

# OPERATION FANTAST

ISSUE 4  
JUNE 1948



TONTONG  
&  
GILES

The Mouthpiece of the Trading Department of the BRITISH FANTASY LIBRARY

Published by Lt. K. F. Slater, 13 Group, R.P.C., B.A.O.R. 5, and Joyce Slater,  
Riverside, South Brink, Wisbech, Cambs., England.

Despite the notice appearing someplace among the adverts, this 'zine is still FREE !

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And there it is, chums, take your pick. We don't mind where you start, and we don't mind what you skip. However, just to fill up this small section, I would like to say that most of the thanks for this issue must go to my wife, Joyce, who for the first time in her life has been operating the duplicator, working solely by means of the meagre instructions contained in a pamphlet and a few notes from Ted Carnell and myself.

She also has stapled and despatched the whole lot ! Of course, thanks are also due to all those folk who have rallied round and contributed stories, articles, and so on. Also to those other folk who have sent encouraging letters. And yet again, to those folk who have sent me stuff not yet published, which will make issue five a cert. for September. And lastly, to the army, who have made things darn difficult by shoving me around, but who's typewriters I have made use of, now and again.

I turned over in bed, opened a bleary eye, and gazed with distaste at the little green devil sitting on the bottom of my bed. It soaked its head impishly and uncurred its tail.

"Burp," it said triumphantly.

I groaned at the thought and muttered thickly, "Go away, why bother me now? Its morning."

"Burp, burp," it repeated with surprising emphasis, and lowered its left eyebrow.

I sat up suddenly. This was no figment of my imagination; it was undeniably a concrete reality. The sharp shock of my sudden movement caused a score of galaxies to burst in my brain. Why had I celebrated the launching of the tenth British Science Fiction magazine so fervently last night? Ten super-science-story publications instead of the one which was published two years ago.

"What, or who, are you?" I demanded unsteadily. I was unsteady because I hadn't expected to find myself questioning a bright green devil on a Sunday morning. What would my friends say if they heard of this? Probably subscribe towards a nice new straight-jacket for me. The devil had bright pink horns as well.

"Burp," it said succinctly.

Exhausted I lay back and digested the information. Perhaps - yes... it must be. "Is your name Burp?" I enquired politely.

"Yes," he replied, unhooking his right horn from a Boki original behind him.

"Yes, I'm Burp. Who are you?"

"My name is Dr. Hutton," I answered. "Pleased to meet you. Now go away and leave me in peace." At that moment a contra-terrene comet burst inside my skull and I took some time to recover.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" he demanded when I had recovered.

"Do about what?" I repeated stupidly.

"You brought me here, now get me back."

The dialogue was beyond my limited intelligence and so I remained silent.

"That's just like a human," he said, "they won't help a bit. Do you remember last night?"

I nodded, and immediately regretted it.

Ignoring me he went on. "You were discussing the possibilities of another dimension with the editor of that new magazine, Stupefying Science Stories, and the type of being which would inhabit it. Before you left the party you had supper with the rest of the fans present. Do you remember what you ate? No? Well, it consisted principally of lobster salad, cheese, pickles, and beer, followed by fried fish, ice cream and beer."

I winced at the horrible picture he portrayed.

"You then went home to sleep it off and had horrible nightmares of incredible worlds and creatures. Unfortunately one of them was so realistic that I was dragged into your pitiful little world." Burp then began to sob, his tears trickling down in a steady stream on to my forehead, which was soon soaked. "Oh! You horrible thing," he wailed.

"I have just taken it too badly," he said.

"Please don't take it too badly," I said. "Perhaps it isn't as bad as you seem to think. Perhaps we can get you back again." But he refused to be comforted and his sobbing increased in intensity.

By now I felt like breaking down and crying myself. What if I was expected to look after him for the rest of my life? Horrible thought.

"Never again will I see my beautiful five mountains or my little Burpette. I'll have to stay in this miserable world for the rest of my life, and I'm immortal."

My worst fears were realised and my heart almost stopped beating.

Some hours later when I had washed and dressed, I managed to quiet him and he seemed resigned to his fate, horrible as it was. I gave him a saucer of methylated spirits, which he lapped up with every sign of enjoyment, and brewed myself a cup of strong black coffee for breakfast.

I offered him a cigarette, which he accepted dubiously.

"I suppose you couldn't help it. It wasn't really your fault," he said magnanimously. "Now that I'm here I might as well try to be of some use to you." He ate the stub of his cigarette and went on. "I see that you are a bachelor, by profession a research chemist, and not a particularly good one at that. You've always wanted to be a science fiction writer, although you've never had the courage to try your hand at it. Perhaps I can further that ambition of yours."

I stood thunder-struck. "How on earth did you know that?" I demanded in amazement.

"Oh! That was elementary. I merely read your subconscious mind, no effort at all," he replied modestly. "If you send in your resignation to Lactic Laboratories to-day I'll see what kind of a full time author I can make of you."

I must have been hypnotised by him, for I immediately wrote to Dr. Lytical resigning my position on his staff. I then dragged my ancient and battered typewriter out of its dusty niche and cleaned and oiled it. I found some packets of paper and carbons and placed them on one side of the machine.

"If you sit down and type whatever comes in to your head, we should do all right," Burp said. He seated himself near me and, putting the paper and carbons into the machine, I began to type. Thoughts flowed through my brain without registering; the keys under my fingers seemed to move of their own volition, although I had no idea of what I was typing. Normally when I use my battered Royal, I am content to look for the key and then jump on it, but then I was typing at an amazing (that word again - Ugh!) speed. Soon the bearings became overheated and a blue pall of vaporised oil drifted across the room. No matter, the words just streamed on to the paper in neat orderly rows. The pile of unused paper on my left quickly diminished while the pile on my right began to mount towards the ceiling.



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Within six hours my first story was finished and I sat down to read the whole thirty thousand words for the first time. As I put down the last sheet Burp murmured, "Do you like it?" and took another sip at a saucer of paraffin.

"Do I like it?" I repeated. "Why its colossal. It packs the punch of an E.E. Smith story, it is as smooth as an epic by A.E. van Vogt, it contains the science of a story by George O. Smith, and its style is better than Weinbaum's. It's colossal."

