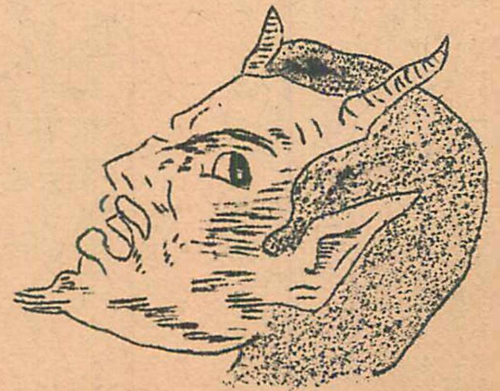
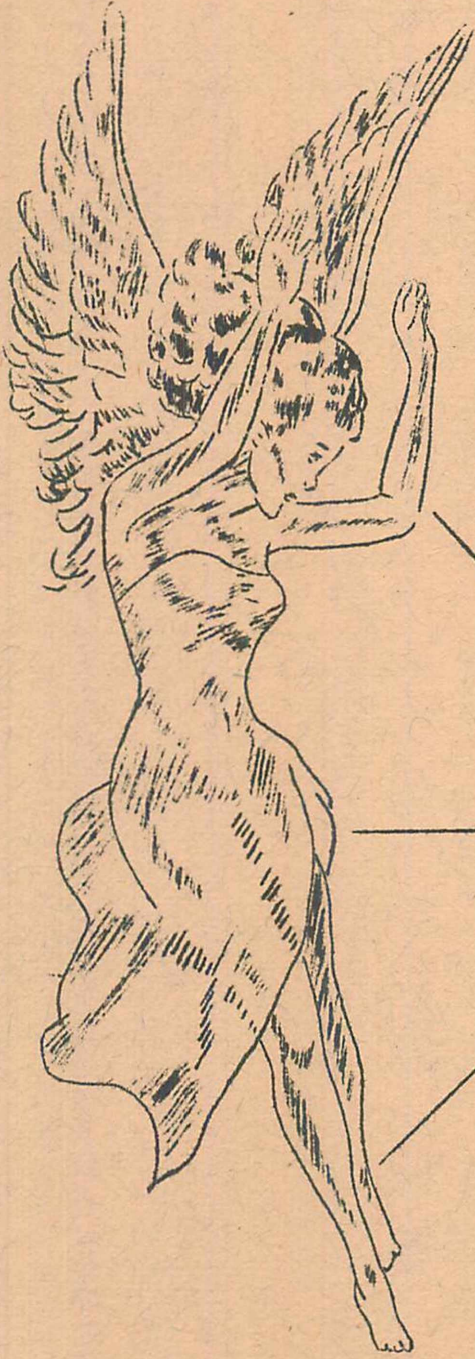


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# FAN FARE



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Fillinger, (editor of the now defunct GHUVNA). This was a mistake—as a matter of fact, two mistakes! Note the sloppiness of the interior reproduction. Note the cover, and realize that Joe swiped it from a Momberger cover on the second issue of GHUVNA; it suffered in the process, and I expect Charlie to sue me any day now. I'm tired of saying in each issue that the next one will see, finally, publication of the DeWeese story. It is not a myth... and it will appear. What? Well, now, you just wait and see!!

Beginning with this issue I am experimenting with kinds of stories—I'm tired of publishing tales that "almost made the pulps;" eventually, FAN-FARE will be issued in a better format than mimeographing—I'd have it lithographed beginning right away if I thought reader support would pay most of the cost, but I've learned from others' mistakes. And I refuse to issue it in the not-so-costly microscopic form which early issues of SF DIGEST used... I'd have to provide magnifying lenses!

Next issue the regular page of book reviews should return, and I hope to have another installment of the Leverentz column—having been an observer to one of the latest atom explosions, he should have interesting things to comment on...

-- 8 June, 1953

## CONTENTS

THE ANNALS OF AARDVARK.....	3
by Harlan Ellison	
THE GOTHIC HORROR.....	10
by George Wetzel	
LOOSE ENDS.....	13
by Jean Reedy	
A TIME TO LOVE.....	17
by Don Howard Donnell	

### VERSE:

THREE A.M., by Walt Klein.....	9
AT TAKEOFF TIME, by R. L. Clancy.	12
NOVA, by Keran O'Brien.....	22
THE SEA AT EVENING, by A. Duane..	22
TAVERN MOOD, by Walt Klein.....	22

### FEATURES:

ENTR'ACTE.....	2
ASSAY REPORT.....	21
WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN.....	23

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## . . . E N T R ' A C T E

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This issue was published with the thought in mind that it would be nice to distribute it at the Midwestcon—in the rush to get it finished, the aid of Robert J. Fritz (editor of the now defunct HYPEROPIA) and Joseph M.

—THE EDITOR



# THE ANNALS OF AARDVARK

BY HARLAN ELLISON

## CHAPTER 1

## THE ENTRANCE

C'mon in won't you? You can sit right down there in that rocking chair. Oh! you saw the sign on the door and wanted to ask me about Aardvark, did you? Well, I guess I'm the best person to tell you about him since I was with him from the moment he entered the country. Do you want to hear from there or from the real beginning? Well, okay, I'll tell you about the start when he met the Valkyries.

You see Aardvarks can live only in the warmest places. So, when the Aardvark got lost in the Swiss Alps, he was very uncomfortable. Don't ask me how an Aardvark got to the Swiss Alps or what he was doing there in the first place. He's never told anyone, except maybe the Valkyries.

Anyhow, stumbling around in the freezing cold, he got lost; but good. Just as he was about to give up and say farewell cruel world, he stumbled upon an ice crypt. Stumbled, he ran into it and knocked out two teeth.

This crypt which was set in the side of one of the glaciers was not an ordinary one, for frozen within its icy walls, rent free, were two Valkyries and a large elephant. Even the elephant was unusual. He was the sole owner (the Valkyries obviously had no use for one!) of a handsome brown handle-bar moustache, nicely waxed and glistening.

The Aardvark, who was inquisitive as are all great men, strolled up to the ice crypt as nonchalantly as a freezing Aardvark could, and dying of hunger, put forth an exploratory tongue and licked the ice. To his amazement, the ice was lemon flavored. Wait a minute, I'll tell you why it was lemon flavored, but first let me tell you what happened.

Knowing full well the consequences of licking open this age-old ice pack, but racked with hunger, the Aardvark proceeded to lick open the crypt. After several minutes of lightninglike licking, the Aardvark sated his hunger and in the process freed the Valkyries.

The Valkyries were forever grateful and proceeded to show the Aardvark this by bursting into a Wagnerian opera, complete with flowing braids.

After the preceding formality had been dispensed with, introductions went around and the Aardvark found out the fact, which is of practically no use to anyone, that the Valkyries' names were Olga and Ketanya Schwartz. Very old lineage, this name. The elephant, who had been sitting by looking very bored about the whole thing, was named Rubin.

The Valkyries, it seems, were delivering a package of lemon flavored Jell-O to the cook in Valhalla, and en route, had gotten frozen in the ice. The elephant was their mode of conveyance since all the good horses had a day off and went to the people races at Lowaleah.

The Aardvark heard all of this in a rather detached way, for you know most Aardvarks can neither talk, write, nor understand human language... The Valkyries who perceived this deficiency were contemplating giving the Aardvark some of their Valkyrie Local Number 86112 Magic, Pat. Pending, when the recipient in question suddenly turned a lovely shade of aquamarine, shivered, and dropped over, frozen solid. This solved the problem very effectively. They worked their second-hand magic on the fellow, and when he awoke...! Well, there was a complete change in him. This was the exit of Aardvark, boy nothing, and the entrance of Cassius Quagmire Aardvark, man of the world.



## CHAPTER 2

## MASS EXODUS

After the Valkyries had revived Cassius with the aid of a bouquet consisting of a quartet of red flowers in liquid form, they placed him and themselves upon the back of the elephant Rubin, who it was found was permanently grounded after three or four thousand years of disuse, and proceeded to the almost obscure town of Eeahohaheeee, Switzerland, where they intended to settle down.

