

Down the Badger Hole

R. Lionel Fanthorpe: The Badger Years



Debbie Cross

STRANGE. WEIRD. EERIE



Introduction by David Langford

full length feature story:

Curse of the Khan

by R. Lionel Fanthorpe

Down the Badger Hole

R. Lionel Fanthorpe: The Badger Years

Debbie Cross

**Introductions by:
Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe
David Langford
Debbie Cross**

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Lionel Fanthorpe, not only for spending 12 years of his life writing for
John Spencer & Co., but also for his ability to laugh with us.

Paul Wrigley, who made this book possible with his technical, creative,
and emotional support.

– *Debbie Cross*



Albatross Pie

Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe

Once you've aimed the crossbow and pulled the trigger, as Coleridge's Ancient Mariner discovered to his cost, the moribund albatross plummets catastrophically to the deck and there's not much you can do about it! Even if you successfully remove the bolt, it's not easy to give the kiss-of-life to a thing with a ten inch beak! The decomposing remains dangle around your neck until the end of the voyage.

The problem about a literary albatross, as opposed to the feathered variety, is that it never really dies. Collectors find bits of it, still stubbornly flapping away, on the highest and dustiest shelves of specialist SF and Fantasy bookshops as far apart as Oregon and Australia! The writer discovers, as the homicidal Eugene Aram did, that the body refuses to remain concealed. It's dead but it won't lie down: so why not do the next best thing and cash in on it – exhibit it like Barnum and Bailey would have done?

Let's digress. In the early nineteenth century, not far from Saffron Walden in East Anglia, there lived a rough, tough, old squire named Perry. He married a beautiful, young, Romany girl, whose tribal chief was a one Abraham Green.

When the robust old squire and his nubile gypsy bride parted a year or two later, Abraham and the lads took umbrage and went after Perry in a big way. The war escalated from caravan burning and livestock slaughter to an all out nocturnal assault on Perry's Hall. Unfortunately for Abraham and his men, the squire heard them coming and let fly with a blunderbuss or two which he kept parked in readiness for such eventualities. Abraham Green departed this life in a sudden and spectacular fashion, and his cohorts fled. Perry, now undisputed master of the battlefield, returned casually to his bed leaving the late Mr. Green decaying quietly on the kitchen floor until morning.

One of Perry's farmhands was a part-time sexton, who obligingly removed the corpse in a wheelbarrow and then decided to provide for his old age by exhibiting it in the vestry. He placed a notice on the church gate accordingly: "One penny to see the gypsy shot by Squire Perry." His

entrepreneurial efforts were a great success. Almost anything, it seems, can be turned to profit.

Back to the Ancient Mariner: what never occurred to Coleridge's hero and his hapless shipmates (who suffered more from hyperactive consciences than from dehydration) was that generous helpings of albatross pie all round would have solved at least two-thirds of their problem.

(If only they'd had a one-legged sea-cook with a parrot that harped on incessantly about "pieces of eight", they might well have survived the traumatic voyage.)

So what *does* an author do today about the one-every-week, at-the-drop-of-a-hat paperbacks he wrote in his spare time forty-odd years ago? The midnight-oil-burners, the generously padded, paid-on-wordage albatross-space-opera-sagas for which his publisher was inevitably waiting impatiently and waving the threat of no more commissions if this current one wasn't delivered before Tuesday?

As the Seventh Cavalry Major inevitably used to say in the John Wayne films: "Never apologize. Never explain – it's a sign of weakness." It's a pity the Ancient Mariner wasn't in his troop. "O.K., son, so you shot the damned bird – now let's eat it! Don't wander around the deck whinging and moralizing – make the most of the situation: pluck it, gut it, slice it and put the best bits under pastry."

"So you sold a couple of hundred pulp novels and anthologies back in the Fifties and Sixties – and nobody offered you a Nobel Prize or a Hugo. What the hell! Make the most of it! There's no such thing as *bad* publicity – although some is better than others. You were, after all, the *World's* most prolific SF and Fantasy writer. Talk about it. Cash in on it." Or as the dying Wyatt Earp was alleged to have told the cub reporter who wanted the *real* story of the OK Corral: "To hell with the truth, kid. Print the legend!"

