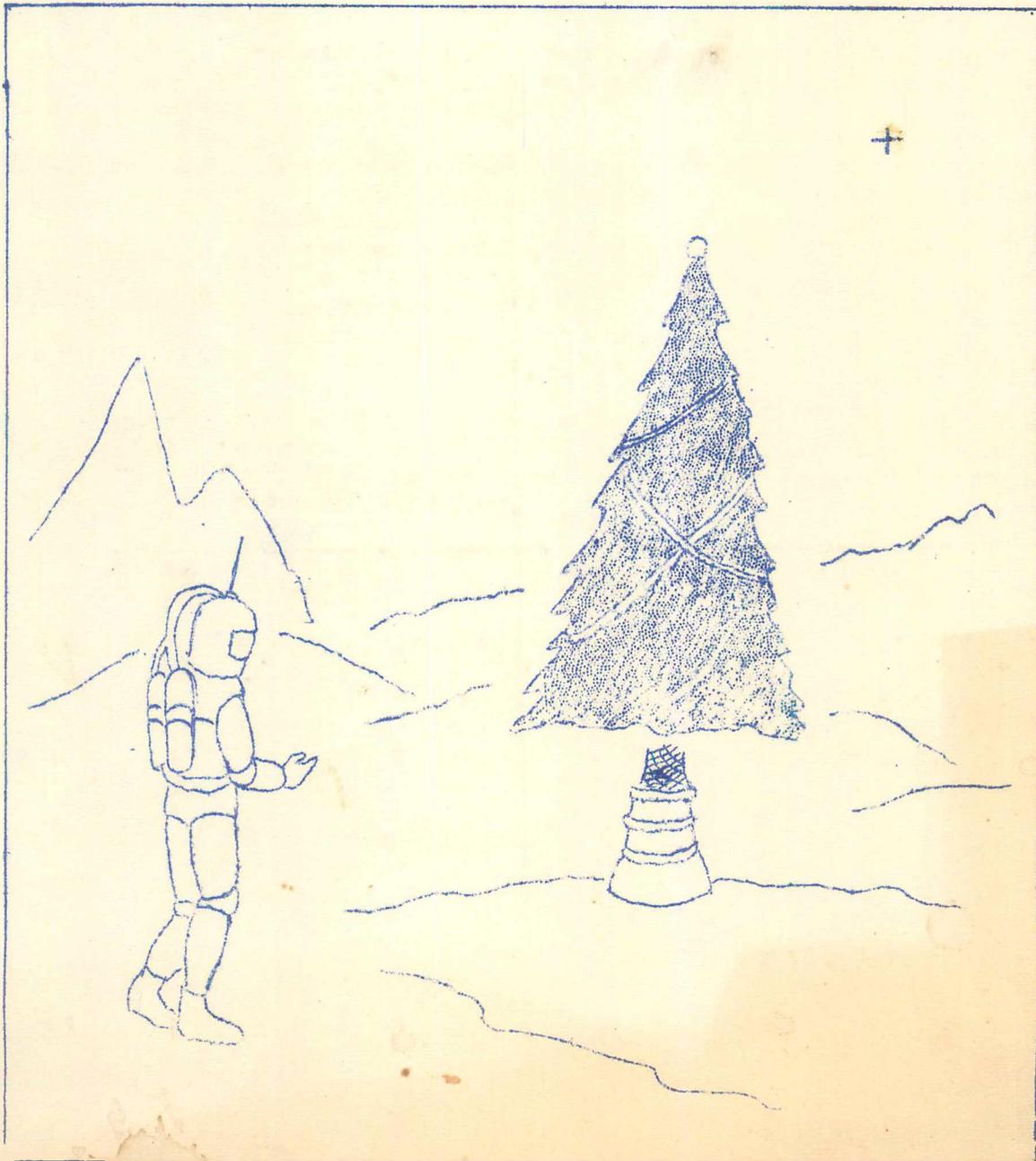


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The 12 Days of Christmas

A Fantastic and Science-Fictional Christmas Carol

By Anthony Boucher

- On the first day of Christmas my true love sent to me a Martian on a space spree.
- On the second day of Christmas my true love sent to me two hurkle kits and a Martian on a space spree.
- On the third day of Christmas my true love sent to me three French fen, two hurkle kits and a Martian on a space spree.
- On the fourth day of Christmas my true love sent to me four falling stars, three French fen, two hurkle kits and a Martian on a space spree.
- On the fifth day of Christmas my true love sent to me five time warps, four falling stars, three French fen, two hurkle kits and a Martian on a space spree.
- On the sixth day of Christmas my true love sent to me six golen wirtling, five time warps, four falling stars, three French fen, two hurkle kits and a Martian on a space spree.
- On the seventh day of Christmas my true love sent to me seven saucers flying, six golen wirtling, five time warps, four falling stars, three French fen, two hurkle kits and a Martian on a space spree.
- On the eighth day of Christmas my true love sent to me eight gnurrs a-gnawing, seven saucers flying, six golen wirtling, five time warps, four falling stars, three French fen, two hurkle kits and a Martian on a space spree.
- On the ninth day of Christmas my true love sent to me nine slans a-slanting, eight gnurrs a-gnawing, seven saucers flying, six golen wirtling, five time warps, four falling stars, three French fen, two hurkle kits and a Martian on a space spree.
- On the tenth day of Christmas my true love sent to me ten trifids lashing, nine slans a-slanting, eight gnurrs a-gnawing, seven saucers flying, six golen wirtling, five time warps, four falling stars, three French fen, two hurkle kits and a Martian on a space spree.
- On the eleventh day of Christmas my true love sent to me eleven robots rowing, ten trifids lashing, nine slans a-slanting, eight gnurrs a-gnawing, seven saucers

flying, six golden wirtling, five time warps, four