But the people of the town upon seeing the apparition of a large elephant with a moustache carrying two beautiful girls and a strange animal, wanted to burn the aardvark and his companions at the stake thinking them a figment of their imaginations.

The elephant did not care for this in the least and raring back on his hind legs proceeded to tell the townsfolk so, much to their dismay. In large groups they immediately depopulated the Swiss village.

Cassius, the Aardvark, finding himself alone in the middle of a deserted town with a moustachioed elephant and two Valkyries decided that here they were not appreciated, and made preparations for leaving the country.

In a deserted haberdashery he found a fine, warm English tweed, a top hat, white gloves, a white bow tie, and a pair of lavender earmuffs, which he quickly donned. The elephant was equipped with a can of moustache wax and a muffler, while the Schwartz sisters doffed their filmy negligee type goddess gowns and donned two lovely business suits.

Then, well clothed and happy, the elephant replaced his travelling companions upon his back, and calmly swam the Atlantic Ocean to arrive at the United States of America, where the Aardvark's appearance was destined to cause a stir and tremor in the daily life of every American.

## CHAPTER 3

## "...IT'S A BARGAIN"

A warning of the thing to sweep the country shortly was evidenced when the moustachioed elephant Rubin came lumbering through the water in the New York Harbor. People from miles around who got wind of the news (he was a very smelly elephant) rushed to the docks to watch, or climb to the tops of buildings with binoculars. And when Rubin climbed ashore on Ellis Island, the city was thrown into a panic.

It seems that Cassius began conferring at once with two of the immigration officers about entrance into the country. This was flatly refused by the officials, who cited a weak clause in the handbook which excluded all uncivilized beings; and anyone could see that Cassius was uncivilized, — whoever heard of wearing lavender earmuffs with an English tweed?

When his traveling companions heard this, they were all for hurling the immigration officers head first into ye olde New Yawk Harbor.

Right about there is where I came in. Yeah, good old Charlie Smirtz, that's me. I had been waiting on the Island for a shipload of animals from Africa and being a producer of some reknown, saw the latent possibilities in the appearance of these, and I use the term loosely, people. I had just finished a show on Broadway that had run three years and was just getting together an animal circus to tour the country. But when I saw this Aardvark in an English Tweed with a top hat, tie, and ivory-topped cane, a moustached elephant wearing a muffler, and two of the most gawjus dames in the world, I knew that this was something a little unusual. I was sure of it when I saw that the Aardvark was wearing lavender earmuffs.

Sauntering casually over to where the Aardvark and his companions were sitting, I introduced myself, and in a low voice related to them the fact



that if they would consent to signing a contract, I would personally see that they were inside the country before morning. The Aardvark gives me the cold eye at first and then says, "If you promise, and write it out in this contract that we are not to appear in any sideshow type things, we might consent."

Before the fellow could twitch his short brown tail, I had pulled out my Foster pen that writes under water, air, ink, blood, and money, and was writing in the clause he mentioned. Then he signed the contract, and so commenced the partnership of Smirtz, Aardvark, Schwartz, and Rubin, Inc.

### CHAPTER 3

### THE CARBUNCLE VOYAGE

After the signing of the contract, Cassius and his companions retired to the harbor to wait till I had made the arrangements. Late that night, very late (about five o'clock), a small tug pulled up to the island and out came one Hawser Dawson. I can truthfully say that Hawser is the mouldiest looking animal ever to set foot upon dry land. Or wet water, for that matter. He is so filthy that his clothes stand up by themselves when he takes them off at night. And the smell! WHEWWW!! Hawser Dawson smells like Mrs. Murphy didn't get home with the eggs in time. He is dirty, smelly, and dumb besides, but he is loyal and one of the best tugboat captains that ever tripped on a two inch line.

We had arranged to get the Aardvark and his buddies into the country under cover but I had forgotten to mention to Hawser how big the group was. When Hawser saw the elephant he almost fainted. His ship, which was as leaky as Stalin's head wouldn't carry that load. It could hardly carry Hawser himself. So we arranged to hang the Aardvark and the elephant under the ship while the Valkyries and myself rode upstairs.

But not only did Dawson get paid twice as much as he should have, he wanted the Aardvark and Rubin the elephant to work their way in. He whispered something to Cassius and Rubin and then came aboard. When the Elephant and our hero were slung under the ship, the leaky tub sank so low into the water that it was wetter on the bridge than it was under the ship. We got under way shortly and as we sailed around under cover of darkness we heard a weird sound. It was a systematic metallic whonking under the boat. When we asked Dawson what the noise was, he told us that the Aardvark and Rubin were working their way over by cleaning barnacles off the bottom of the tugboat with their teeth. I almost fainted when I heard this. Our future star, the brightest new personality in years.... scraping barnacles! Oh no!

After breaking a steel pipe over Dawson's head, we got the Aardvark into the ship and started chipping the remnants of his work from his bicuspid. It was about this time that we got into the small dock that Hawser had told us would be waiting. We dragged the slightly defunct sea captain out of the ship, got Rubin out from under and proceeded to enter the United States of America, which as you know has been renamed since by some people, the United States of Aardvark. One of the reasons is because of what happened in the Drunken Cockroach Nightclub. Oh was that a queer night. It happened on the same evening we got into the States...

### CHAPTER 5

### IN THE 'DRUNKEN COCKROACH'

We got the Aardvark settled quickly in a hotel near the center of town and then decided to go out and eat someplace. Hawser Dawson wanted to go along till he got his money and since he wanted it in cash and the banks



didn't open till the next day we decided to let him tag along. There was but one stipulation; that he take a bath. This almost broke Stinky's heart but he consented and when he met us in the lobby a few hours later, he was (as he termed it) "disgustingly filthy clean."

Rubin was looking quite elegant in a rented tux which was a size sixty-seven. The Schwartz girls were absolutely ravishing in their two evening gowns that were strapless, hemless, backless, topless, bottomless, frontless, and with a plunging neckline.

But the really dashing one was Cassius Q Aardvark. He was decked out in a conservative green and red suit with a yellow tie, spats, a cane, top hat and the perennial lavender earmuffs. We could never understand it but the newspapers said the next day that about fifty cases of color blindness and shock were brought into the hospital raving about an Aardvark with a top hat and earmuffs.

That was really a queer night. We started out at the Stork Club. Sherm Billingsley had gotten wind of the Aardvark and had a special room reserved with a wall knocked out for the elephant Rubin. The men were practically fawning all over the Schwartz Valkyries who calmly broke Champagne bottles over their heads and continued to stay by their erstwhile pal, the Aardvark. After we had gotten well placed I looked at the Aardvark. He was holding sway like a royal Sultan, complete with dancing girls. The young blade was surrounded by the chorus line and was having a rough time with them. But he had eyes only for the Schwartz sisters. They sat there exchanging guttural sounds.

After we got finished at the Stork we took in rapid succession the Mocambo, the 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 Clubs, the Noire Pansy Club, and the Hi, Low, Top, and Homburg Hat Clubs.

About nine o'clock we were just about pooped out when we noticed that we had lost Hawser someplace. It was quite a relief to us as he had poured the contents of a potted palm over himself at the Noire Pansy Club to make himself feel more at home and he had begun to reappear the odor that was peculiar only to his body.

It was then that Cassius remarked, "Look at the neighborhood we're in. This is lower than low."

Truer than true were his words. We were in a neighborhood that looked like the inside of a shell-shocked oyster shell. We were surrounded by broken down houses and buildings that looked as though they had been old when Moxie's Army was chewing on rattles. At the end of the street that we were on was a building that was a little better; just a little. By better, I mean it was standing. There was a sign over the door that proceeded to tell us in no uncertain terms that this was the "Drunken Cockroach Nightclub."

I was all for turning back as was Cassius Q., but the Valkyries, Olga and Ketanya who had consumed a great deal of wine (they learned how in Valhalla, they told us) ran on ahead and without a backward hiccough vanished into the rickety building which threatened at any moment to fall on their heads.

With a shrug to the Gods of Chance Rubin, Cassius and myself proceeded to the Spirit Hostelry, or as you choose, Beer Parlor.