Let the tender, young academics, and the aesthetic, literary critics (who agonize like Hamlet – prancing, posing, and soliloquising about stylistic trivia on the verbal battlements of SF-Elsinore) slide Ockham's reliable old Razor across the throat of their current critical theory, and write something of their own, instead of merely attempting to evaluate what others have written (or, worst of all, evaluating the evaluations of other literary critics). It might even be argued in the last analysis that *all* literary criticism is far too subjective to have any objective validity whatever!

Let the critics first try doing a full day's work (driving a truck or

teaching a secondary school class with over fifty students in it) and then, with a two-day deadline to beat, let them hammer words into an unforgiving tape-recorder that moves as inexorably as the Hand that wrote on the wall at Belshazzar's Feast – and let them do all this at three in the morning, when the coffee-pot is dry, and the cerebral cortex in much the same abject state.

So much for the sermon – what about the reminiscences?

In 1950, or thereabouts, I wrote a little parody on John Masefield's "Sea Fever" which all English school children learnt in those days as part of their literature course. It began: –

I must go back into space again,
To the lonely space and the stars;
And all I ask is a rocket ship
And a job to do on Mars...

For some unfathomable (?) reason it kept coming back with rejection slips attached, until one fateful morning it trotted home from John Spencer and Co. (Badger Books) of Hammersmith with a letter instead of the usual printed "Don't call us, we'll call you".

This epoch making epistle regretted that they didn't buy poetry but were in the market for SF novels and short stories: and everything – like Topsy – escalated from there.

By the time it reached its peak some 170+ novels and collections of short stories later, I had a team of four or five audio typists working on old-world "steam" reel-to-reel tape recorders.

There were occasions when we had hilarious fun.

One of the audio-typing gang would ring and say: "Did you know that last reel made 29 pages, so we're on page 154 already?" Standard Badger length was 158 pages. It meant I had heroes on the far side of the galaxy in a crippled ship, surrounded by hideous, aggressive aliens... and three pages in which to bring them home. This accounted for more than a few of the infamous "With-a-single-bound-he-was-free" endings, including my own favorite: the [Flazgaz Heatray](#). My memory is slightly (deliberately?) hazy on the subject, but maybe Debbie has found it in her archives. I think my Flazgaz Heatray was based on an idea I got from a kid called Maisie in a syndicated strip cartoon: "The Perishers". When they played space opera games, Maisie tied a funnel to a broomstick, shouted "Zap!" and everybody was dead.

The Flazgaz heatray was about as technologically probable as Maisie's funnel and broomstick weapon, and, furthermore, it had to be introduced, described, used effectively and replaced in its red box marked "Forbidden Weapon – Never to be Used" all in the space of 750 words.

Some of those early books might best be described as an exploration of the limits of the preposterous: just how many Roget synonyms *can* be squeezed into a paragraph without exciting the attention of the publisher? Just how many ways can you describe a pink and grey rock in [*Galaxy 666*](#) at ten shillings (about 75 cents) per 1000 words?

With experience came fascinating new ways to pad things out: long monosyllabic conversations with one word on each new line; didactic technical or philosophical passages when I couldn't think of anything else to do with two characters except have them talk to each other while stuck in an elevator.

As you go through Debbie's extracts, examples of these little peccadilloes will appear. Enjoy your albatross pie!

But as we reluctantly draw this Introduction to its overdue conclusion, there are three serious things we'd like to say while we've got this unique opportunity: –

1) All this John Spencer, Badger stuff was a very, very long time ago, and a few things have happened since then. Try "The Black Lion", "Pictures at an Exhibition" edited by Ian Watson, "The Secrets of Rennes-le-Chateau", or "The Mystery of the Oak Island Money Pit". Read some of the dozen or more religious books which Lionel has written recently for Bishopsgate Press.

2) Not *all* of the old Badgers were *quite* as terminally rabid, as some reviewers have suggested. There may still be a grain or two of wheat among that widely windswept Badger chaff.

3) Maybe the Priest-that-is was struggling to escape from the dime-a-line-hack-writer-that-was. In all the old Badgers, (unlike much modern horror) Good triumphed. I believe that in the Eternal Scale, it always does: that's *realism*!

We were more than delighted when Debbie said she wanted to compile this anthology. Maybe albatross pie doesn't taste too bad after all. Like the Curate's Egg – it's quite palatable in parts!

Have a nice read!

– Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe



The Badger Game

David Langford

Reader, you hold in your hand a unique anthology. If you have read this far, you are now caught in the most intricate trap ever devised for one individual... oops, sorry, wrong script.