falling stars, three French fen, two hurkle kits
and a Martian on a space spree,
On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love sent to me twelve
hnau a-praying, eleven robots rowing, ten triffids
lashing, nine slans a-slanting, eight gnurrs a-
gnawing, seven saucers flying, six golden wirtling,
five time warps, four falling stars, three French
fen, two hurkle kits and a Martian on a space spree.

Trad. (erroneously attrib. Rhysling)
transcr, Herman W. Mudgett



"The trouble with these modern toys is, they don't
give a kid a chance to use his imagination."

ULYSSES, OR, VIRTUE REWARDED

by Poul Anderson

In making a spectacle calculated to unglue the great American public from Milton Berle, Hollywood is probably taking more pains than ever before. Especially if the setting is "historical" (O Momsen, Trevelyan, and de Voto!), no expense is too great for lavish sets, special effects, careful photography, and costumes as accurate as the censors will allow. There are only two classes of technicians omitted from the production--- actors and writers.

Many of you have by now seen the film version of the Odyssey. If you are in some doubt as to whether the Ulysses meant is Homer's or James Joyce's, take comfort: you are not alone. Those who have not had the opportunity of viewing this epic-by-committee are to be congratulated.

Let us be scrupulously fair. The sets, costumes, and other accessories--- especially Silvana Mangano's accessories --- are beautiful. The fight scenes are about as well handled as you can expect in an American movie, where the actors are presumably told to slash the unoffending air and hope nobody will notice the difference. (If you want to see a recreated battle which is really a battle, haunt your local film society till it revives Alexander Nevsky.) The Cyclops looks like a Cyclops, even if he behaves like an MGM producer. A certain amount of condensation of the original is quite permissible, in view of time limitations. The fact that English dialogue has obviously been dubbed in for a number of Italian actors is not too disconcerting after the initial shock.