The inside of the Drunken Cockroach was worse than the outside. It looked like a nightmare by Dali on a night when he had run out of brushes and had started using his feet.

The bar, which ran across the back of the smoke-filled room, was of a seasick green color while the walls were a burnt umber tinged with beige. The floor was ornamented with a five-pointed star that showed several



crawly type animals such as the kind that "...go bump in the night." They were of various hues and were, in all, quite sickening. The bartender was the worst. A small sign above the bar related the fact that he was Oliver Absinthe. He was not only repulsive, he was nauseating. A large bald head encased in folds of pink flesh was what surmounted the largest bay window in the country, outside of Rubin's. He was wearing an apron that showed the demise of many a martini. There were also spaghetti, dirt, milk, coffee, and gravy stains on the apron besides a group of green blotches that I couldn't quite place. It looked like the remains of last week's spinach.

Have you ever heard a sick Hippo tell you about his operation? Well, if not try to imagine how it would sound, since that was what this fellow's voice sounded like. "What's ya pleasure," he said.

"Nothing much," I answered, looking for a quick way to get out if it was needed.

We seated ourselves in a booth next to the Valkyries who were fast at work guzzling beer. Rubin just stood with one foot on the brass rail, which at the application of his weight, bent. He ordered another double double scotch and in one gulp downed it. It was then that the elephant began screeching in an unelephantlike way and kicking himself in his more than ample posterior. We started shaking him by the trunk and asked him what the trouble was and he yelled that the last drink was one too many. He was seeing pink people.

After this outburst I returned to the booth to see that the Aardvark was gone. My attempts at locating him were halted suddenly by the screaming of another person. It seems as though that evening was open season on howling. The person yelling was Oliver Absinthe, the bartender, who was yelling at Cassius who was in turn yelling and alternately beating with his fists and a cuspidor, a slot machine that was not acting in the way Cassius expected it to. With a resounding howl the machine exploded showering colored lights, nickels, pieces of wire, and an Aardvark at me. The last was caught by Ketanya Schwartz in one hand while downing a beer with the other. Absinthe was jumping up and down behind his seasick green bar while the rather shady looking patrons were scrambling for the nickels.

Absinthe, who had been systematically withdrawing each strand of hair from his chest (his head was bald), let loose a barrage of verbal abuse that even singed my ears. Besides that, he let loose a string of whiskey bottles that sailed across the room and felled, one at a time, the clientele on the opposite side. The bodies began piling up as Oliver the bartender became not only bald on his head, but upon his barrel chest also. I for one dove for safety under the table, and there was pleasantly surprised to find the half-pickled Olga Schwartz still swilling spirits. I raised my head in time to see the Aardvark swinging across the nearly ruined room on the trunk of Rubin, who was sitting in the middle of the floor hitting himself and repeating, "Go away, go away." Giving out a sound like Tarzan with the gout, he flew through the murky smoke-filled air and with a sidearm that would do Bob Feller credit, hit the still-bellowing bartender a resounding clunk in the cranium. Absinthe fell like a poled ox.

By this time there was much yelling and hollering by everyone within a radius of two blocks. In the distance we heard the mournful wail that signals the entrance of the blue coated gendarmes. With a significant look we aroused Rubin, whose moustache had begun to droop sadly, climbed upon his back, and amidst the clatter and crash of beer bottles, escaped the "Drunken Cockroach Nightclub." Like I said, what a night!



These were the times. The good times that I still remember as I rock back and forth before my fire. Eh? Whassat? Oh, yeah, less ruminating and more expostulating. Heh, that's a good one, sonny, but don't be gettin' flip with me... old Smirtz can still tan the hide off'n any young whipper snupper like you.

Well, anyhow, I had been making plans to put Cassius and his band into a supra-super-collosal extravaganza that would out Florenz Ziegfeld. It was about six months after that mad night at the Cockroach that rehearsals were over, the show was prepared, the public waited with bated breath and fish-hooks to see what had been the most highly touted production in a decade.

Then that night.

I can remember it as if it were twelve years ago. (As a matter of fact, it WAS twelve years ago). The marquees blazoned their messages to the crowd that had formed a line fourteen times around the block in front of the Garden. New York had turned out en masse. And, as I said, those marquees!

### THE AARDVARK FOLLIES

starring CASSIUS Q. AARDVARK with RUBIN, OLKA and KETANYA SCHWARTZ,  
MILTON BERLE, LAURENCE OLIVIER, LIONEL BIRDBATH  
and others

an extravaganza to out-ganza all extras!! STANDING ROOM ONLY

How d'y'like that? SRO signs up, and we hadn't even opened yet!

Well, when that curtain rose and the Aardvark came out on the backs of seventy raging rhinocerii, the crowd went into fits. And when the Schwartz girls danced the dance of the  $8\frac{1}{2}$  x 11 Kleenex, you could have sworn that the rafters would buckle. And when Rubin did his imitation of the president (Oh that imitation of Mamie!), the Garden sounded as though 12 billion Zulus were singing, "TIDE'S in, Smirtz out."

Thirteen weeks went by with two shows a day except when Cassy got tired, and the money was rolling in. We had to save a box seat each night for Impellitterri, otherwise the cops would have closed us down. It wasn't exactly blackmail, I don't blame him a bit, that was one helluva show."

However, all good things must come to an end.

We had signed on a pair of kids named... uh... what in the...oh yeah —yeah, that's it, Martin, for some fill-in stuff 'tween acts (we had to let 'em go eventually. We found 'em carrying on with one of the hat-check girls name of Monroe, or something. Oh well.) and Cass had taken off a week to go down to Monte Carlo for some sun and air. That year, the rage of the Riviera were two three-headed girls named Sally Louise Lee Munglefootz and Gertrude Alice Roberta Hitslongle (they called them SLL and GAR for short), and when they saw Cassius...

Well, it went on for three gay, mad days till I went a wire back to New York to tell Olga and Ketanya to get down to le ville de mazuma to save Cass-boy from what might develop into a septangle.

SLL and GAR were entertaining Cass at a party one night, drinking borscht from his sneakers, when who should drop in through a skylight from a DC-6 but the Schwartz sisters who immediately began laying about them with a pair of two-handed broadswords. Fifteen minutes and ninety



gallons of blood later the place was cleared of all sentience save Cass, myself, the Schwartz girls, and a drunken cockroach (something familiar about that boy) who immediately staggered to the seashore, fell in and was poisoned to death.

Cassius, basking in such munificent attention, and also regaling himself with the beauty of the two girls, immediately realized how unhappy he really was in civilization. He pleaded on bended bodies for forgiveness, and upon being received warmly by Olga and Ketanya, made plans for his leaving "culture."

I didn't try to stop him.

What would'a been the use? I'd made enough to retire, Cass had seen the World, Rubin had been adopted by some destitute family named DuPont who wanted a house pet, and all in all, the only drawback was that I hated to see him go.

But finally he chartered a plane (something about a sacred cow I believe) and took off back to where he felt was home with the two Schwartz valkyries.

Yep, that's the last anyone ever saw of 'em. That is, till now. Huh? Where are they? And what am I doin' here? Well, you see I didn't figger on taxes after the Show... and I was broke in two months. That's what I'm doin' here. Eh? Where are they?

Well, just ste-ep right up, ladeez and gennulmen, for onny twenny-fi' cents I'm gonna show you a real, authentic, for-sure aardvark and two girls frozen into a block of lemon flavored ice, right here in the heart of the Swiss...

The End

THREE A.M.

by WALT KLEIN

The clocks are all awry  
this hour of the secret  
night - the slender hands  
all aimless; the terrible, slender  
hands all fingering  
a different cipher. and the stars  
all reeling in their orbits.

O time! time! time!

Time and death have vanished  
this enchanted moment, forgotten,  
lost in the endless  
corridors of mind. But who -  
who will know tomorrow  
of this moment fleeing, lost?

Wailing, wailing, wailing...

The pendulum, rasping; drops,  
the door springs open,  
and a tinny voice shrieks:

"Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo!"