Burp sat back and wagged his tail. He seemed very pleased with himself. His earlier state of depression had vanished. "All done by thought transference and release of inhibitions," he said. "Pack it up and post it off to Gillings or Carnell, they are running the best magazines with this science fiction in them."

I received a reply within a few days, with a cheque for thirty guineas from the editor I had sent it to. He expressed his satisfaction with my story and offered to buy any more of the same high standard I would let him have.

During the next week I wrote six stories and two serials, all of which were science fiction and were accepted by various editors. For some reason I could never fathom Burp refused to help me write weird or supernatural tales. When I first broached the subject he paled visibly and sulked for a whole day. The plots of my stories ranged from satires on the intelligence of science fiction readers to super-galactic empires and stories with queer gadgets and twists in them. One, I remember was concerned with the explosion of two atomic bombs at exactly the same instant over London, and the resultant time warp.....

Burp soon graduated from paraffin to petrol and the outflow of fiction was so great that I had to find a dozen new pseudonyms to write under. My bank balance rose by leaps and bounds, much to the astonishment of my bank manager, and I was able to buy myself a house in the country.

One day, many weeks later, Burp said to me, "Why don't you try sending some of this stuff to the American magazines? I'm sure they would accept it. Besides, they pay much higher rates than the corresponding British publications, in spite of their inflated currency."

No sooner was this suggested than this was done. Within a year, Cainbell, the editor of the best American science fiction magazine had accepted forty of my stories and serials and published them. Many were written under my pen-names, all of which were world famous. Many hitherto well known authors, especially those known as "hacks" had committed suicide or died of starvation, when they could not sell their stories.

Within two years I was supplying over eighty per cent of all the material in all British and American science fiction magazines. Some of the magazines I had bought myself and I was publishing them and editing them along my own lines. All this time Burp seemed quite content to feed on the various hydrocarbons available and to continue helping me.

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By now science fiction fans throughout the English speaking world realised that the millennium had sneaked up behind them. Dozens of magazines containing their favourite literature were being published. The higher standard then prevailing in that field attracted many new readers. In some cases the sale of the better known prozies exceeded a million copies a month. One little known fan, with a well known collection, who was called Ackaman bought a whole row of garages to house the flood of new magazines. He retired to bed for months at a time to catch up with his reading. But, alas, even his great intellect could not withstand the sudden shock of seeing thanx misspelled as "thanks". They cremated him on a pyre of Finlay originals and ancient "Amazing" stories.

Equally sad was the end of an obscure being, named Tucker, who lived at Bloodington. It was reported that he died laughing fiendishly, calling on Chu, as his dwelling collapsed under the weight of the magazines it contained. But it was too good to last.

One day, as I opened the front door, Burp came rushing down the corridor to meet me, his nose lighting up like a neon bulb with excitement.

"I've found it," he screeched as he skidded to a halt in front of me. "I've found it."

"Found what?" I asked irritably.

"How to get back to my own world. Isn't it wonderful?" he asked as he danced into my work room, wagging his tail violently.

Stunned, I collapsed into a nearby chair and ejaculated, "How? Where?"

Burp waved a book in the air and said, "It's in here. I found it on your book-shelf. Now I can go back to my dear Burpette." With this he thrust the book into my hands and said, "Watch, it's quite simple."

He began to mutter to himself in a high pitched voice and to dance with a complicated rythm.

Then, suddenly, he blurred and disappeared. With him went my writing ability. No more was I able to construct those long, highly scientific sounding, meaningless phrases, so dearly beloved by science fiction fans.

Within a few months most of the science fiction magazines on the market disappeared for want of material. The few that did remain had to publish whatever they could get from the few remaining "hacks". The standard of the literature in then sank lower and lower until, in the public mind, science fiction was eternally discredited and forgotten.

What is that you ask? What was the book Burp found? Oh! Haven't you guessed? It was that well known fantasy, "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll.

There should be a moral in this somewhere. Can you see one?

If you do drop us a post-card and we will forward you a genuine atom bomb. If you find two morals in it we'll send you a full sized atom bomb.

(This offer only good in the U.S.A.)

-THE DERELICT-

Near the star-studded rim of outermost s-space,  
A ship cruised along at infinite pace,  
Black with the darkness of galactic night,  
Traversed by Man in magnificent flight.

No warm light showed in her portholes bare,  
In her scarred tubes no fierce atomic glare,  
For she was spawned in the far distant past,  
When Man into the unknown void was cast.

Ten thousand million years had slowly turned,  
Since her tubes had been hot and burned,  
By the fierce fire that puny Man had won,  
From the dying heart of a forgotten sun.

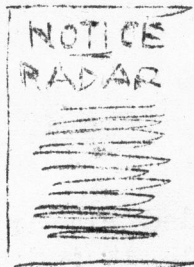
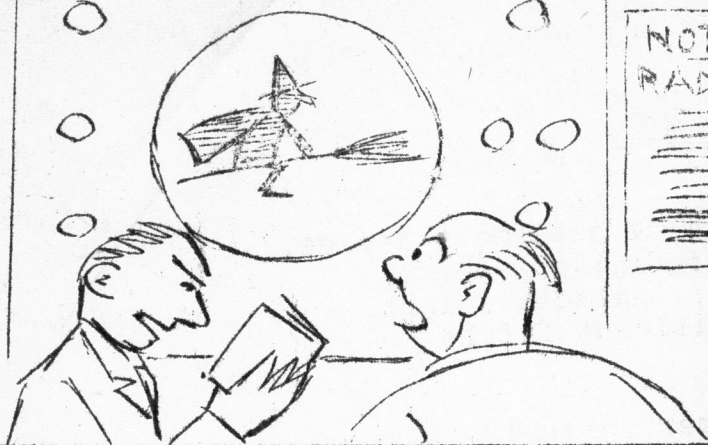
The long centuries had slowly slipped by,  
But the freighter continued to fly,  
Past the charted zones and far flung sectors,  
Whence human hands had set the vectors.

She carried a cargo deadly to Man,  
For long ago she had escaped the wide spread ban,  
Imposed on plague systems in vain,  
To halt the progress of the dread migraine.

As silent as death onward s-he flew,  
For, like all else, dead were her crew.  
Dying now in alien space, the last one;  
For ahead lay a massive giant sun.