Robert Lionel Fanthorpe has long been a cult figure at SF conventions on both sides of the Atlantic, even in the times before he personally founded the Cymrucons in Cardiff, South Wales, and before he became a Reverend. I remember how at the 1980 British national convention in Glasgow, a certain shambling figure lurched drunkenly on to the stage during the “Vogon Poetry Competition” and attempted to submit a true prose poem – being that fine passage about the disc ship’s landing and what followed, to be found in Chapter Five of Lionel’s *March of the Robots*. (Which will surely not have escaped this volume’s compilers.) The screams of the audience were terrible to behold. Terrifying screams, weird screams, uncanny screams, awful screams, inhuman screams, alien screams, robot screams... Some things were too rich, too exotic even for the cultured awfulness of Vogon poetry readings, and the swaying performer was loudly urged off-stage. Reader, that shambling figure was I!

Years later, I remember writer Graham Joyce contriving a stunning effect at a reading which interleaved this same immortal *March of the Robots* passage with lines from another work of almost equal stature, Guy N. Smith’s *Night of the Crabs*. The listeners rapidly became a fear-crazed mob. Mixing your books can lead to a terrible hangover. But I digress.

Nowadays Lionel’s 160-odd Badger titles are widely collected. I know several people who boast complete or near-complete sets, including the dubious cases where the author himself is no longer sure whether he or someone else wrote that particular one (under a Badger house name like John E. Muller or Karl Zeigfreid) but remains happy to sign the book anyway. Some of them have been reprinted in hard-cover, and even pirated. Thanks here to Martin Hoare, who allowed me to consult his priceless first editions of works not in my own library...

To set the seal on his fame, our author even has his own lightbulb joke –

improvised during a session at Orycon 11 in Portland and paying loving homage to the thesaurus-bashing which helped him through those mindboggling feats of dictation against time. “How many Fanthorpe pseudonyms does it take to change a lightbulb, to replace it, to reinstate it, to substitute for it, to swap it, to exchange it, to renew it, to supersede or supplant it, to provide a proxy, to put another in its stead, to... ?” There is no recorded case of an audience having stayed around long enough for the answer.

The great thing about this astonishing body of work is the lack of any sour aftertaste from laughing yourself silly at its excesses. Legendary turkeys like *The Eye of Argon* may be irresistible, but isn’t the fun larded with a certain sense of guilt at mocking the afflicted? Be honest, now. With Lionel, it’s not merely that the author doesn’t object but that we’re laughing with him – at the spectacle of an intelligent chap with a distinct sense of humour confronting impossible writing conditions. Under the cruel lash of John Spencer & Co (Publishers) Ltd, entire books had to be churned out in perhaps eight or twelve hours. Nevertheless deadlines were clubbed to death by the mighty Fanthorpe thesaurus, smothered with relentless padding, stunned by *deus ex machina* twists, placated by outrageous literary steals...

I was a schoolboy in the 1960s when I encountered my first Badger book, *Beyond the Void*, a title which even now gives me a nameless thrill. It opens with a spaceship in the grip of a furious magnetic storm, and something oddly familiar about the names and dialogue became clear when I reached the “born to be hanged” joke: “I still think he’ll make the devitalizing chamber, though every cubic foot of space tends to argue otherwise, and the whole of the void opens its great maw to swallow him.” And sure enough, the ship soon makes a forced landing on this enchanted asteroid where exiled scientific wizard Rosper lives with his lovely daughter Darmina, a flying robot called the Leira Mark II, and the savage, scaly mutant Canbail.

But lazy old Shakespeare couldn’t provide enough plot for the terrifying needs of a Badger novel, even after eleven pages of small print detailing every single move of the chess game between Darmina and Ferdin[and]. Following the tradition of various authors in other centuries who “completed” *The Tempest* – feeling that Antonio in particular was inadequately repentant and bound to cause future trouble – *Beyond the Void* continues for several additional chapters in which future trouble duly comes, the plotters plot anew, Rosper regrets having broken his staff (in this version, his test-tube),

the young lovers find marriage dead boring, and most of the cast ends up back on the asteroid feeling glum – the last line being Ferdin’s not *all* that Shakespearean conclusion, “*Hell is other people!*” (His italics.)