But there is no sense whatsoever in basic alterations. When Ulysses (I still prefer "Odysseus," but let it go) is washed up on the shores of Phaeacia, the movie, for reasons known only to the front office, makes him amnesiac! He does not recover his memory till the day of his wedding with Nausicaa, God help us--- and the princess is changed from one of the most charming and wistful figures in literature to Jane Jordan, Girl Typhoid Carrier, or a similar soap opera heroine. Circe and Calypso are melted together and the alloy is as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. The scene at the gates of the underworld, here transferred to Circe's isle, could in the hands of someone like Fritz Lang have had both the horror and the pathos of the original; instead, it consists of a few dough-faced figures and a resonance chamber. The gods drop completely out of the story (and what could not have been done with them?), Ulysses' reason for returning in the guise of a beggar is never made clear, the dog Argus is

still fat and sassy after 20 years--- but the film never mentions the exact time lapse, since heroes and heroines have got to be young---

Why go on? I admit that the actors generally look their parts; even Kirk Douglas manages the leathery appearance one would expect. They don't act their parts, because there are no parts to act--- the crafty wanderer becomes a clean-cut moron giving it the old college try, the sober and steadfast Penelope develops an intercultural itch and talks about it--- since nobody could act such lines as are foisted off on the cast, they merely stand around and mouth them.

Even technically, there is often such an absence of thought that one wonders if the movie were written, directed, and produced somnambulistically--- a theory which, by the way, would explain quite a few other films. In one scene, we have a storm at sea. Long shot of the ship tossing in the wild waves; pan to the crew, running aimlessly about while the w.w. break over them on a perfectly steady deck.

Polyphemus the Cyclops, having captured the Greeks, is offered wine and demands more. Ulysses tells him to collect grapes, which he does. Then the Greeks tramp out the grape juice and offer it directly to the Cyclops, who gets dead drunk on it. Could be none of the men had washed their feet lately?

The basic flaw in all Hollywood's efforts along this line, whether it be Ulysses or Robin Hood, is the assumption that a "romantic" setting means that everyone concerned must have been the type of neurotic children which superficially appear to belong against such a backdrop. It ain't so. They were real, and adult, humans, meeting real problems. Like all great works of fantasy, the Odyssey is essentially realistic in its view of mankind. It was never a Little Golden Book, or a comic book.

If this review has a tinge of bitterness, it is because of disappointment. Ulysses could have been so much, and it is so little. I don't want to be the fellow with praise for all centuries but this and every country but his own. Foreigners have made their share of movies that stunk, and Americans have made films as good as any in the world. But so far, they have hardly ever done it when the budget was high.

We had hoped, in this issue, to bring you another essay from The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. In fact, our parallel-universes time machine brought us an excellent one, entitled: What To Tell Your Child When He Asks Whence He Came. Unfortunately, this continuum has postal regulations, and the article is written in an English of purely Anglo-Saxon derivation.



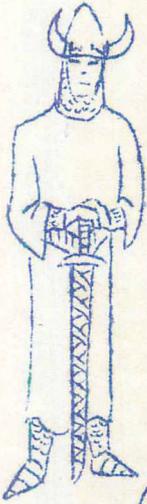
OYEZ!

OYEZ!

OYEZ!

Know all fen by these presents, that

WHEREAS Sir Arb Kingsley of Kingsdene, Knight of the Worshipful Order of the Silver Churchkey, hath most valiantly served his liege lady, videlicet, in the downing of many beers and nuclear fizzes, and in the composition of filk songs and convivial singing thereof,



NOW THEREFORE do we, Karen of Sevagram, invest him with the Counties of Napa and Sonoma with all revenues and honors thereto appertaining, including the monopoly of the dulce washed ashore on the beaches of Sonoma, first choice of the vintages of Napa, and the high, the low, and the middle justice in all his lands; as well as the addition to his arms in such manner as he shall see fit of a Golden Beer Bottle; and we do require Count Arb Kingsley to furnish us at our need with a levy of one man-at-arms out of each ten able-bodied men in his fee;