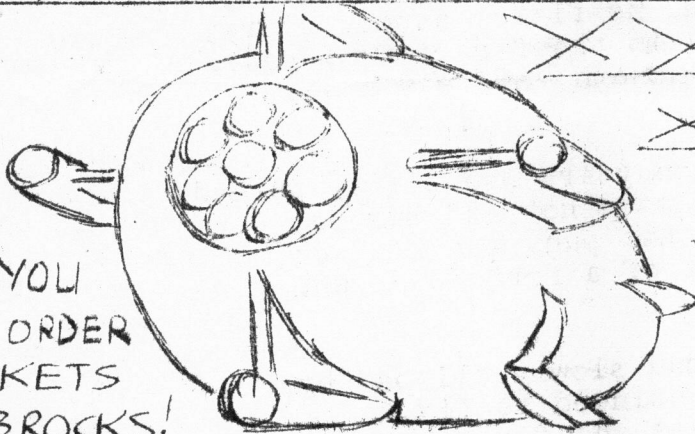
As gravity caught the ship in its stress,  
Each scarred plate groaned, as if under protest;  
Grey, gaunt, girders cried aloud in their stead,  
Loud and triumphant, Ma-nkind is dead.

$$S = K \log_e W + E$$



ITS NOT IN  
THE AIRCRAFT  
RECOGNITION  
HANDBOOK  
SIR!

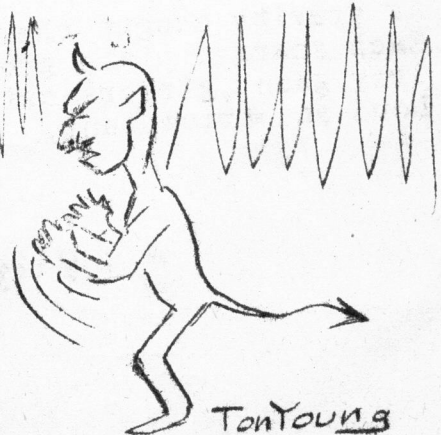
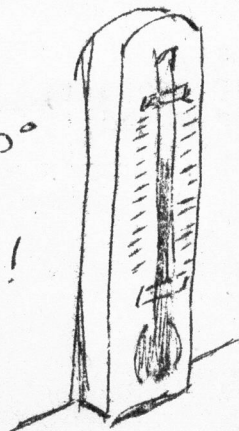
I TOLD YOU  
NOT TO ORDER  
THE ROCKETS  
FROM BROCKS!



YOUR EYES ARE  
LIKE STARS!

WHAT  
MAGNITUDE?

TEMPERATURES  
DOWN TO 3000°  
MUST BE A  
SOUL  
SHORTAGE!



Tonyoung



## THE SUCCESS OF SCIENCE FICTION

by E. C. TUBB

Science fiction is popular and getting more so. This is strange when it is realized that science fiction and fantasy can only be enjoyed, understood, or even tolerated by those with vivid imaginations. It seems as if this type of writing would appeal only to those who, enterprising themselves, can appreciate the situations, ideas, and environments contained in the stories. Readers then should be reckless, restless folk, ever eager to do things, go places, live active lives. The truth is the very opposite.

It is a psychological fact that the more humdrum a man's life, the more intense his dream world. Those who live sedentary lives have been proved to have far more vivid dreams, nightmares, and incidentally a trend to longer hours of sleep, than those who live an active interesting existence. What they miss in the normal routine of daily life they make up in their own private dream world. How humdrum then must be the lives of science fiction fans.

There is no more dream like literature written than science fiction. In it nothing, literally nothing, is impossible. Heroes embark on voyages fantastic in complexity. They wage war single handed on whole civilizations. They are armed with weapons of God-like power, while protected with invulnerable armour. Monsters, unimagined even in nightmare, stalk across the plains of far off stellar systems. Men and women have superhuman mentalities with adolescent emotions, and the erotic side is usually well taken care of. The constant theme is action. Action and adventure. Blood, murder and sudden death, to all except the hero and his friends. They always win.

Readers of this type of writing find it to be a sort of drug. It is enjoyable, habit forming, and it provides a method of escape from boredom. It also satisfies the collector's instinct as shown by the number of fans eager to pay fantastic prices for magazines decades old. It also has, like a drug, its drawbacks. It gives a tranquil sense of security and a false self valuation to the reader. As it can only be enjoyed and understood by those with vivid imaginations, it follows that those who do read it are too often prone to confuse imagination with intelligence. Most fans do not think it amiss to consider themselves on a high intellectual level.

It does not require brains to enjoy science fiction. It does not even require ignorance. It merely requires tolerance. Once the reader can bring himself to tolerate the impossible, then he's half way to becoming a fan. After a while he will find that he requires more and more impossible concepts, he has become hardened to the minor improbabilities, and needs more and more fantastic concepts to satisfy his basic longing for escape. For that is what science fiction is. Escape literature. And in as much as it does what it sets out to do, it is the most successful type of writing yet to appear. You doubt it? Take an example.

Dozens of stories have been published describing the steps that the next war will probably take. There will be bickering, tension, aggression, and then the atomic bombs will begin to fly. Now atomic bombs are a fact, and so is the international situation. So are radio-active dusts, and induced plagues, and tension certainly is not absent. In fact all the signs point to war. Do we see any fans who have certainly read all about the horrors they can expect when war does come, heading for safety? Is there one fan who, while able to discuss the effects of atomic bombs, mutants, shattered civilization, etc., really takes the fact that it might actually happen, seriously?

I doubt it. I contend that the average fan is one of the most smug, hidebound individuals it is possible to find. He has read the impossible so long that nothing could be new to him. He is a victim of his successful escape medium. It not only provides him with a perfect vehicle in which to indulge in fantasy, but it also provides by vicarious means the solution to his problems.

The Moon is rarely used now as a situation for a story. It is too near. We have grown out to the stars to set the action of a story. Even the planets have grown too familiar. We've travelled too much, in our armchairs. We've been all over the solar system, and a few interstellar systems too, but we've never left our own back yards.

Yes, Science Fiction is sure a success.

(Eds. Note; and for those of you who wish to quibble, Mr. Tubb resides until the first A-bomb hits, at 9, Randolph Avenue, Maida Vale, London, W.9.