# THE GOTHIC HORROR

BY GEORGE WETZEL

Quite often Penhryn had puzzled over the reasons Gothic arts were made so hideous; every cathedral he had visited, every Gothic mss read, even Medieval tapestry was cursed with this ubiquitous grotesqueness. Once a medieval archaeologist told him it perhaps was the soul—ugly and deformed—of the Age that tolerated it. Perhaps so. Certainly there was a shocking parallel between it and the practices of the witch covens that marked that period; a parallel that suggested many hidden Satanists carved the wood and stone of the cathedrals. For did not the same spirit of mockery and perversion of Mass ritual exist in the gargoyles who leered atop cathedral parapets and from cornices and recesses?

Even now, the tymponum Penhryn studied was such an example of that blasphemy. A sly, cynical hint of bigotry, it seemed to him, was expressed in the too closely crowded group of saints and reveling demons. Another infamy like this present symbolism of the Elect and the Damned, he recalled, once carved on the tympanum of Rheims Cathedral, so shocked its 18th century clergy that they had it chiseled out.

His examination of the stone figures on the entrance arch was broken by the verger, commenting pedantically on some IX century Saxon brickwork in the wall. Penhryn stepped into the cathedral and a palpable sea of silence which even the stone of sound (that was his footsteps) could barely ripple. Mumbling about the church's reliquary, the verger started off; and Penhryn, despite the verger's boresome presence, decided to follow him.

Beneath tones of stone they passed, whose weight elfin Plantagenet ribbed vaults appeared incapable of supporting. Reaching the Reliquary in the gloom of the west transept arm, the verger unlocked it and brought out of a chest therein the cathedral's mortuary wealth—the remains of illustrious prelates and canonized saints—that reposed in bejeweled, golden urns and containers. Dryly, the verger spoke of dullsome abbots and obscure saints.

"This particular urn," said the verger, picking one manifestly no different from the rest, "whose osseous contents are those of an early saint, has a quaint history. In 1163 the Popish monks here gathered some henbane found growing in their garden, mistaking it for a kind of parsley."

Unimaginatively, he went on, relating—despite his pedantic manner—an interesting account of how those monks who did not eat of it were woke that same midnight by the Matin's bell. And coming into the cathedral read scrawled across the sacred books what was never originally written there, saw written in chalk on the walls blasphemy, and heard profane things uttered by those who had awakened them.

"The archives," said the verger, "are not explicit on the outrages; though they did say how the drugged monks, for one thing, made a mockery of Christian ritual by reverencing this urn."

At Penhryn's look of amazement, the verger smiled, reflected a bit, and said: "Oh, we've had other misfortunes here, worse than that. Why the west tower has come down four times since their time. And fires without number are always breaking out and always had been." The verger went on to recount other calamities suffered by the cathedral.

"Don't you think it odd," interrupted Penhryn, "such an uncommon number of disasters has struck here?"

The verger pondered this a moment and then smiled triumphantly, "Why, not at all. We have missed some serious misfortunes that have plagued lesser churches... Cromwell's troopers let us alone when they desecrated other cathedrals about us."



"But Cromwell was a hidden Satanist," blurted out Penhryn. "At least Montague Summers thought he was."

"Which is why," added the verger, "he and his Roundheads desecrated so many British churches."

Penhryn desisted from further argument. The verger did not see he meant his emphasis on the fact that Cromwell had left this place inviolate. He pondered a bit. Then, he asked the verger another question, "I wonder—just what do the bones in that urn," he pointed to the one that figured in the curious story of the drugged monks, "look like?"

A look of quizzical tolerance crossed the verger's face, "Just like any other, if not dust already." Then the amused verger added, "They could be fraudulent, you know. It wouldn't be the first time three thigh bones of a saint existed in three separate churches."

What the verger referred to was the traffic in spurious relics during the medieval times, the monstrous incongruities that sometimes existed along with the monkish pilfering of relics from rival monasteries. But that was not what Penhryn had in mind—at least not entirely. Better he not voice what he thought of those relics lest he shock the verger. Considering the spirit that motivated the Gothic decorations, it was very likely just what those relics might be.

At that moment a man in faded overalls entered the cathedral, looked about, and spying the verger, came over. A conversation about gardening ensued. Finally, the gardener—quite obviously—not comprehending the pedantic instructions of the verger, asked that person to accompany him outside and see the vegetable problem himself. Penhryn breathed a deep sigh of relief. The verger was a bore, besides openly regarding Penhryn as a ridiculous, superstitious man.

Now at last Penhryn could do what he originally came for—examination of the cathedral's organ. As he ascended to the triforium gallery, a feeling of self reproach arose. He regreted remarking on the oddness of this place; no wonder the verger had smiled. And yet there was no denying of it—the cathedral had an atmosphere of wrongness; it affected him.

Sunlight glorified the mosaic panes up here; and alternately, where no window pierced the stone wall, a chill darkness lurked. Thrusting up its ornate spires and pipes in perpendicular Gothic style was the organ case, beneath the oculus window. Dry dust assailed his nose as he crawled behind the organ to examine its geometric world of square and round pipes. Coming out, after a time, he paused to look over the balustrade into the hollowed out nave below, and was seized with awe; the Gothic craftsman had been clever, for their arboreal and animal carvings on pew boards, corbel-tables, and moldings seemed living things frozen in acts of motion, waiting for some mysterious summons before they convulsed with life again.

Penhryn felt an oppressive sense of heat; and looking up, saw last, lingering sunlight burning through a window. And the sainted figure that looked down at him seemed to be twisting agonizingly, as though its abode there was some fiery hell. The window frames were wrought in sections resembling flame tongues—a feature similar to the French Flamboyant Gothic style—which furthered the illusion that the window opened into a fiery domain. And he speculated if flame tracery was not also deliberately fashioned, along with the grotesqueness of the Gothic carvings. Another thought, of imitative magic—at least the wish it expressed—came to mind as he looked at the fiery window, and he grew more uneasy. Quite suddenly he realized there was some sort of blistering warmth emanating from the window—too much for comfort—and he retired into the gloom.



Raising his eyes upwards to the clerestory regions, he noted the irregular alignment of the longitudinal axis, proof that a later repair had been incorrectly engineered. While he studied this mistake, the shifting sunlight retreated roofwards as darkness filled the depths below, and he became aware of the long time he had browsed up here, hoping it was not so long that the verger may have forgotten his presence and locked him in. The thought terrified him—the spending of a cold night here—but why he could not say, or else did not want to dredge up the reason.

Hastening downwards he found his worst fears were true. The entrance door had been locked. A kind of reasonless panic threatened to engulf him—his theories about Gothic art were the blame—but by mimicking the verger's pedantic cynicism, he kept a surface calm. Possibly he could find a broken pane somewhere where he could shout out until someone came. Penhryn had barely made up his mind when it happened. Hitherto all was a canvas of dead silence but now a sound was brushed across it. From the transept of the Reliquary it had come; and as he turned in that direction he sensed, then saw, a stirring in the almost impenetrable dark. Fear had called up that presence.

Memory was fragmentary after that. Some shock drove him to seek the upper regions where a blur of light remained. A priceless stained glass window was smashed. And he plunged to the ground outside. No questions were asked him when days later he came out of a state of delirium. None were needed; he had babbled disjointedly while in that state, enough to cause the cathedral to be closed. An examination was made, discreetly, of certain relics. Later the gardener was observed by some to cast a small paper parcel into the river. And shortly afterwards several high ranking clergymen held a private church service in the cathedral to which no one was admitted. Though the more noisy spoke of hearing a hand bell ring and ponderous Latin phrases uttered.

Penhryn's experience had blanks in it which was well for him. One thing, not fully erased, was of a "face eaten away by darkness." There was one final thing that, when he learned of it, sent him into a paroxysm of horror. The investigators, taking much of his delirium babbling into serious consideration, had medical examinations made of the relics. One osseous remain—that which the drugged monks had blasphemously revered—had been non-human and unhallowed; a spurious relic passed off as genuine. The substitution was made obviously by a hidden Satanist, mocking the Church, as the Gothic carvers had, and the witch covens.

