is the basis for a shockingly definite picture of a confused boy in trouble, and the often terrifying obtuseness of a conventional adult world. Matthew's allies and enemies are ranged, one by one, until he finds himself altogether alone, and the avalanche finally leads him to Finisterre -- Land's End -- and tragedy.

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Fritz Peters has painted a story perhaps overly melodramatic, but plausible, with a tense and facile pen; and probably goes as deep as anyone into that mass of emotions and misconceptions called the human soul.

Reviewed by MZB

"It was good to be on the loose on that kind of a day, but winter range stores up a lot of things in a man, and spring roundup hadn't worked them all out. Gil and I had been riding together for five years, and had the habit, but just the two of us in that shack in the snow had made us cautious. We didn't dare talk much, and we wanted to feel easy together again."

-- Clark; THE OX-BOW INCIDENT

DIGRESSION by RHD

Almost without exception, the male homosexuals one encounters in fiction are exceptional people from standpoints quite other than their sexual orientation. Whether the writer is speaking of them with sympathy or distaste, they are portrayed as being fabric of finer weave than the mine-run of human being. Usually they are shown as active, and sometimes highly talented, in the arts or in one of professions of lesser general esteem, such as teaching. This is, probably, because the average person who knows few homo's tends to think of them as being less manly than most, and thus less apt to compete in the everyday business or working fields. Then, too, the homo's one sees and recognizes as such (sometimes erroneously) on the streets, are the effeminate, "swishy" ones, and one tends to assume that this makes up the universe of deviates.

Like many generalizations, this one has its flaws, the most flagrant being that it isn't true. Or so my limited experience indicates. As a weedy but pink-cheeked adolescent I was on the receiving end of the usual number of passes from these gentry, and can testify that of those I encountered, none had any qualities whatsoever that would classify them among the intelligentsia. One, for example, had been released from the Army because of his low I. Q. (this was before WW II of course; otherwise they'd have made him a shavetail) Poor guy! His pass was in the form of a shame-faced "Lemme fix you up, huh kid?" I didn't understand, and it took him fifteen stammering minutes to make his meaning plain. Scared hell out of me, as I remember -- I was just out of high school.

Anyway, when one considers the reasons that psychologists advance for sexual deviation (here should follow about three paragraphs of gobble-dygook about the Oedipus myth, the silver cord, father fixation, _____ envy, unresolved conflicts, etc., but I don't have the patter, nor the time to acquire it) it is apparent that they can occur in almost any childhood, and that there is no reason why the shotgun pattern of whatever-it-is that causes deviation should not fall throughout the entire range of economic and cultural strata that exist in our culture, instead of just the intellectual hoi-polloi. From the unrelieved pattern of effeminate artists, etc., that the lending libraries and the paperback publishers insist on showing us, it is therefore a great pleasure to review the next book, which is . . .

Each shall be both, yet both be one . . .

D E R R I C K S

-- James Barr

A collection of seven short stories in which male homosexuality is thoroughly discussed and annotated. The characters, most of them very well drawn, range from farmers to construction workers to white collar men to college students to writers; the happenings cover murder for profit, for jealousy, for love; a whimsical relation of an interview between a student and his doctor, in which when asked for details of his early sex life he tells how at the age of three he and the little girl next door got together in the toolshed. "Then what happened?" "Oh, we poured sand in each other's navel, and went home."

The notable thing about the book is that it is one of the few that show homo's as average people, who live and love like anyone else, except that they must be more cautious about their taboo violations than the conventionally oriented person. Except for the accident of their unfortunate orientation, they feel fear, love, desire, hate, exhilaration, and jealousy quite as this reviewer does, and react to those emotions as would any other person within the framework of their culture, except that their overt acts must always be made to conform to the hostility that would surround them were the reasons for those acts known.

About Barr's style I can say little, except that it is not quite as good even as that in his first book (reviewed elsewhere in this publication) and that Barr seems not to be at home in the short story. It is to be hoped, however, that he will continue to write on what seems to be his chosen theme since, regardless of how we feel about homosexuals, they are an increasingly important factor in our America, and we need to know about them, just as we need to know about the other minorities who have already found eloquent tongues to speak for them.