CONTACT ! The Aussies still want some contacts - will some British Fan please make a note of Harry Brunen, Box 56, The Union, Sydney University, SYDNEY, N.S.W., Australia, and write him. He wants to swap letters, books, and mags.

INFORMATION BUREAU.  
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Due to various difficulties, and also lack of queries, the infobureau is rather condensed this issue. Tony Young is still busily working on the ASF INDEX, which we hope to get produced before 1949 (Okay Tony ?), and Leslie Flood tells me he has commenced the heroic task of making a comprehensive index of all fantasy fiction - details still awaited - so it would appear that we shall soon have most of the usually wanted info on easy-to-get-at basis. Next issue I'll try and publish a few more lists of issues, but I am of the opinion that most enthusiastic fan have acquired their own by now. Herewith, any way, is T.W.S. from 1939 to 1947 - and its still bi-monthly. Any special queries will still be welcome, and will receive attention.

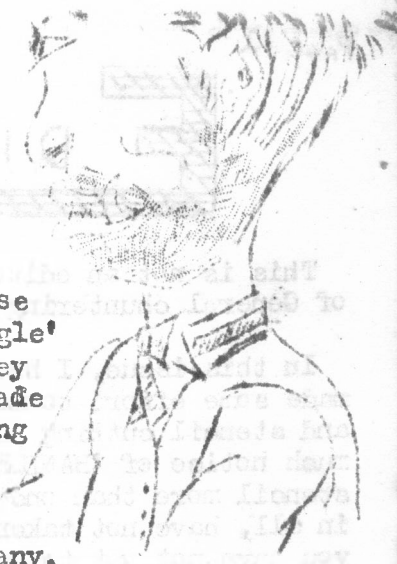
THRILLING WONDER STORIES

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	
1939	-	13/1	-	13/2	-	13/3	-	14/1	-	14/2	-	14/3	Numbers, as usual, are:
1940	15/1	15/2	15/3	16/1	16/2	16/3	17/1	17/2	17/3	18/1	18/2	18/3	
1941	19/1	19/2	19/3	20/1	-	20/2	-	20/3	-	21/1	-	21/2	Vol./Issue.
1942	-	21/3	-	22/1	-	22/2	-	22/3	-	23/1	-	23/2	
1943	-	23/3	-	24/1	-	24/2	-	24/3				Fall- 25/1	
1944	Win -	25/2		Spring	25/3		Summer -	26/1	Fall -	26/2			
1945		- 26/3			- 27/1			- 27/2		- 27/3			
1946		- 28/1			- 28/2			- 28/3		- 29/1	Dec. 29/2		
1947	-	29/3	-	30/1	-	30/2	-	30/3	-	31/1	-	31/2	

# GENERAL

CHUNTERING

B. K.F.S.



A awful lot of chuntering I wanna do this time, but have not enough space, I fear... try and give you the best dope...for one thing, those of you who don't already know, can cross the name 'Miss Joyce Teagle' outa your lil' black books - she is now Mrs Slater...we spent our honey moon in London...needless to say, two sessions at the White Horse...made personal acquaintance of Mike Rosenblum for first time...not forgetting Mrs. Rosenblum...and Mrs Duncombe...and a host of others. Pardon omission of your name...you know I have it, in your own writing !! (Maybe thats why its omitted - some of you....well, I'll skip that.) No sooner had I made Joyce my wife than I left her...and came to Germany, where this is being written. To make matters worse...I am now 'Lt.KFS' no vacancies for captains out here...Vol Molesworth has been in hospital, and at time of writing is still in, I believe...that has resulted in a hold-up of Aussie book production...hope you are okay by the time you get this, Vol.....we fen seem to have struck a bad patch...other sufferers have been Phil Rasch, John Koestner, Ron Holmes.... bad I better not list them, either....by the time you read this a Whitcon will have been held by British Fen...successfully, I hope....I hope also to produce a special Whitcon ish as soon as dope comes to hand...the report of the Avon Fantasy Reader's discontinuation was wrong...I've had No.5.....I grovels....sorry, chums...but some real bad news right from the horses mouth - the man on my right in sackcloth and ashes is Brother Ted Carnell, ex-editor of the late NEW WORLDS....Pendulum Pubs have gone bust, one gathers...bad luck, Ted...maybe we fen better get together and float a company....The OCCULT REVIEW, pubbed 4ly, sometimes carries a good weird yarn...and lots of articles of interest to occult-type fen....an effort to start a new fan club in the Mid-West,U.S.A., has been abortive, 'twould appear, but it may result in TWO new clubs....B.F.L.member T.L.McDonald gave a lecture to the CUMBRIAN LITERARY GUILD on Fantasy and S.F., which reasonable interest and some good discussion...Norman Ashfield wrote to Atlas Publishers and pointed out they were reprinting their own reprints in UNKNOWN...they apologised, and explained they had lost files, etc during the war....an excellent article on space-flight 'FIRST STOP - THE MOON' appeared in the Evening Times, Glasgow, Jan 20th, similiar articles have appeared in Nash's Xmas Number, John Bull, Feb 28th (WAY TO THE MOON); Britannia and Eve Aug 47 (THE SKY'S THE LIMIT)....and many other periodicals have been plugging rocketry...maybe they have woken up ....and there is pretty continuous spate of stuff in the papers....Ted Carnell (2nd mention -2/6) in his book-business, is now issuing a bi-monthly sheet called 'POSTAL PREVIEW' of great interest to the bookish fan... a 2<sup>nd</sup> stamp may secure you one copy, as a trial, and if kind hearted makes a whole in your bank balance on the strength of that, you may count on getting more....a Chicago store had a display of men's clothes...that's not unusual, says you, but these clothes were 21st Century styles....unfortunately, no orders were being taken.... most Chicago fen seem to be dark on that stunt, too...I got my dope from a newspaper..... Tom Moulton has moved, but has not yet disclosed whether he found room for all his books... speaking of books, Mike Rosenblum (2nd mention) has passed the 1544 mark in his collection.. ..but George Medhurst lays claim to 'over 2000'....that man Wigodsky (see SS AND TWS letter sections) is reported due to be born next year....Fen should start getting ready to issue congrats in many directions, talking of Wigodsky and birthdays...lots of little Genus Fen are expected...Any fan who did not get Red Bogg's 1st April TYMPUNI missed sompin...don't ask me what....Peter D.Fortey (10 a/b Aston Street B/ham 4.) wants ideas for cartoons,please... have you seen Joe Baker's advert for autographed books in Fant.Advertiser? If you want any, I'll accept orders pronto...quoted price, plus about 10% for postage, etc.... FROM UNKNOWN WORLDS (Street and Smith's) will come out on JULY 15th...price prob. 25¢....let me have your order...Mullen (GORGON) has written a book, KINSMEN OF THE DRAGON...not yet certain when or where it will be published, but watch for it....and I fear that's all.....K.F.S.