After which it was no surprise to encounter (in a different novel whose title I forget) the Pardoner and Summoner from the *Canterbury Tales* plotting some dire wickedness on the spaceways. Or the chap in *Negative Minus* whose travels seem reminiscent of episodes in Homer and who is called Suessydo, his wife being Epolenep... and of course this wanderer returns home to find the lady beset with suitors (“One by one, food and alcohol overcame the revelling princelings.”), whereupon he takes his enormous multi-charge hunting blaster from the wall – “Few men would have had the strength to lift it, let alone fire it.” – and the rest is history, or at least mythology.

And then there are those glorious pages of scene-setting infodump in *Forbidden Planet*, which carefully list grid references for the “sixty-four habitable planets federated to the Intergalactic Convention and explain the spacegoing capabilities of certain alien races, with Garaks able to teleport only along diagonals and Pralos along grid lines”, while “Anything a Pralos or Garak could do a Gishgilk could do”, and Zurgs not only leap askew through hyperspace but have horse-like faces, and... One can only admire, and even more so when in Chapter Ten the human pawns realize that the situation strangely resembles a forgotten Earth game – enabling the author to have them explain the moves to each other *all over again* and laboriously remap the entire grid to avoid the difficulties of algebraic notation. Thus the first move of the plot so far becomes P-K4. Eat your heart out, John Brunner: following devotedly in Lionel’s footsteps, *The Squares of the City* appeared four years later.

When not being badgered to bizarre expedients, Lionel would occasionally slip in a perfectly respectable story which would lurk unnoticed between those terrible Badger covers, punctuated by the imprint’s full-page ads for Joan the Wad, the Lucky Cornish Piskey, or – even more arrestingly – VARICOSE ULCERS, ECZEMA AND PSORIASIS. It was a cruel fate for the more seriously intended fiction. Even the austere and crabby *Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction* remarks that the loose supernatural series featuring Val Stearman and La Noire is “of some interest”, and I would agree – but this verges on the dread practice of literary criticism. Judging from his own introduction, Lionel will be after me with bell, book and candle if I

dabble further in such accursed matters.

But we must mention the amazing mismatches of titles, back-cover blurbs and front-cover “teaser” lines. The struggling author was required to submit a wide variety of all three after inspecting cover paintings churned out by some artist of infinitesimal fame and substantially less talent. Badger would then pick a combination they liked, more or less at random – leading to occasional Fanthorpean acrobatics, as when he desperately tries in *Beyond the Void* to establish the relevance of the strapline “Part man part machine they possessed the worst qualities of both” to his pastiche of *The Tempest*. Meanwhile, who knows how many fine titles fell by the wayside? What was the literary taste of the Badger editor? Perhaps this entity was a low-grade droid, being so evidently susceptible to the scientifictional inclusion of a number: hence the remorseless progression of *The Negative Ones*, *Zero Minus X*, *Reactor XK9*, *Formula 29X*, *Force 97X*, *Uranium 235*, *Barrier 346*, *U.F.O. 517*, *Galaxy 666*, *A 1000 Years On* (“Who were these fantastic women..... why did they disturb his eternal rest?”) and a clutch of titles featuring *Infinity*.

And lastly, why this book? There is a famous 1930 verse anthology called *The Stuffed Owl*, whose editors D.B. Wyndham Lewis and Charles Lee saved fun-hunters a great deal of time by omitting good or average passages and including only the ghastly peaks of badness perpetrated by Byron, Keats, Poe, Tennyson, Wordsworth (“Spade! with which Wilkinson hath tilled his lands”) and the other usual suspects. The honour paid to them is now paid to Lionel Fanthorpe, who on his own turf can beat them hollow and probably arm-wrestle them flat by way of encore. Reader, you are exhorted to turn the pages and enjoy. To pinch a line from the Works – frequently repeated with slight variations depending on the pseudonym our hero was using – what follows is a feast of prose in the tradition of “the great 20th century science fiction writers Zeigfreid, Fanthorpe and H.G. Wells” Two out of three ain’t bad.

– David Langford

JOAN THE WAD



GUARANTEED DIPPED IN WATER
FROM THE LUCKY SAINTS' WELL

Introduction

Debbie Cross

Several years ago at MiniCon, a Minneapolis science fiction convention, Denny Lien read from the works of Robert Lionel Fanthorpe. I was immediately hooked on the thesaurus-like passages which characterized the writing. I came back to Portland determined to become an authority on Robert Lionel Fanthorpe, aka Pel Torro, aka Leo Brett, aka John E. Muller...

