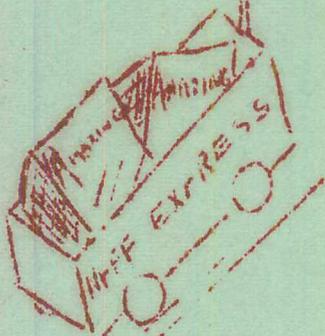


Variations
(by RWL & THE @)
on a
THEME BY
A. COUPLANNIES

Chartreuse



hooking Pink



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Chartreuse



Shocking-Pink

PUBLISHED FOR FAPA BY RWL

WINTER 1944

WHEREIN DOC LOWNDES' FACE TURNS FUCHSIA IN A TRICE . . .

By Timber J. Apostate

Doc Lowndes, as is fairly common knowledge in fandom, is a renegade. Would to Ghu that he could not distinguish between a fan and a fanatic! But he can and does - to my fusty disgust.

My good friend, Doc Lowndes, and I say that with a leer, would, I presume (but then everyone presumes at times) embrace and welcome as a kindred soul any "man" from anywhere, be he four feet tall with big ears, tendrils and a double heart, or a floating kidney sustained by 3.2 beer. Any amicable conception of Mr. and Mrs. Michel, Dr. and Mrs. Wollheim, Mr. and Mrs. Kubilius, no matter how repellent a monstrosity, would be greeted and treated like a fiend - like the Goddamus, the DAW, and The Killer, for example. But Doc balks at specimens of homo sapiens pigmented chartreuse.

Doc Lowndes is intensely anti-fanatic. And I have just been reminiscing over the first letters written by one RWL many years ago which prove beyond a doubt that at that time he was a fanatic!

In a recent article, Lowndes ("with women and women for all") stated in all possible sobriety under the circumstances and with revolting self-satisfaction this heinous proposition: "The new fans are the product of the current decadence." He and a white woman (sick) had to sit opposite a "slanlet" in the galley of a four-masted schooner. She choked up, and he contented himself with making a few audible remarks; in the meantime giving her some bicarbonate of soda. The fanatic turned pale chartreuse and said hesitatingly, "Pardon me, but it might help the lady if she took a more scientific remedy. These little pink pills . . ." His chartreuse tinge suddenly grew much more vivid and the fanatic fled to the deck. Alas for the inhumanity of ocean to semi-circular canals - unquote. "The world is full of people and the people are full of --" but let's return to scraping our palette.

Lowndes turned an unbecoming shade of mauve and beetled his brows. "Pink pills, indeed! What that little squirt needs is a good dose of sulphur and molasses." He looked vaguely around for a typewriter with which to administer the dose, but the woman stopped him with a piteous glance from her topaz eyes. Her hair was black as Yngvi's heart, and her eyebrows two wisps of ebony. Thunderstruck, Lowndes murmured, "You remind me of a feline with whom I share my bed and board." He slipped her a nickel. "Call me up when you feel better, you brunette, you. I do short-shorts and if you were willing, I might work you into a

love pulp some time." He leched quietly as she cried, "Oh, thank you, sir. And if you're looking for your typewriter, isn't that it over there under your pipe?" Leching again, Lowndes bit off her right ear, but - "Pleasure before leisure, I always say," he said, as always.

He clutched his typewriter and strode purposefully behind the purple curtain marked "Fuh Futurians Only, Suh."

The brunette scratched her head and said, "For some unknown, personal, selfish consideration, I feel distinctly uncomfortable." Suddenly she screamed, "Omigod! I'm embarast!" and fainted.

Lowndes ignored her cries. Coldly he inserted a skeleton key in the shift lock and, bending an elbow at the space bar, began that historic document: "How Now, Fanatics."

Now I personally do not relish the company of fanatics. I've a measure of squeamishness about associating indiscriminately with same. All it really is, I think, is a guilty recollection that I too was once like that. But one has to contend with one's Id!

While a fanatic would not be sexually attractive to me, and I should not expect to have inter - - please! Leave us not drag my libido into this. It was my Id we were discussing. As I was saying, while I would not yet grant fanatics full fanship, I need not snub them in matters of early fan activity - reading, corresponding, publishing, nosing (brownly), and going off at intervals like earnest little sky-rockets.

They are human. They are young. (You were young once, Uncle Robert . . . remember?) You were green once, too, although never quite chartreuse, I grant you that.