# EDITORIAL EFFORT.

This is not an editorial in the normal sense of the word - rather is it an extension of General chuntering - except the 'bits and pieces' are bigger.

In this issue, I have done my best to improve the general quality of the contents, & made some effort to make it a little more decorative. However, I fear the duplicating and stencil cutting is worse than ever. Somehow, I don't think the post office take much notice of 'HANDLE WITH CARE' inscriptions. Result, I have had to cut the same stencil more than once, have used stencils which really should have been re-done, and all in all, have not taken that 'little extra effort' which should have been taken. However, you have not got to pay for this, after all (tho I have given the idea some serious consideration) and so why should you complain? Nevertheless, your criticism will be welcome - but please comments on the inferior WORK - I know just how d--- bad it is, I am rather ashamed. But just the same, Joyce has done a good job - most of the faults are mine. But for Joyce, there would be no O.F. No. 4. Your blame to me, your thanks to her.

About that subject of paying for this rag, I have decided against making any fixed charge, but other fanzines will be welcomed in exchange, free gifts of old mags you do not want gratefully accepted; and any one who makes a cash contribution towards the upkeep will receive my heartfelt thanks. BUT don't send me any ten p/b notes or dollar bills. The odd 3d stamp or so, 6d P.O.s, will be quite good enough, enclosed in a normal letter sometime when you are feeling flush. I warn you, whether you send one or not, U'll still get O.F., you unlucky people. And further, I shall make no acknowledgement, public or otherwise, of items received. But please mark 'em - O.F.Support. Mags as well, and then I won't credit 'em to your a/c if any.

One of my biggest mistakes in this ish, was to advertise that you can advertise here-in - but I forgot to quote prices: Therefore - Smalls 3d: Quarter page 1/6: Half page 2/9: Full page 5/-.

I hope to start producing the Trade Supplement again soon, and this will be mainly for adverts.

Requests to include an order form separate from the 'zine, so that it may be used without spoiling the 'zine. This has been done, and a bit of reviewing appears on the reverse for the benefit of U.S.A. readers.

The next little item is a point YOU may be helpful about: I'd like to get this 'zine printed, similar to FANTASY ADVERTISER - any of you able to advise me on that - costs and so on?

And lastly, in this list of oddments, I'd like to remind all you British Fen who do not belong to the British Fantasy Library, that it still does exist, and that it is doing its best to keep the chains going, and all its other little bits of business. However, a few real live wire folk with access to typewriters, duplicators, and other odd machinery on which fen waste all their leisure time, would be very welcome assistants to Ron Holmes. His address is 67, Lineside Road, Belle Vale, Liverpool. If you are not in the Library, & want to join, write Ron. If you are in, and want to take a bit more active part, write Ron. If you are just plain nuts, write Ron. I gather he would be able to use assistance of all kinds !!! Should you be stark ravin' crazy, you better write me first. I can use that kind of assistance to prove that I am sane. (says who?) And still on the subject of the B.F.L., the WHITCONZINE may be a little delayed, as yours truly may be going on a 'course' some time about May 30th, with the result the half of said 'Zine not yet done, will have to wait four weeks to get finished. And that will be about all, I guess. And now, all my friends and Sam Merwin Junr., get crackin' and tear me off a strip or two.

(Editor Merwin is excluded because O.F.3. airmailed at 4/6d in March, did not make the July Startling Stories !!!) /All right, so you did start the presses for that in Feb!



In this year of 1948 sorcery might be a useful adjunct to the business of living. At least, one might be able to produce a few of the articles that are in short supply. So Jim thought, as he read the formula his friend had loaned him.

He noted the magic number, and scribbled down sundry other notes of importance, and then handed back the little book.

That evening, after his return from work, Jim made his preparations. Arranging everything as he had been told, not forgetting to leave open the door to permit easy access for the ONE he was to summon, he described the magic number with the fore-finger of his right-hand, and pronounced the necessary incantation after due lapse of time, when he knew that the ONE could hear.

A short interval of time passed, and then a figure appeared in the dim-lit room.

"Ah," said the figure; "I see you have obeyed the rules - you can't see me too well?"

"No," replied Jim, shortly. "Good, - its - er - safer, from all angles, you understand - not that we can't trust each other, eh?"

"No," again replied Jim, who in the presence of this being, found it hard to voice more than monosyllables.

"Well, what do you want?", prompted the figure.

Jim answered hastily "Six-pairsernylons-assorted shades'n-twobottles-Scotch-one-ergin'twodozenegg s'n.....". "Slower, slower," interjected the figure, "I gotta get this down."

The order was repeated by Jim, in a more controlled voice. "Right. Now just wait a few minutes". The figure vanished.

Shortly it returned, with two others, who put down on the floor sundry boxes and then left. The chief of the creatures retired to a safe distance and then said "Checkit!"

Jim did so - "Right" he said.



"Now gimme mine", requested the ONE.

Jim referred to his notes, and held out what was required.

"Thanks" said the creature, taking it, "Let me know when you want more" and left.

A sigh of relief escaped Jim. His first deal with the devil passed through with out a hitch!

He had met and dealt with his first SPIRIT!