IN WITNESS WHEREOF
Our Hand and Seal
We Here Subscribe

Karen



NIGHT ON BROKEN MOOR

by Kar en Anderson

A premonition of danger, of unnamed terror, slowed my steps as I started across Broken Moor at the end of a lowering day. Yet I must cross that dreary and ill-reputed waste before I could find a night's lodging. I had lingered too long over stout ale and the cheery fire at the "Three Tuns" in Cobham; had I known what a gloomy road lay ahead I would instead have hurried on to Pagley, my destination, and arrived by dark.

I was on a walking-tour, but for some perverse reason had elected to do so in the latter part of October; the chill blast from the moor gave me yet another cause for regret. It was with a bleak mind that I started across the moor itself.

The landlord of the "Three Tuns" had described Broken Moor as the haunt of terrifying creatures of the supernatural world. I had dismissed such thoughts readily enough beside the fire, but beneath the windy, darkening sky they rose again in my mind and multiplied until every rustle became a goblin's gibber, every shadow a demon.

Summoning all my courage to displace such superstitious fears, I walked on at a quicker pace. By an hour past sunset (or rather past that dim hour at which I judged the unseen sunset to have taken place) I was halfway across the section of Broken Moor which lay between Cobham and Pagley. About this time the heavy clouds began to break up and be swept away by the wind. Pale patches of sky appeared, and occasionally the gibbous moon.

It was in this uncertain light that I beheld a sight which filled me with horror. With a silent swoop, a great black bat came out of the clouds and alighted on the moor--- and, by a weird metamorphosis, assumed the form of a man! Satanic in its awesome dignity, it walked to a flat, altar-like stone and gave a strange piercing cry. Frozen with horror I awaited the response: a wolf's howl. Moments later the wolf itself trotted up, and my knees gave way as I saw it, too, assume a human form.

I found that I was lying in a ditch; I stayed there, scarcely daring to peer out but filled with a horrid fascination by the fearful spectacle. In the increasing light of the moon, I saw another arrival: a withered hag, shrieking incomprehensible words, sped to the stone on her broomstick; they rose to greet her. And now a fourth appeared---a dimly

luminous figure that coalesced from the darkness before my astounded vision. Then vampire, werewolf, witch, and ghost huddled together over the altar-stone and began some nameless rite.

So absorbed were they that I dared, drawn by a force stronger than myself, to approach the group. I could barely hear their voices now: the witch's cracked falsetto, the werewolf's grumble, the vampire's mincing speech, and the half-formed, half-to-be-guessed-at susurrus of the ghost. Now the wind ceased entirely, and in the preternatural hush I heard their words:

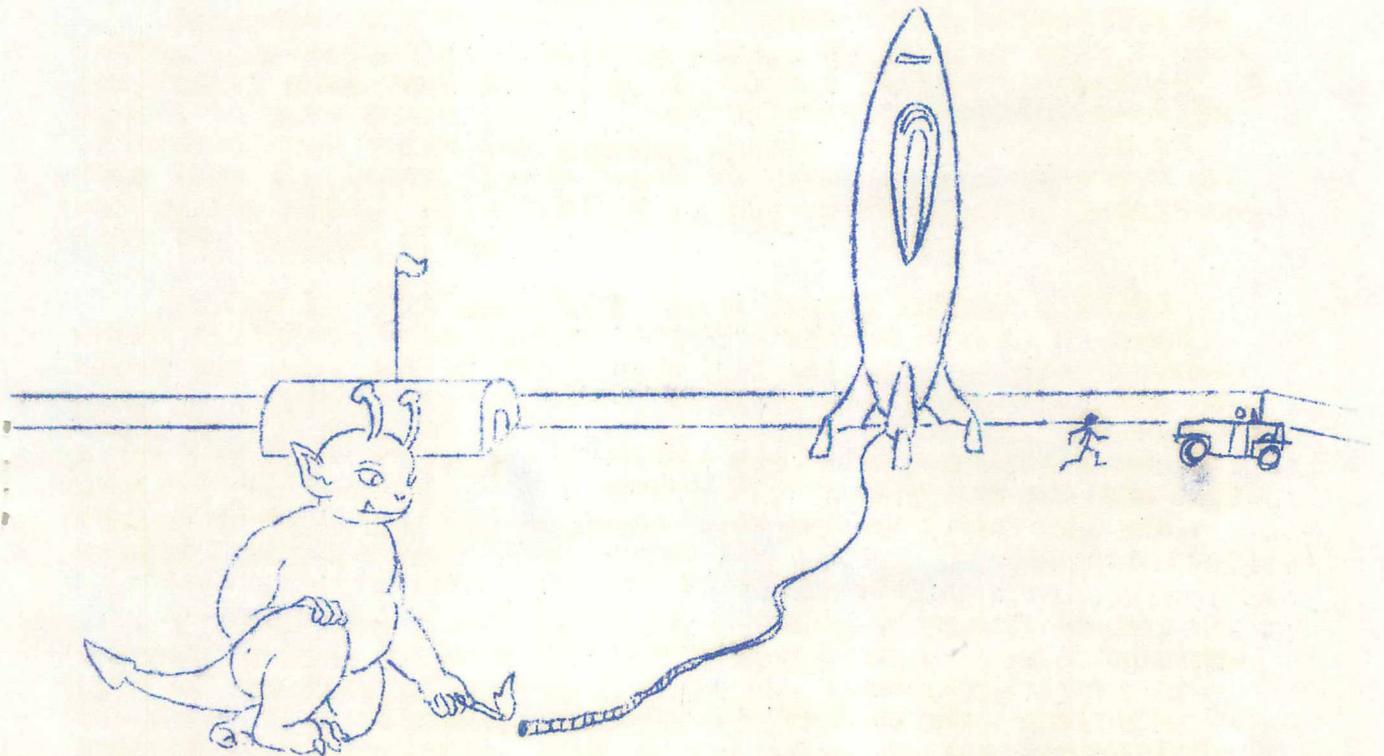
"Two diamonds."

"Two spades."

"Three diamonds."

"Pass."

The End



SHAGGY AND SHORN

An American hitch-hiking in England was picked up by an old British-colonel pukka-sahib type in a tiny Austin, who hrumphed at him and drove on in the silence of an Englishman who has not been properly introduced. But a mile or so down the road, the colonel stopped the car, hrumphed, took a can of powder out of the glove compartment, got out, sprinkled the powder liberally on the car and the highway, got in again, returned the can to the glove compartment, hrumphed, and drove on again. After another mile or so the colonel stopped the car, hrumphed, took the can of powder, got out, sprinkled the car and the road, got in again, and drove off once more.

After this had happened several times, the American could stand it no longer and burst out: "Pardon me, sir, but what is that stuff? Why are you spreading it around?"

"Hrumph," said the Englishman. "Lion powder, don't y' know. Keeps the lions off the road."

"But there aren't any lions in England!"

"Hrumph! Jolly good thing, too. Bloody stuff's no good."

--- courtesy of R. Bretnor

Masochist: "Beat me! Beat me!"

Sadist: "I won't! I won't!"

Feminine voice in a campus theater: "Pardon me for slapping you, but I thought you were trying to steal my sorority pin."

A mathematician named Klein thought the Mobius band was divine.

He asserted: "If you join the edges of two, you will get a weird bottle like mine."

An expectant father, pacing the hospital corridor, reeled when the nurse came out and showed him a fine set of triplets. Then he rushed toward the delivery room where his wife was.

"You can't go in there!" cried the nurse. "You're not sterile!" "Lady," he snarled, "are you telling me?"

And a happy New Year to you, too.