Reviewed by RHD

" . . . the Kingdom of God shall come when the two shall be one, and male shall be female, and there shall be neither male nor female"

-- Cretan inscription

W O M E N ' S B A R R A C K S

-- Tereska Torres

After the invasion of France, the Free French forces enlisted French women in England as an auxiliary. The author was supposedly one of these women, but this is not her story. It is the story of half a dozen young women in the abnormal surroundings of Army life.

Frequently funny, sometimes sordid, often tragic, but always sympathetic, this is the story of women in a strange land, among strangers, freed of family and other restraints, despondent and alone. Their only tie is to a France in the hands of enemies. Few of these women keep the conventional habits of civilian life. This book studies a gradual breakdown in

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in morals and morale, and with painful honesty traces the causes and effects of the degeneracy of women.

This book is a devastating answer to those who advocate that women can live men's lives. Deplorable as is this moral breakdown, 'his girl's'-army accumulation of human flotsam is a painfully accurate study of women as they are in actuality, not in the romanticized notions of the American public. Men can read this book for their interest in the story, or even to enjoy the occasional salacious passages; but to women, this book will be painfully self-revelatory. It reads like an ironical comment on today's over-emphatic feminism.

I cannot deplore that this book is available to teen-agers. In **WOMEN'S BARRACKS** there is no incentive, certainly, to imitate the conduct described. Rather, in the hands of a teen-age girl, it may serve as a rather grim warning of the uncertainty of her own nature. Most American women will resent this book. I think it is one of the most valuable books to come out of the second world war.

Reviewed by MZB

" Has it ever occurred to you, procreation may be a side-issue and the act of sex has other uses, overwhelmingly more important as man gets harder and harder pressed by the unnatural chains of his civilization? Men generate a psychic steam, and sex is its great safety valve. Who has ever known the language to ask of nature what is natural and what unnatural? Or understood enough to know the answer?"

Rosmanith; UNHOLY FLAME

THE WELL OF LONELINESS

-- Radclyffe Hall

This, the classic story of an abnormal woman, has recently appeared in a cheap paperbacked edition on the newsstands -- a much healthier attitude, I believe, than in the days when it was on the closed shelves of the college library and could not be withdrawn even by psychology students without written permission from the head of the department.

I first read **THE WELL OF LONELINESS** at the age of sixteen, and was deeply moved by its tragic story and the fearful implications. Re-reading it recently, for purposes of review, I was struck not only by its tragedy but by its integrated beauty as a fine novel.

I am assuming that probably every mature person in the audience has read this famous story. For the few teen-agers who haven't; **THE WELL OF LONELINESS** is the story of Stephen Gordon, a young person with the emotional and physical nature of a man, who through some tragic blunder of nature was born into a woman's body. Her frantic and trapped struggle in the England of the first World War, her attempts to conquer her nature -- and the genuinely tragic end which comes when she finally decides to live in accordance with that nature -- make one of the most awful stories ever written in English, and yet one of the most truthful.

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The story is tenderly told, with a command of language which is masterful, and a flow and rhythm which at times approaches poetry. It even moves, occasionally and excusably, into the sentimental. A shocking book when written, and too often banned, there is nothing here to attract the seeker after casual pornography, or to satisfy the collector of erotica. It is a book which demands recognition, and which contains as much sound psychological information as it is possible to put into a work of fiction. And long after the current wave of fiction about Lesbianism has been snowed under by a change in the taste of the masses, I believe THE WELL OF LONELINESS will stand alone as the definitive picture of sex inversion.

Reviewed by MZB

The adopters of favorites also shared in both the honor and disgrace of their friends . . . this love was so honorable and so much in esteem, that the virgins too had their lovers amongst the most virtuous matrons. A competition of affection caused no misunderstanding but rather a mutual friendship between those that had fixed their regard upon the same youth, and a united endeavor to make him as accomplished as possible . . .