## FUTILITY

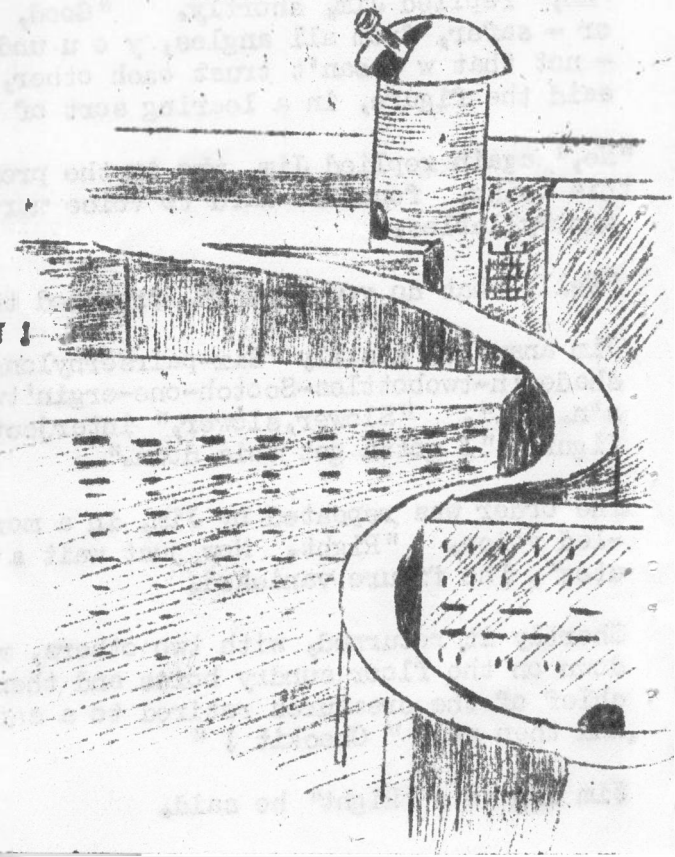
Gazing out on the stars of space,  
Last alive of a warrior race;  
Scion of a breed of life,  
That conquered worlds by valient strife.

Last of a type whose sons had won  
Out beyond the nethermost sun;  
Whose ships had flashed down the Milky Way  
Stopping anon to enslave and slay.

A breed who'd ruled the Universe,  
Who'd lived and fought, had died and worse;  
In order that all life should be  
Servant to a thing like he.

Gazing out on the stars of space,  
Last alive of a warrior race;  
Stilling at their futile span  
For he was there - the last of MAN!

K.F.S.



# READER'S LETTERS !

THEY CAN  
WRITE!

From Charles Duncombe (The Perambulating BBC Vocab.) 82, Albert Square, London, E.15  
comes this missive - personal chunks deleted by Ye Ed.....

I've got O.F. 3 and here goes. The cover design was a great step forward and is synonymous of the overall improvement, as for instance, the much better stapling. However, it is only a design, and could be improved by being one single drawing. Even the title I approve Old English? Gothic? You've got me there, pal. Gothic - modern "THE DAWN" was a yarn equally as good as the majority of tales I have read in mags outside the modern A.S.F. - but even those can be criticised, so here is my projectile After 300 years the citizens of London still harbour the most extreme thoughts of revenge. Even a few years after the last mayhem we are endeavouring to save the enemy's children, a project of which I must remark, is surely the more civilised attitude. Still John, you could easily excuse us (Londoners, that is - rather, will be) by pointing out their insularity; I must admit that the culture I visualize must have a world-wide range, as an stf fan, even wider, I hope. Ken, enlarge O.F. for a disquisition on phil-osophy. GENERAL CHUNTERING is the salt of your own effort, and I consider it a duty of fans to help fill your condiment set. F.G. Rayer's effort was written in professional style, dialogue is not easy to write, but I thought the solution rather inane. Still, surrealism is only for a select few and I am a Philistine. I am no poet, and I doubt if I carry enough guns for a serious appraisal of the HYMN but I'll lead with my chin and opine that I have any poetry in pro- or fan- mags as good as this. THE OLD FOLKS AT HOME - a poor title, had the O'Henry ending that sells well in ASF., and would not have disgraced its pages. High praise indeed but it should take a back seat to the HYMN. All hail to Norman for keeping aloof from the enervating influence of the LONDON CIRCLE, to strike a mighty blow against its postwar English inertia. Now recovered - see WHITCOON How does one qualify for his mailing list? B.F.L. circulation About Fred's letter, I beat my breast over my sesquipedalistic tendencies which was the commonest complaint of my article, but I wish he'd elaborate on that curt 'tripe'. You and Fred better get together on this Joyously, I proclaim FUED ! FEUD !!! when...../Not here you don't...the body of this is deleted, it being an argumentive policy about the London Circle....Ye Ed thinks they can feud quite well in the White Horse...but not in O.F./ Ken, I am whole heartedly in agreement with the well known crack that I may disagree with Pete's dissertation, but I will defend to the death his right to say it, but may I also agree with the anonymous fan you quote? Sorry, Pete, I bare my breast to the knife you would so cheerfully slip into my ribs. Remember, I too have been flogged with nettles. Ron certainly has put mundane matters to the forefront, and reminded us of a whole host of problems to be considered. Tony's INDEX - I hang my head in shame at such zeal. WEATHER CONTROL - we'll soon have you writing the article in ASF and - should it be a purely English subject, no doubt you could.

Eds. comment; Well, if I did not know Charlie better, right now I'd be wondering what he wanted to borrow. As it is, well, thanks a lot - you sure do encourage me !!

A gentleman who is well to the fore in this ish., is John Newman (36, Bulstrode Ave., Hounslow, Midsex.) ..... 'Thanks very much for the copy of O.F. you were so kind to send me. It arrived this morning and I was suprised to find it such an improvement over the earlier ones. I must admit that after seeing No.1 I had a fairly poor opinion of it and Duncombe's article did little to dispel my earlier opinion. Should you be able to continue the publication.....I have no doubt you will be able to make it quite as interesting as any previous Anglo-fan publication. I notice with approval that No.3 is far neater than Nos. 1 & 2. I think it important to remember that a newcomer to the field, not one of the elite, will tend to judge such a magazine as O.F. by its appearance as much as by its contents, however interesting. It is easy enough to put out a