Armed with a partial bibliography and list of pseudonyms provided by Denny I began acquiring my collection. Before long I was doing readings of humorous excerpts at OryCon, Portland's own science fiction convention. I usually begin the readings with a brief biography, stating that the author was now an ordained priest and teacher. Invariably someone will ask "But isn't he dead?"

I admit, that although I knew he was alive, I thought of Fanthorpe in a very impersonal way. He may as well have been dead. After all, those Badgers were written a long time ago. Imagine my surprise when I discovered, thanks to the information superhighway, that there was actually going to be a Fanthorpe convention in Wales! I wrote, begging for the opportunity to purchase a copy of the souvenir programme book, and stating that I was such a fan that I even did presentations of his work.

The phone rings, it's 7 AM, the voice on the line identifies himself as Lionel Fanthorpe! "You're kidding!" I cleverly reply. But no, he's not kidding and he and his wife Patricia are interested in visiting the U.S. No problem! I can get them invited as guests to OryCon and they're welcome to stay with me and my husband Paul before or after the convention.

Shortly after this phone call, I began to panic. Somehow, I had failed to mention to him the nature of my presentations. I was, after all, *making fun* of the books this man had written – and now he was coming to stay in my house! What if he took himself *seriously*? WHAT HAD I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?

After much agonizing and some good advice from friends, I wrote a letter confessing the nature of my sins. I'd certainly understand if he chose not to come to Portland. Then followed another agonizing wait, but a reply

finally arrived. “Confession is good for the soul,” he wrote. Of course, they would still come to OryCon. After all, the Badger books *were* written a long time ago and some of it was even *intended* to be funny.

I spent the next few months assuring people he was *not* dead, a fact that no one disputed after meeting the vivacious and indefatigable Reverend Fanthorpe. An ideal guest, he worked like a horse, displayed widely diverse knowledge, entertained the fans, and never failed to have a good humoured look at his early Badger writings.

Since writing the infamous Badgers, Fanthorpe has gone on to be a head master, a private tutor, a management consultant, a broadcaster, and a priest in the Church of Wales. He has written numerous religious books, children’s books, scholarly books on unsolved mysteries, and prize-winning poetry.

Down the Badger Hole, however, focuses on the volumes, known as Badger Books, written between 1954 and 1966 for John Spencer & Co. Fanthorpe already had had several short stories published, and was only 19 when his first book, *Menace from Mercury*, appeared under the house name of Victor LaSalle. He had begun a long and perhaps gruelling relationship with the notoriously penny pinching publisher.

For the next twelve years, Fanthorpe cranked out science fiction and supernatural books for the Badger imprint. In a three year period, between 1961 and 1963, they published 83 books written by him... all in his spare time! In the end, Fanthorpe wrote 168 books – 86 novels for the Science Fiction series, 34 novels for the Supernatural Series, and 48 Supernatural collections; plus several individual stories. The process began with the cover art which would be sent to him. He would return the art with several alternate titles and a cover blurb. He then wrote the story, usually in less than a week, by dictating into a battery of tape recorders. He would often do this huddled under a blanket to enhance concentration. The tapes would then be transcribed by a team of typists who would notify him when the required page length was near.

This process often led to the notable characteristics of the Fanthorpe Badgers. These include both abrupt endings with improbable resolutions to the plot, and seemingly endless padding to obtain the required length. Padding was accomplished in several ways. The one I find most amusing, is the descriptive prose repeating the same thing, over and over, using different words, phrases, or just rearranging the order of the words. Another tool was for the characters to have long philosophical or scientific discussions, often

while in the middle of a crisis, e.g. being eaten alive by alien swamp slime. A final method of padding is to give a detail by detail description of some event or process such as a ten page play by play of a chess game.

Sometimes the plots can be identified as a rewrite of a classic such as *Hamlet*. They are rarely as overt, however, as *Space Trap* which retells the story of Aladdin and the magic lamp. The names remain unchanged, but the lamp is actually the protagonists' spaceship. The alien planet, on which they have crash landed, is on a much larger scale than their own, but their technical superiority allows them to manipulate Aladdin to save them from their pursuing enemy.