The End

#### D I F F E R E N T

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#### AT TAKEOFF TIME

by Raymond L. Clancy

I'd like to leave for the stars from Iceland,  
There where they gleam in purple and gold,  
In green and orange, and all gorgeous colors,  
And the Northern Lights their beauties unfold  
Under the eyes of Venus and Mars,  
From the Northern Isle, I would leave for the stars.



# LOOSE ENDS

by JEAN REEDY

Ada Webster had a feeling of buoyance as she moved away from her body. Sights and sounds were crystal clear. Each mote in the shaft of sunlight, falling through the window pane, was sharply defined. Sounds of the small city came acutely to her ears. Sounds of laughter and talk and moving cars and busses. And closer, the rustle of a nurse's starched uniform, the soft closing of a door as she went out.

In the room, quiet sobbing.

Tenderly the two beside the bed reached for the sheet and together they covered the whole body.

Ada watched in amazement. Brother and sister! They had not seen each other since girl and boy days. Now they were crying in each other's arms.

Ada wished they would stop crying. Their crying made her feel guilty. As though she were the cause of their unhappiness. Was she softening toward Howard? She knew he was there before she left her body. Even then, in her semi-coma, she had resented his presence. How did he know? How did she sense his presence and know him? This tall, good looking man with more grey than black in his hair did not resemble the boy she had tried to forget. This well groomed man with the expensive clothes and the charm of Ben, his father, but without the marks of dissipation.

The old bitterness flared. Why had Howard come, after a lifetime of neglect? He'd soon know she left nothing. Anyhow, she would have left him nothing. She wished there were something for Ellie and her boys—and Ted. If just a few keepsakes. But there was nothing—nothing.

Ada looked at the body under the sheet. It was not as old as some, in years. Hard work rather than age had broken it down so that now it was bent and wrinkled. Why, she could see clear through it! There was the deformed hip bone! The one that had not been properly set after Ben threw her down the stairs in one of his drunken rages. She was quite young when that happened and all the rest of her life she walked with a limp.

"Never again, Ada," Ben sobbed. "Never again will I take a drink."

She knew then that he was too weak-willed to keep the promise. She also knew that she would always love him.

The babies had come too close. Howard. Several that she could not carry to the full. Two still-born. Then Ellie. The twins, both dying after a few weeks of sickly life. Doctor bills. Short rations. Ben, so abusive when out of work and drinking. Ben, so sweet when working and sober. Ben, who died in a charity ward many years ago.

It was before Ben died that Howard ran away from home.

"It's your fault, Ada," Ben accused when he sobered. "You took the money he earned with his paper route."

"My fault!" Ada screamed. "I didn't take all his money. It was little enough. I only took it when there was nothing in the house to eat."

"It's your fault. It's your fault," Ben repeated as though reciting a lesson to himself. He raised bleary eyes to her stormy ones. "You didn't tell him and he thought of it as stealing."

"He'll come back, Mother," said Ellie soothingly.

"He'd better not come back," said Ada, fiercely. "Running away from home! All this added disgrace! I had enough to bear before."

Howard never came back and Ada remembered how, in her stubborn bitterness, she would not allow the mention of his name.



Now she studied the knees under the sheet. Yes, the swollen joints were prominent. Scrubbing floors had done that to the knees that were once round and dimpled. She thought it was the only work for her after Ben died. She was not used to anything but housework.

Scrubbing floors was not bad. Without fear in the back of her mind she could laugh and joke with the other scrub women when they met to eat a midnight lunch in the tall building. She could sleep in her quiet room without fear of being rudely awakened to appease a befuddled man and guard against his attacks.

And she was independent!

When Ellie left her job as waitress to marry Ted Hayes they went into a small house, just around the corner from the rooming house where Ada lived.

"Come live with us, mother," said Ellie. "Ted wants you to."

"Oh, no!" Ada replied. "I'll have my own place, though it is only one room."

It was some years ago that Ellie went around with the letter. That time stood out clearly for Ada. The young folks had not started their family early. Then there were two boys, Carl and Alfred. Sometimes Ellie brought the children to her mother's room. But that time she was alone.

Ellie was nervous and fidgety. "Mother, I want to tell you something," she said at last.

"Well, out with it," said Ada, impatiently.

Ellie drew the letter from her pocket. "Now don't flare up, Mother," she tried to laugh.

"Stop fussing and come to the point."

Ellie took the letter from the envelope. "It's another letter from Howard," she said timidly.

"Another!" cried Ada. "Have you heard from him before?"

"Y-y-yes. Please forgive him for leaving home and not writing for so long. H-he wants to take care of you. He wants you to stop working."

"How does he know I'm working?"

"I told him. And that you won't come with us because you think you'll be a burden on Ted. As if——"

"Oh! Squealing to your brother who did not write to us for half a life time. The trouble and worry he caused me when he ran away! Having the neighbors talk about us more than before! I'm ashamed of you, Ellie! Where's your spunk?"

Ada remembered how patient Ellie was that day. How hard she tried to explain. How she said: "Please! Howard wanted to make good before he let us hear from him. He has been working for an archeologist of late years. He travels all over the world with expeditions."

"Why didn't he say all this before?"

"He did. But I was afraid to tell you. You're so stubborn, Mother. Now you are getting old and I think you should——"

Even now Ada recalled the hot flush of anger that crept over her. "You take that letter out of here," she said.

"B-but——"

"If you ever mention his name again I'll forbid you to come here. And don't you forget it."

"I won't forget it." Ellie had gone out, her pointed chinas firmly set as her mother's.

That was the last mention of Howard and in Ada's senile years even the memory of him was blurred.

She studied the hands under the sheet. The knobby joints, the callus.



How clever those hands could have been!

Even in her first grades in school she loved to sketch. But there was no money to develop her talent.

And when Ben Webster came with his handsomeness and charm she didn't care about it.

But later her talent helped her through many dark hours. With it she could sometimes lighten fear and trouble by her own feeble attempts to create. A funny face would appear on a brown shopping bag. A white box lid became a winter scene. She remembered that in her floor scrubbing years there was a time when she worked in a school house. How tempting was the black-board when a piece of chalk had been carelessly left in the trough! Once she had almost completed a picture of a city street when a fellow employee poked her head around the half closed door.

Ada quickly smudged the picture with her floor cloth.

But the time came when she had to stop work. No more would the old joints bend and stretch.

Then Ellie came to her room one evening with determination in her eyes. "I'm taking you to another home, Mother," she said, firmly.

Ada was too tired to protest. "Where?" she asked.

"Let's play a kind of game," said Ellie. "Close your eyes and I will lead you."

Like a child Ada agreed. Before they left the rooming house that had been her home for so many years she closed her eyes and put her wrinkled hand into Ellie's. "Is it far?" she asked, trustingly.

"Not far, Mother. Don't look until I say so."

"I promise," laughed Ada.

A short walk and around a corner. Ada kept her promise, even when going into another house and up the stairs.

Then Ellie said: "Open your eyes, Mother."

Ada looked and she was in the middle of a well lighted room. A thick carpet was on the floor, bright paper on the wall, a luxurious bed room suite, a roomy easy chair and beside it a radio.

"This is your room," Ellie said, softly.

Ada stared, speechless. Then Ted and Carl and Alfred crowded into the room.

Ada's gaze went from one familiar face to the other before she realized that she was in the front room of their house.

Once more flared the old independence. "B-but—all this. You can't afford all this," she protested.

Ted put his arm around her shoulders. "A fellow can get a raise."

What blessed comfort to the old bones was the soft mattress, compared to the lumpy one in her recent quarters. The fine wool blankets, compared to the rough scratchy ones. The quilted gown to keep her cozy when sitting on the big chair. The fleece-lined slippers for her bunioned feet.

And now the last year stood out clearly. She had been in the comfortable bed most of the time and there was a white clad nurse to give her the best of care. There was no pain—just weakness. Frequently there appeared a doctor. And the tray, filled with delicacies! Everything she craved, in and out of season.

Like a child she had taken all this for granted but with great enjoyment.

Now Ellie and Howard went slowly out of the room and Ada moved with them. She realized that only a few minutes had passed since she began to examine the body and bring it up to date.

The small living room on the first floor was cheerful with late sunshine. Ellie partly closed the Venetian-blinds so that the corners of the



room were shadowed.