number of badly mimeographed sheets with every tiny corner filled with print, but it is a far more difficult and better thing to produce a well thought out magazine which is neat, tidy, and easily readable. The extra effort and cost is very small but the effects can be more than startling...../Ed. John continues with more advice, etc./.... As I am a London Fan, one of the LONDON CIRCLE /subject strictly verboten/.....you seem to assume that an organisation is a good thing in itself. Why do you think that this is so? Is it a basic assumption or does some form of reasoning lead you to this conclusion? This is a matter of interest to most fans so perhaps you could write an article on it, and gather the views of other fans...../Ed. See my note below/... Your article on WEATHER CONTROL was quite interesting. Probably a little more information on the mechanism of rain formation would be appreciated, i.e. what forms of cloud yield rain... Just as I consider FANTASIA to be one of the most interesting parts of FANTASY REVIEW, so do I like your GENERAL CHUNTERING. In both cases a great deal of information of general interest can be compressed into a small space. I am glad you have judiciously mixed all types of material and not concentrated on, say, short stories, or made O. F. into a letter-magazine. I have heard about the Sydney Futurian Society being reformed and I heartily endorse your suggestion that British fans should do all they can to help them. During the war years they were in a worse position than we were - they were forbidden to publish fan mags. Should be able to publish another issue of O.F. perhaps you would make some sort of plea to ask British Fen to send the Aussies any spare mags, or fan-mags.

Which is the majority of the text of John's letter. About O.F. - on lay-out I am trying to follow the plan of getting each part of an item to follow in sequence, and - I hope - avoid thereby the 'continued on Page 16' business, which to me, is very annoying, and detracts from readability. This may result in odds and ends being shoved in to fill gaps, but not too badly frowned on, I hope. I have not yet mastered the art of making all my lines finish level - although I am doing a bit better about starting 'em all in the same place. On the subject of ORGANISATION I have sent my views to John and I shall be pleased if other fen would do the same - then, John, YOU can write that article - please? Regarding our DOWN UNDER associates, I don't think they want charity, but they would welcome the opportunity of swapping stuff - and they have plenty of their own books to offer - Erle Cox OUT OF THE SILENCE, 'frinstance - folks interested should write me., or get direct contact with Vol Molesworth, 160 Beach Street, Coogee, SYDNEY, N.S.W., Australia.

HARRY LONEY, 31, Cottesbrook Close, West Derby, Liverpool, 11, pops up with a short comment or two: I read in GENERAL CHUNTERING what you say about the paper shortage - it is the same with WEIRD TALES /Ed: Just to be difficult - who cares?/ it was out down and went bi-monthly, but STARTLING STORIES can go monthly /ED. ??/ and thicken its pages. I don't get it! .....The Yanks don't know there is a paper shortage the way they can throw paper around. I, and a lot of other readers I'm sure, would like to know what the reason is! ED. I am afraid you are shooting the wrong bird, Harry. The Yanks (naughty, naughty - mustn't use that word - what about all them there fine Southern gents?) have a paper shortage, maybe not quite as bad as ours, but still, a sh shortage. Trouble is, various folks can get more paper than others, and I was trying to point out that in my very humble opinion, 'twas the less deserving that got it. I like STARTLING, and I was glad they increased. I don't like the stuff F.F.M. reprints and I was sorry they got one. However, my opinion has been changed somewhat by the two issues of F.N. to hand. They have the right idea there, I think.

Last but not one of the folk to get their nose in these pages this ish, is Cedric Walker, who has shifted his H.Q. to - c/o Martin, 594 Holderness Road, Hull. Says he:

Thanks for the latest O.F. I enjoyed it tremendously, as usual. And I agree with one of your readers that you should make a small charge for it - after all, paper does cost money - disregarding the time taken in making the mag. All that is required



now is that it should come out more frequently - which is of course impossible, especially with the o/seas posting threatening. As to the contents, I believe I enjoyed best the poem, the lines 'Protect them whilst they stop and wrest, An Earthchild's wants from an alien breast' especially stick in my memory. THE DAWN was pretty good as was THE OLD FOLKS AT HOME, but I don't quite get the point of Rayer's story Ed.. Shaggy Dog. to you Ron was funny, as usual. GENERAL CHUNTERING I enjoy most of all - its the sort of friendly nattering that you can sit back and enjoy, at the same time getting the feeling that you know all the fans mentioned, personally. Be nice if we could all get together..... Before I forget, the cartoon was good, tho it should have been smaller. Agree with our mutual friend Grimes re P.T. S.A.T. effort.

Ed: And Cedric included with his letter a short story 'SURVIVAL' which will be published in the next ish. Its a good one, too.

And finally, after threatening to send one of his tame 'mutants' to do damage to my person, and giving a truly horrifying description of the particular one, Tony Young goes on to say; 'The reason why I asked him to aoll on you is contained in O.F. 3 In this issue you publish a cartoon of mine, and not only do you omit to acknowledge it, but you list it in the contents page as produced by Peter D.Forty'. Ye Ed butts in here to explain that there is some confusion. The cartoon attributed to Peter was by Peter. Tony's effort was the one, badly reproduced by me, that headed the TRADING DEPARTMENT. Apologies have been tendered to Tony, and as the mutant has not yet call, I assume they were accepted. Actually the cartoon reached me just in time to be inserted in an appropriate spot, and in the general rush, I failed to credit to anyone. Continuing the extracts from Tony's letter 'Incidentally, I should like to do a sheet or two of cartoons for inclusion in O.F., if you're interested. I'm enclosing an s.a.e. to make sure. I couldn't put on a 2 and one third penny stamp as you suggest on P.16, O.F.3, but I hope a 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d will do (Yaki Yaki). I liked John Newman's 'DAWN', very professional - only one query - what is living chalk?(p.3. para 2.) HYMN very good, too. Couldn't make head or tail of Kurt Fredericks effort. ' Tony then bids me and all other fen a fond farewell, and goes off, I hope, to buy some pen and ink, etc, to make those cartoons. His offer has been accepted, and with luck, the cover of this ish should be by him. I hang my head in shame over that 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d penny stamp business - will anyone who has not written for that reason please note that 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d will do ?

Just to close the Letter section, please let me have your comments brief and meaty - then I'll be able to get more of you in. As it is, this is only a very small part of the purely O.F. mail received. Thanks a lot. lads. Howa about some letters from the one or two lady recipients ?

H U Z Z A H !