Plutarch: LYCURGUS

THE GAY YEAR

-- Michael de Forrest

This was published by the Woodford Press. Now, we all know what sort of books this house issues -- stories about beautiful-type girls and handsome Paul Bunyan's with all the stamina in the world, engaging in or maneuvering for, one activity alone beside which all else in the world is as naught, according to these tales. One unrelenting theme with pitifully few variations. Masterpieces for those poor wights who can't invent their own midnight fantasies. Worlds as never was.

Yeah. Except that this one isn't like that. Whoever de Forrest is, he can write, and he knows people and New York's Bohemia very well. Or at least he is convincing enough to make me think he does. Joel Harris, the hero, (and the word is used advisedly) young, artistic, sensitive, ap-
perceptive, "different", but not a degenerate monster, nor yet a fragile victim of environment, but a straightforward, courageous man, facing the fact that he is alone, always alone, as are we all. The story tells of his search for someone to love, and ends with him coming to terms with himself and with the fact that he is prisoned within his own skull, and finding confidence that, come what may, he will function in courage, hope and integrity.

Reviewed by RHD

We were both, in a sense, dedicated. We both had separate lives in work which were inviolate and sustaining. And yet, we both needed, not in spite of this capacity for withdrawal but because of it, continual intimate human contact. Without it we were only half alive. Human passion, human closeness, was the source of our energy, recharging the batteries of our imagination.

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Marya Mannes; MESSAGE FROM A STRANGER.

TORCHLIGHT TO VALHALLA

-- Gale Wilhelm

Perhaps the earliest of the avant-garde novels is this curious little pastel piece, a delicate tale which derives its main line of conflict in one of the most tragic relationships possible.

It delineates a young girl, Morgen Teutenberg, and the deeply emotional relationship in which she stands to her artistic and unworldly father. Morgen, a cool, remote and strange girl, has lived the sheltered and withdrawn life of a cloistered nun; she seems to be a modern prototype of George Eliot's ROMOLA. Her father's sudden death shocks her out of her dedicated childhood into a numb withdrawal from reality.

The remainder of the book is a kind of battle for Morgen's soul, fought by a young pianist, Royal St. Gabriel. Yet, in spite of all his efforts, Morgen lapses farther and farther from reality, finally taking shelter in the affection of a childlike young girl, Toni, who can to some extent draw Morgen back into a semblance of the real world, a mirror image of her desired life.

This is a strange, brooding novel, told in a curious allusive style, in brief fragments of description and conversation, detached scenes with no direct continuity. It is not a story, but, like Morgen's life, the mirrored reflection of a story -- on a troubled and rippling surface which keeps breaking into fragmentary circles. Much is left to the imagination of the reader, who must look between the formless, innocent fragments to the frightening, but altogether logical conclusion to Morgen's abnormality.

It is beautifully written and sensitive, told with a close observation to detail, and a searching insight into human nature. Very few will enjoy this book, but fewer still will be able to forget it.

Reviewed by MZB.

No nudes is good nudes

THE PRICE OF SALT

-- Claire Morgan

This will have to be a quickie -- running out of space. It's the history of a Lesbian affair between two very nice, courageous, integrated women, whose initial attraction comes to be the mainspring of their lives, although it also causes the greatest griefs either has experienced. Throughout the course of events described therein, both are completely true to themselves and to each other, and absolutely fair as can be to the outsiders who are enmeshed in their tribulations. Carol, the elder, is involved in a divorce suit, and their love, discovered, becomes a factor in her husband's case, leading to loss of custody of her daughter. Therese has a boyfriend, whose reaction to the revelation is as petulantly explosive as one might expect from a thoroughly spoiled youngster. It ends well or sadly, depending on one's sympathies and prejudices, but on a note of calm, and leaves a feeling that the two will be all right for the future. Buy it, try it, -- only a quarter.

Reviewed by RHB.

THE BATCHEON PRESS
R.H. Drummond
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Seattle 4, Wash.



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