Howard went to the settee. "Let's talk a while, Sis," he said. "It's been so long."

Ellie sat beside him. "All right. The boys will be home from school soon and Ted gets home from work in an hour. That will be time enough to make arrangements."

"I'll take care of the expenses," said Howard.

"Oh, thank you. But you've done so much."

"I can afford it. I wanted to—"

"I know." Ellie patted her brother's hand. "We had to trick her so that you could do for her. It's too bad but that's the way it had to be. We could never have given her the luxuries you provided."

To Ada the voices had a metallic sound, like the tinkle of silverbells. So Howard was the one! He had taken care of her after all! No, if she had known, her stubborn pride would not have allowed it. Somehow, pride did not figure now. She knew that she had lost a lot through false pride. The anger she had felt toward Howard was not there now—only regret.

Ellie's voice went on. "I'm sorry mother was so far gone. I thought she might rally and know you at the end."

"I came as soon as I got your wire," said Howard, sadly. "I'm glad I was in this country. It's just as well she didn't know me. She didn't want to see me." Then he brightened. "I'm so anxious to see your boys. How old did you say they are?"

"Carl is twelve and Alfred is fourteen."

"Are they doing well in school?"

"Fair. Enough to get by. Like average boys. But Alfred—I don't know."

"What about Alfred?"

"He has a talent for sketching. Wants to go into commercial art. It's funny, neither Ted nor I can draw a straight line. Ted wants Alfred to learn a trade. He says we can't afford to give the boys extra advantages. We still have a mortgage on this house. Ted had an operation and lost a lot of time at the factory. It's always something."

Howard reached for his sister's hand. "Don't discourage the boy," he said. "You folks are all I've got. I'll see that the boys get their chance, if you and Ted will let me."

"Oh, Howard, you're sweet." Ellie brushed tears from her eyes.

Ada moved closer. She should have known about Alfred's talent but she was always too tired to take an interest in the boy's studies. Yes, Howard would take care of it. But she had planted the seed of her talent in Alfred. She had left something after all! And, through her going, Howard would be close to this family for the rest of their lives.

"I can't believe I am back here after all these years," said Howard, dreamily. "When I first left I was very homesick. But I could see no future in this town. What chance did drunken Ben Webster's kid have here? Yet, I knew that if I wrote to Mother and gave her a chance to coax me back, I would come."

"I had ambition and I did not want to destroy it by coming back here. I didn't know what I wanted to do then. But I knew that some day I would find it." He searched Ellie's face. "Do you understand that, Sis?"

"Yes. I think so."

Ada understood also. The tinkling sound of his voice was like the breaking of fine glass. The words came clear and almost before they were spoken she had their meaning. The bitterness was ebbing and in its place there was admiration.



# A TIME TO LOVE

## BY DON HOWARD DONNELL

Clark stretched his eighteen year old body luxuriously, rippling the splendid muscles he had acquired from a vigorous, outdoor life. He surveyed himself critically. He had just bathed in the icy lake nearby, and the water droplets glistened in the soft mid-morning sun. Standing there, as he felt the breeze dry him, he drank in the beauty of his surroundings. As the sun plucked the moisture from his bronzed skin, he listened attentively to the mocking birds nearby. The birds seemed unaffected by the happenings of the past few years, and sang their song so joyfully that Clark forgot for one happy moment, before memory crept stealthily back into his forceably matured mind. Slowly he put on his ragged blue jeans, and settled down beneath an oak tree, losing himself in observation of the countryside. The ever present, ever beautiful grass marched stolidly, like long rows of soldiers... No. Grass does not kill, it must not be compared with soldiers, ever. Yet it marched, rhythmically, in time to something... Clark pushed the nearly blond, sun-bleached hair out of his youthful, yet hard face, and played with the sickle bladed grass. He pulled one and examined it closely. There was a ladybug on it; he maneuvered it to his finger. A half-forgotten rhyme came to his lips and bubbled into spoken verse:

"Ladybug, ladybug, fly away... What came next? He thought hard, back, back to his childhood to when everything was...

He nearly cried.

The hills came up from the morning mist, rough hewn and uneven, reminiscent of a buzzsaw, yet, a buzzsaw did not accurately describe them. They were a deep resplendent purple, streaked with white cold veins. Behind them, gradually building up in the distance, were icy mountains of majestic clouds. And all in all there were the bobbing, bending wild flowers, in numbers and colors too numerous and vivid to describe, with wild honey bees like black buzzing dots, floating from the daisy to the dandelion, pollenating, and birds darting across the deep expanse of turquoise blue that was the sky. The warm, active, late spring day tended to create a sense of security, no matter how false, and his head fell to his chest, and he slept.

At first, it was only a subtle sensation, creeping from his thighs up his body to the nerve centers of his brain. It was the vague feeling of warmth, the kind that can only come from...! He was wide awake and sat upright in the next second, looking into the heaven that was her face...

"Well," she said in the voice that only could possess, "am I that ugly?" Badly off-balance, he stuttered around for something to say.

"Why...er hardly. I mean..." He broke off as she started laughing. "Am I that funny?" he said.

"Yes, silly," he giggled, "You should have seen the look on your face. You didn't know what to say, did you?" He snorted and sat up.

"There's nothing to laugh about, girly. Wake a fellow out of a sound —" The last word was silenced for she leaned over and kissed him firmly on the mouth. When he saw sufficiently recovered he spoke:

"You work fast, don't you?" She socked her head prettily, pushing the brown chestnut hair out of her long oval face, and smiled a smile that Venus herself would envy.



"Maybe you work slow," she said, not too seriously. She had finished tying her hair behind her head, and her long, discriminately tanned arms matched the extremely delicate, yet beautiful legs that showed from the short, skirt-like affair that showed. Her small mouth was gently outlined by a light shaded lipstick which he knew to taste good. It was the only cosmetic she wore, or needed to. He licked his lips subconsciously. Her eyes were deep, large and colored to match the wonderfully long hair that was tied in back. His appraising gaze soon became a stare and she said:

"Do you like me?"

"Being no fool, little girl, I'll say I do, and it's not quite a fair question, I don't even know your name."

"Dianne, if it will make you feel any better," she said softly as she rose to a standing position.

Clark did mental somersaults. She couldn't be much more than sixteen, yet her breasts bore the full aura of a woman, rising and falling, graceful and full. The trim contours of her young body were sleek, litheline of feminine muscle that were attractive, outlined through the thin material of her clothes. He felt quite a lump in his throat, the reason for this being that she filled out that age old form that had enchanted the male from the time of the much maligned Adam to Clark's furiously pounding heart.

"Damned if you're not pretty," he breathed in an undertone that was more than complimentary.

"Thanks," she said in the high prim voice of a girl, and cocking her head again, added; "and I still don't know your name."

"Clark, if it'll help any," he said. "How come... uh, er, How did you happen to find me?"

"I didn't find you, Clark, so deflate your ego a little. You just happened to be here when I came."

"Come here every day, eh?" She smiled a deep pretty smile. Clark noticed she had dimples.

"Every day," she said.

"Suddenly I begin to grow attached to this spot," he said softly, "very attached." He looked at her for a long time, silent, then he said:

"Where do you live, Dianne?" Now it was she who became silent, and didn't answer for a long interval. Clark became sober too, guessing the reason for her silence.

"Bad memories?"

"Uh huh," she said in a subdued tone. "62 Blitz."

"My horror was the first Bomb. I saw the people around me cut to ribbons by flying glass." The birds and the wind through the trees were the only sounds, until, suddenly, she was in his arms, crying. He put his arms around her, pressing her close, comforting himself as well as her.

"Why? Why did it happen..? Oh Clark..." The bitterness of perhaps many years flowed out in a flood of tears that seemed ceaseless. Silently, Clark listened to her story. And it wasn't an unfamiliar one, in fact commonplace, tragically commonplace.