No longer we savour  
The incredible flavour  
Of tripe, á la Shaver.  
The value of Dero  
Is right down to zero;  
- same for the Tero i

A B O U T T U R N

+  
++++++  
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by

+  
++++++  
+

Norman Ashfield.

SCIENCE- FICTION in its early stages was what its name said, - fiction largely based on Science, and the majority of stories published in the better of the earlier mags was of this character. However, as in the normal development, authors tried to go one better than each other in extending the area covered by their stories, and we had the gradual arrival of the more enterprising inter-spatial stories, finally leading up to those of inter-galaxial flight, which it seemed was as easy and almost as quick as flying from London to New York these days. The stories of E. E. Smith and John W. Campbell, Jr., well demonstrate this point. E E S is still going strong with his terrific imaginative powers, but JWC seems to have got to the position where he couldn't go any further and so dropped the whole idea, becoming editor of ASE, and, as a matter of fact, doing a jolly good job of work editing. (His stories as Don A. Stuart are of a very different character.)

AFTER THE SPASM of piling new concepts on new concepts, the average SF-fan, it appears, decided that he wanted be-ew-tiful women and B.E.M.'s on the covers of his mags, and in the stories. He must have wanted them for otherwise the publishers would not have adopted the policy. "The public is always right!" -- and if it wanted 'sexy' stuff, -- well, it got it, good and plenty!

THE INEVITABLE reaction occurred and publishers now find that their readers want once again more mature stories and less of those of the 'pulp' nature. This may result in the loss of those who read SF in the way that they read mags of the type that can be generically labelled 'STARTLING DETECTIVE (ALL TRUE)'. Amazing's reaction to the change in the public's wants has been, rather, well - 'amazing'. Although the readers don't want the type of story just referred to, Amazing is giving it to them in the 'Shaverian' stories, a type of fictional folk-lore, or 'fairy-story', and they're lapping it up! These stories are interesting and one is often led to suspect that Shaver is the pen-name of some giant in the SF field, as the stories are well written generally. If they are, as is stated, written by Shaver himself, and he has had little literary experience, this does seem to go some way to proving that he is being helped by 'teros' or perhaps 'The Helpers'. Even so, I expect a change from the Shaver stories in due course and I am fairly confident that editor Palmer will find that reversion to the normal SF type stories will pay him better. I do hope though, that this will not mean abandoning those delightful stories of the Harold M. Sherman type - THE GREEN MAN, for instance.

.....

The above was written by Norman Ashfield some time in Jan/Feb, I believe - it was in my hands before the last O.F. was sent in March. I think one can truly say -

\* HOW RIGHT YOU WERE, NORMAN ! \*

.....A.....

P.S. LOUSY RHYME - BUT A LOUSY SUBJECT, TOO !!

Known that stacks.

Most amazing for Scatter !!

FOUR layers of data.

Stack - each - 9 say!  
9n Amazing for May -

The truth, we are told.

Elsewhere will unfold

No Shaver razors!

No more caves,

April Amazing!

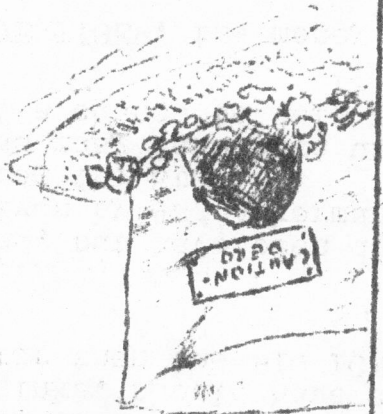
R.H.R. sayin'

9n Have !!

But dare !!

Not ants in our pants

STRUTH!



This, believe it or not, is not Page 20, altho it comes in the place you would expect Page 20 to appear in any normal book let, mag., or fanzine. But the O.F. is far from being a normal any thing. Apart from anything else, it serves as a channel for the by-products of my slightly off-balance mind, so how can it be normal ?

Owing to some slight confusion on the part of my beloved but erratic spouse, she found she had two blank sheets when she had finished all the stencils I had sent her - because she had produced Pages 19 and 20 on separate sheets of paper !!! In great trepidation she conveyed this intelligence to me by air mail. What did I do ? Well, to start with, I just laughed it off (Blz:BSOUA... !!), and then looked round to see what useful purpose I could make of two sheets of paper. (Don't tell me!)

One has gone to furthering the news that Joe Baker and OPERATION FANTAST have got together on a spot of trading, which is more or less personal propoganda. 'Tother, methinks, should have a somewhat more altruistic purpose, and what better than the BIG POND FUND ? Therefore:

#### BOOKS FOR AUCTION

The following books have not yet reached England, but have been donated by American Fans. In the case of those given by 4sj Ackerman, they will be sent direct to the lucky bidder from the States. It is thought fairer to auction them by post, as many Fans were unable to attend the WHITCON, but will be glad of a chance to help the cause, and obtain these rare items.

Donated by Gus Willmorth, editor of FANTASY ADVERTISER, the money to go to the BIG POND FUND:

3 copies of A.E. Van Vogt's and E. Mayne Hull's new \$2.50 book

#### 'O U T O F T H E U N K N O W N'

Donated by 4sj Ackerman, noted U.S. Fan, the money to go towards the the funds for next years Convention:

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FANTASY MAGAZINES?

It is felt that to the British Fen, now that the ban has fallen on subscriptions, such things as the B.F.L. Liaison Department will become increasingly important. Especially to those of us whose subs are due to expire soon. It is hoped that it may become possible to place a limited number of subscriptions to various mags, for members, however. But don't despair, even if we get one thru for you. Nigel Lindsay tells me that the Chains will continue, and also, the mags will reach the Library under Ron Holmes care, sooner or later. We'll try and make it 'sooner'. However, you will find a spot to mark off a 'sub wanted' on the order form, and if we do manage something, and your name is on record, we will advise you. Please note approximate date of expiry of your present sub., if possible. You will also see a space to mark 'X' if you want the Trading Supplement, which we hope to recommence soon. Please mark this and any other items, which are open.

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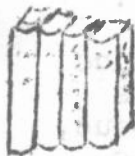
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But this issue - I want to draw your attention to the offers on page 6... Joe Baker's ad. If you want any of the items he quotes, let me know; I can get them for you.

Kenneth F. Slater, RIVERSIDE, South Brink,  
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January February 1942.

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