I hold no brief for the NFFF. I view it tolerantly as just another aspect of the many childish ailments (like the mumps) from which adolescent fandom periodically suffers: "acute we-gottaorganizitis". Like the mumps, it produces a disfiguring but temporary swelling, which inconveniences the body as a whole but does not harm* it. Not giving a damn either way, I even admit that the NFFF may conceivably overcome its initial difficulties and function admirably for a period of years, serving those fans whose makeup is such that they are happiest when cogs in a

* - Incidentally, mumps are dangerous when contracted by an adult as impairment of sexual function is a frequent complication. There are several lamentable cases in my files. However, due to lack of space and the libel laws and things like that there we will not go into more specific detail.

machine, when being led by their innocent noses. Individualists like you and me can sit on the sidelines and happily jeer. You, lucky man, even while you snipe snidely at projects like the NFFF, can function as a part of FAPA and keep your proboscis inviolate in that admirable organization.

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But how can you defend your statement that the new fans - think how inclusive that is! - are the product of the current decadence? A fan, to my way of thinking, is a devotee of fantasy in any or all of its branches: science-fiction; weird fiction; the outré; whimsy; and, broadly, literature that is imaginative in what degree soever.

The reading public which supports certain professional magazines today cannot be said to consist of fans, can it?

The youngsters of today - the FAPA members of tomorrow - who somehow manage to procure real science-fiction, who track down the "elder writings", are devotees of the "literature that stormed the heavens and the depths under the earth, sought out the secrets of man and his mortality and tried to look forward to greater tomorrows," even as you and I.

The elder writings are, in some measure, obtainable; a trickle of science-fiction is being published today - witness the November Astounding, with Desertion, Alien Envoy, and Killdozer! - and I for one believe that there will be a re-nascence of true science-fiction after peace is established.

The "pitiful few who remember" - are they an elite group who have the right to consider the membership rolls arbitrarily closed? May not many of the fanatics be fans in the making?

Why, there will always be new fans as long as there are men who "try to look forward to greater tomorrows". My great-great grandchildren in the year 2004 will doubtless be fans.

I accuse you, in all seriousness, of priggishness, of condemning all the energetic youngsters out of hand - choosing to forget your own feverish enthusiasms of other years. The very perspective you pride yourself on having gained should make you exhibit more tolerance - and perhaps even a little fond indulgence - toward the small fry.

Shouldn't it? . . . TEMPER!

@@@

WHEREIN THE APOSTATE IS LEFT A DOUBTFUL HERITAGE

By Doc Lowndes

Devil take my entrails of a gentleman, but who said I pride myself on having obtained any perspective? Matter of fact, I didn't. The proprietor looked at me as if I'd personally opened fire on Fort Sumter and muttered phrases translatable as: don'tcha know there's a rebellion on?

But let us return to the main point, and since this is a family magazine, we can't discuss it -- not without risking life, limb, the pursuit of etcetera. Which leaves me in an awkward position as regards the Apostate's article. I'll have to content myself with comment on a few minor references and ignore the main question.

So be it, then. The first scurrilous aside to wither is the inference that I'd welcome as a kindred soul any "man" from anywhere. This is the result of Apostate's having gobbled up so much idiocy from drooling mannikins self-termed "fans", that @ has overlooked my well-known anti-social bent. The "man" from anywhere would go into the soup, were he a floating kidney, although on second thought, I can't stand kidneys. Blackout could have him raw.

We shall ignore likewise the Apostate's rhapsodies over these aforementioned blights upon science fiction, and hold @ eternally accountable for having, in an inebriated moment, no doubt, set forth in writing that some of the stories in the November 1944 issue of Astounding were equal to the real thing as of yore. We know, of course, that these opi were gems in comparison to the current product ordinarily, but that does not make them worth reading twice.

You understand, I trust, that I'm not entirely happy over condemning all the energetic youngsters out of hand -- but lacking a flame-thrower, machine gun, or disintegrator, what else could I do? Of course, a letter could be sent to the Haters, but my finances are a bit transitory these days.

As for choosing to forget my own feverish enthusiasms of other years, that's a rather silly way of putting it. Rather do I choose to put them in their place -- in a museum. And I don't enjoy seeing them prowling about of days any more than I'd leap with glee at seeing stuffed Assyrians seated beside me at the Met.

Empirically speaking, your definition of the term "Fan", might be okay, but the blights will not have it so. And lacking the funds, and a license, to electrify my doorbell so that any fan ringing it will obtain pink shocking, I'm constantly being beplagued by them. Next time I move, b'gad, I'll have a sign put on the door; no dogs or science fiction fans admitted.

But don't let this sadden you, Apostate. You are not being priggish, you aren't condemning the garbage out of hand, you aren't choosing to ignore your own feverish enthusiasms of other years. Nope, you have perspective with a capital P and tolerance, too.

So, Apostate, I give you fandom. Please take it and keep it. RWL