Dianne, as many other countless millions of girls, had been ordinary; the typical American maiden. (Clark could disagree with that.) She had been living in Los Angeles when the war came and disturbed the routine, the everyday life of everybody. Her parents had died in that murderous '62 blitz, and left her homeless when she was about ten. When civilization had crumbled, her own world gone, she found herself one of the tearful few left, living in the hills around the devastated cities. One of



the very few. She had lived, just as Clark had, on Nature, and had found it to be... pleasant. Once in a while, she obtained luxuries, such as cosmetics, soap and good clothing from one of the deserted houses among the hills. It was an old story... tragically old.

Dianne dried her eyes and looked beautiful, which wasn't hard. "I'm a cry baby," she said bitterly.

"How long has it been since you've been with another person?"

Dianne sniffled. "About four years. I can't remember exactly."

"You're no cry baby kid, you've got a right to cry, and cry a helluva lot." He put a finger under her chin, raised her face, and kissed her lightly. "Hell! I haven't seen a girl in three years." She laughed.

"What about you, Romeo," she said. "How did the war affect your life?" He sort of grinned, and leaned back against the tree, pulling her with him.

"You know, I think it affected my life for the better. If it weren't for the war, I might not have met you. It seems that I'm falling in love with you already."

Dianne frowned. "Don't say that... Don't say that you wanted the war. think of the people that died... you folks... mine."

"It was coming, I didn't realize then, but it had to come. Man was too far apart from Nature and Nature wanted him back..."

"That's silly."

"No, Dianne, no, it's not silly. Man lived in his concrete skyscraper, above the earth... complex, not simple. He lost his sense of good and decency; he depended upon someone else for his food and well being. He became soft. It had to come."

"Maybe you're right Clark, maybe," Dianne whispered, nestling close to him warmly.

"I know I am," he said. He was aware of her in the crook of his arm, and, he added, almost too softly to be heard, "I know."

"How about when you were little?" she softly enquired.

"Oh, nothing really. The only thing I remember clearly was the Huntington Park Bomb that dropped on my tenth birthday."

"Birthday?"

"Yeah. Had a party going full blast when it hit. I remember it as a soft of a thunder-clap and a bright flash in the sky. Then, amid the screams of my playmates, came a wave of heat that prickled my skin while flying glass cut everybody around me. I don't remember anything very clearly after that; guess I was in a state of shock or something. After that, I wandered around, living and growing up with Nature. It's been very pleasant... though I haven't met many people until I saw you, lucky day." She grinned.

"You've been through a lot," she said simply.

"We've all been through a lot. Maybe a lot more. Who knows? There's always a few lunatics and degenerates wandering around after the war... ever been bothered by them?" Suddenly, she cringed, wrinkling her face with revulsion, then swallowed hard.

"When I was about twelve..." She was nearly ready to cry again. She pressed closer to Clark...

"Never mind," said Clark, "It's over now, don't think about it." Again she was pouring out the sadness of many years of loneliness.

"I love you," said Clark. It was later in the day and they were still in the same position. "I think I love you too," she said leaning back on him. "It's strange", he breathed.



"A few years ago they'd call it puppy love." I'm sure this isn't. It can't be, Dianne. The war has changed things. Before I met you, I used to lay on the grass, staring up at stars thinking. Maybe that civilization was finished, but man wasn't. He's a tough animal to kill off. The future may lie in us, Dianne."

"You're being dramatic, Clark, we're not the only ones left; there are plenty more people. In fact," she said suspiciously, "I am beginning to doubt your intentions. My name is Dianne, not Eve."

"And mine's Clark, glad to know you." They laughed and settled down to watch the sunset. "Where are you living?" asked Clark a little later.

"It's a cave over near the Santa Monica Mountains."

"There? That's infested with a lot of renegades!" Dianne smiled.

"They're too stupid to look under their own noses." She sat up and stretched. "Come on, I'll show you." She sprang up and began running, her long hair streaming out behind her. Clark bounded after, at a pace only youth and vigor could maintain. He soon caught her and they both rested, laughingly. When the shadows were deep, they continued, silently. Within an hour, they were at the cave.

"Well, I'll be damned!"

"It's cozy."

"No doubt. Now I begin to doubt your intentions, young lady." She smiled and squelched him.

"I hope you're used to the hard cold ground, because that's where you're sleeping. There is only one bed. Or you can go outside."

"Never mind, I've got a tough back. But allow me this; this cave's pretty well concealed." The last was true. The cave was situated so that it was visible and nearly impregnable. A dense growth of foliage covered the entrance while the passage-way into the main chamber twisted and turned so that light and smoke were diffused perfectly.

"Where... how did you find it?" Dianne sat down on a makeshift bed and began to braid her hair. She raised her eyes and said:

"When I was a little girl, my family came up here on Sundays to visit my uncle. I used to play around in the hills while they were so engrossed in their deep adult conversation. One day I just found it. I didn't tell anybody about it, and used it for a secret hideaway. When the war came, I remembered it. Once in a while I go to my uncle's house just over the rise for things I need, but most of the time I've been here." She finished braiding her hair and leaned back on the bed.

"I lived in the open," Clark said moodily. "With the grass for a mattress and the sky for cover." He glanced around, "I think I'll like it here better." Dianne raised an eyebrow.

"Keep the gleam out of your eyes or else you'll be roughing it again," she said jokingly. He laughed and sat down beside her.

"Where did you get the candles?" Clark motioned to several wax lumps scattered about.

"Uncle liked them, so..."

"Yeah." she yawned. "Tired?" he asked.

"Very." There was a silence.

"Ever read the Bible?"

"Some."

"I remember a verse that I read a long time ago...it sort of stuck in my mind."

"Tell it to me, Clark, please."



"Sure." Clark licked his lips and recited his favorite verse into the murky stillness of the room:

"To everything there is a season; and a time to every purpose under the heavens;

"A time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to love and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace..."

"Hmmm," she said lazily, "Where did you get that from?"

"Ecclesiastes."

"Nice." There was a long silence.

"Dianne?" There was no answer. He stood over the bed and saw that she slept. He stood there a long time, just watching her, drinking in her beauty. She was something he couldn't tear his eyes from. He scratched his youthful stubble, and was aware that the candles were low, casting a ruddy glow, deepening the shadows on her face, creasing her ankles and thighs, accenting everything that needed to be accented, and perfectly. Her breasts rose and fell to the even tempo of her breathing. He walked over and blew out the candles, thoughtfully.

Clark stretched out full length on the rough floor of the cave using his hands for pillows, staring straight into the blackness of the ceiling. The ground felt good against his back. He grinned. Something ran through his mind over and over again.

A time to love... A time to love... A time to love....

Soon, he slept.

The End

#### ASSAY REPORT

For the July-September issue:

<u>PLACE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>STORY</u>	<u>POINTS</u>
1	Don Howard Donnell	I LOVE YOU, ROBERTA	1.57
2	Tom Covington	A BIT PREMATURE	2.36
3	J. S. Semens	I	2.79
4	Terry Carr	SUPER BOMB	3.29

... and the Nov.-Jan.:

1	Larry Saunders	A PHONE IS RINGING	1.33
2	Al Leverentz	TARRY THOU HERE	2.33
3	Toby Duane	COLIN AND THE LEPRECHAUN	2.83
4	Ken J. Krueger	SOLUTION T-400	3.50

For once, the ratings flowed in in a manner reminiscent of old times — thanks to my consistent bewailing. There is no rating sheet provided for your use in this issue, so I am not too hopeful about the results. I hope, though, that you will fool me and send in your story-preferences in volume. In the latter issue, the poem most liked was VIGIL, by Isabelle E. Dinwiddie, and second was Toby Duane's THE MAN-HEART.

In the next issue, you may definitely expect DeWeese's long story, which was promised for this issue. Circumstances intervened, however.

—THE EDITOR



N O V A

A yellow star  
Burned wanly in the spreading dawn,  
Then died.

"Hello, Joe, how's the missus?"

"Fine, Bill,

Did you see the news?"

"No, what's up?"

"Something about a new bomb, K factor  
Of two hundred, whatever that means."

"Probably

Nothing, they're always talking about new bombs,  
And anyway, we're not at war."

"Well, I don't know,

I hear this one's something new."

"That's what they say

About any new stuff. Remember the first  
Atom bomb?"

"Yeah, well there's nothing  
we can do, and like you said, we're not at war."

A red star  
Burned fiercely in the black void,  
Then died.

--Keran O'Brien

THE SEA AT EVENING

It was in the purple evening, as the moon rose on the sand,  
When I heard the restless waters calling me across the land;  
And I left the moors and meadows and the forests stretching free,  
Left the wind-swept fields behind me, and went down to meet the sea.

How the surges roared to greet me, soared to meet me as I came!  
And it seemed that they were calling clearer, chorusing my name.  
With the moonlight on them glowing like the luster in a pearl  
And the sapphire dwelling in their depths, I saw the waves uncurl  
As they spread their crystal fingers, carving figures in the sand—  
That the sea had known and bounded, tales from every distant shore;  
And I knew that the enchantment would be with me evermore,  
That the restless roll and reflurence would shackle me apart,  
For the sea was in my spirit, and its song was in my heart.

-- Andrew Duane

TAVERN MOOD

The melancholy  
faces drift in gloom like pale  
headlights through the fog.

-- Walt Klein



## WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

All letters for this column should be sent to Robert E. Briney, 561 W. Western Avenue, Muskegon, Michigan. No letter should exceed 250 words in length.

Dear Bob: Maybe you're wondering what my reaction was toward Saunders' story, A PHONE IS RINGING. Well, I'm still wondering, too. I don't know whether I liked it or whether I didn't. I'm perplexed. Before I go any further, however, I must admit that the story held my interest. The suspense was superbly executed. But when I read the ending, I was disappointed. It seemed as if Saunders had a good idea in the beginning... but as the tale progressed, he forgot about it. He seemed to be in too much of a rush to get it finished. And the ending struck me---huh? I'm still saying "huh?" Perhaps I skipped a vital paragraph in the story---I'll have to reread it one of these days and possibly my "huh?" will change to an "Oh!" I don't know, though. The short-shorts, I didn't care for, and as for Leverentz' column... I cannot see how he considers "The Crimson Pirate" as science-fiction. He creates an argument that really isn't an argument. CP was a comedy, anyway, and it was supposed to create a laugh, which it did... This is the first time I have heard it classed as science fiction. [If memory serves, it was not Leverentz but the movie reviewer he quoted who classed "Crimson Pirate" as science fiction, thus reflecting the public opinion of sf.--Ed.] Not that sciencefiction is "respectable"---but Leverentz should have chosen a better example to illustrate his point. ---Joe Semenovitch, 155-67 71st Avenue, Flushing 67, New York. P.S.: In SOLUTION T-400 there are 399 words! You're wrong, Ken, I took time to count them.

[Judging from the following letter from Larry Saunders, we doubt that you missed a vital point in A PHONE IS RINGING. In fact, you probably noticed something that no one else has bothered to comment upon, and which Larry mentions in his letter.--Ed.]

Dear Bob: An explanation for the confusion that probably resulted from the appearance of A PHONE IS RINGING seems to be in order. I wrote the story some years ago while I was under the influence of Leiber, Bradbury, and Benet. When I submitted it to Paul, he accepted it with reservations. In other words, he was confused. He suggested that I might rewrite it and clear up a few points. This seemed like a good idea. The fact remains that I am a lazy SOB, in other words a typical fan, and I never did rewrite it for him. Its appearance in the Nov.-Jan. issue of F-F thus came as a complete and utter surprise to me. I was both pleased and embarrassed. Embarrassed because the story is a confused mess. As it stands, I know what's going on but the readers do not---a situation which should not be allowed to happen. Rather than offer you my full explanation of PHONE, I offer you my apology instead. Ghu forgive me. ### Toby Duane's COLIN AND THE LEPRECHAUN was well-written and capably handled. Ken Krueger's SOLUTION T-400 was an amusing play on words. The best item was Al Leverentz' TARRY THOU HERE, which though unoriginal, was masterfully pulled-off. INTRANSIGENT impressed me with its Nietzschean bitterness. Can't say that I agree with him... Who gives a faint, unheated damn whether sf is "respectable" or not? If I want to read something respectable I can turn to Dostoyevsky, Balzac, Dickens, Hardy, or even Nietzsche. As for the song RUDOLPH---well I can't stand it either, but not for the same reason. The song just is no good---it stinks. The majority of commercial songs do. I listened to this tripe all my life and it had no apparent affect on me. I just outgrew it. Now instead of the current Hit Parade, it's Brahms, Bruckner, Mahler, Handel, Nielsen, Strauss, etc. ---Larry Saunders, 170 Washington Avenue, Stamford, Connecticut.

Cheerio: About the matter of Al Leverentz' red-nosed reindeer. This is a version of Rudolph's birth that I picked up somewhere, I don't remember just where, but it sounds only too true. You might check with Bob Bloch--- he's in the advertising business and will probably know the score. ### My understanding is that the song was deliberately written a few Christmasses ago to promote Sears-Roebuck merchandise. [Am inclined to think it was Montgomery Ward rather than Sears---I can remember when the first rash of that Rudolph bilge came out.--Ed.] Some bright advertising genius sold that company



a package deal: a song to do the plugging, and "Rudolph" toys, books, soap, clothing, etc. It worked very well, too, with perhaps hundreds of ~~thousands of~~ dollars worth of junk being palmed off on the kids and their helpless parents. ### That sort of promoting is done all the time to sell many products. When one of George Pal's interplanetary movies, WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE, was being readied for the theaters, one of the movie trade journals I subscribe to reported that Paramount had arranged to plant an article on how the picture was made, in ASTOUNDING. And that's just what happened. At least, friend Campbell printed it. ### Meanwhile, they've got a new picture coming up next May, WAR OF THE WORLDS, and the publicity men are bust again. One of them has been in contact with me, getting names and addresses of both pro and fan magazines, so there's no telling what kind of propaganda barrage is about to come our way! --Bob Tucker, P.O. Box 702, Bloomington, Illinois.

Dear Bob: I'm a little confused about the Lovecraft Collectors' Library. On the contents page of F-F it states that one volume has been published and there are six more to go, the set to sell for \$2.25. On page 18, it says the set will consist of six volumes and sell for \$1.20. I'd like to get the set, but...well, could you clear up the confusion? And what about GROTESQUE? I'd like to sub, but how much does it cost and how often is it published?—Richard Billings, 610 E. Street, North Wilkesboro, North Carolina.

[The true state of affairs with regard to the Lovecraft Library is as follows: there are seven volumes in the set, one of which has been published and a second of which is about to appear. Price for the set of seven is \$2.25, or 35¢ per volume if purchased separately. As for GROTESQUE: as was stated in F-F, the magazine is now defunct, due to the induction of the editor into the Army. The first three issues of the magazine, however, are still available from the editor of FAN-FARE at 50¢. Take it from us, they are well worth getting!—Ed.]

Dear Bob: On the pleasant side of the ledger, the fiction. A PHONE IS RINGING—a rather excellently integrated yarn. A certain resource of technique and imagination definitely present. TARRY THOU HERE—well done. Maybe I had better say no more, except that to the best of my knowledge my reason for the placing of this story is entirely aesthetic. COLIN & THE LEPRECHAUN—clever. SOLUTION T-400—this is a story? The title was good enough as a pun, but that was about the best part of the whole thing. ### Now for the CAT. If this were the only communication I ever received from Al Leverentz (direct or indirect), I would think him a terrible fellow indeed. Actually, he seems to be a rather nice guy. However, I can't let a challenge of this magnitude go by without some response. Case I: My reaction is entirely wrong. Conclusion: Al was edusing entirely too much from my short remarks, and his lack of acquaintance with my personality at the time. Case II: Al is completely wrong. Conclusion: cf. my remarks in preceding FAN-FARE. I probably erred in the direction of charity. Case III: Article fails insofar as it led to individual interpretations on the part of the reader—interpretations which were false, but please! not maliciously so. Conclusion: Al errs by excess in his reaction. This I think is the most probable. There may be many more positions, but I think I've covered the ground sufficiently. Now that the fiery one is in the Army, it may not be just to get the last word by default, but there seemed no other course. I trust Al Leverentz will forgive me. —Keran O'Brien, 186-29 Avon Road, Jamaica 32, New York.