Content aside, the Badgers have their own particular charm. My pulse still quickens when I spy the telltale yellow spine (there are a few exceptions in pale pink or blue) complete with the little stylized badger. The cover art is bound to be intriguing – either by the unknown artist Fox or “borrowed” from an American Ace paperback. They often featured some fierce looking face in the sky with a variety of terrified humans below. The supernatural covers will proclaim STRANGE. WEIRD. EERIE – words sure to give me goosebumps!

Inside will be found poor quality printing and type setting, with frequent errors. (I've taken the liberty of correcting obvious typos in the excerpts.) The tables-of-content of the collections will list five or six titles, usually all pseudonyms of Fanthorpe. Somewhere deep in the interior will be found one of two or three regular advertisements. A picture of Joan the Wad leads you to read the fine print, mostly testimonials from people who enjoyed exceptionally good luck after purchasing the “Lucky Cornish Piskey”. It also offers “HISTORY FREE FOR A SHILLING”.

Another page of ads, all with the same address, offers a wide variety of products. BEAUTIPON, “the Vegetable Flesh Former”, will develop your bust. SLIMCREAM, “the remarkable Vegetable Reducing Cream”, will give you a slim bust. NEW Nature Treatment grows hair. You can also gain weight, stop smoking in three days, or grow 1-5 inches with other products. All are guaranteed or your money back!

If you don't have a bookcase full of Badger books to read, this volume will be the next best thing. It has been a labor of love extracting the “funny bits”. Read the excerpts then read “Curse of the Khan” with an eye to intended as well as the unintended humor. Have a good read!

– Debbie Cross

Tel.: RIVerside 8560

JOHN SPENCER & CO. (PUBLISHERS) LTD.
PUBLISHERS & WHOLESALE BOOKSELLERS
HOME & ABROAD
131 BRACKENBURY ROAD, LONDON, W.6.

Directors
S. ASSAEL
M. NAHUM

HO/MN.

R. Lionel Fanthorpe
23, Norwich Rd.,
Dereham, Norfolk.

1st. Sept. 1960.

Dear Sir,

We herewith enclose our cheque for £70.
to-gether with your account rendered.

We would point out, however that you have
quoted three items on your account at £25.
each whereas in fact your invoices in each
case were for 45,000 word MS. £22.10.0.

Your acknowledgment on this point, to-
gether with your receipt in due course will be
appreciated.

Yours truly.
for. John Spencer & Co. (Publishers)
Ltd.

M Nahum

JOHN SPENCER & CO. (PUBLISHERS) LTD.
PUBLISHERS & WHOLESALE BOOKSELLERS
HOME & ABROAD
131 BRACKENBURY ROAD, LONDON, W.6.

Directors
S. ASSAEL
M. NAHUM

Mr. R.L. Fanthorpe
23, Norwich Rd.
Dereham.
Norfolk.

May 4th. 1960.

Dear Sirs,

Enclosed are two covers for which we require some suggested titles, cover blurbs and copy introduction.

You should ignore all lettering that appears and treat the matter as most urgent, return these covers with your reply.

We also require a new introduction to use on any Supernatural (standard wordage) at your very earliest.

Start on the Mss. on completion of any current commissions you may have of ours, in this connection we require all Mss. as soon as possible and lengths of 45,000 words apply.

Yours faithfully.

pp. John Spencer & Co. (Publishers)
Ltd.

S Assael



Excerpts

March of the Robots

BIG and round, like a great silver full moon it came out of the sky. First as big as a sixpence, then the size of half a crown. Then the size of a saucer; the size of a dinner plate, and still growing as it descended. Huge... vast... and somehow terrifying.

It seemed to blot out the stars and to blot out the blue velvet of their canopy. It seemed to be an alien thing of the night, and yet for all that, there was a strange, terrifying, alien beauty about its gleaming symmetry.

The great disc ship... the unearthly thing, skimming slowly down, like a coin tossed by a careless god, into the abyss of nothingness. A silver coin skimming across a universe; spinning across a galaxy. Down, down... down... a great silver spinning thing. A ship, an alien ship, a strange unearthly thing, something that was cold and hard and terrible. Something that was beyond man... that was different from man... that seemed to have neither part nor parcel with the ordinary human world. Something frightening, frightening because it was strange; strange because it was frightening.

It came through the sky, a round, spinning plate of a ship, a flying saucer out of the sky, down through the blue vault of air; down through the dark forests of night; down to the sleeping, unsuspecting countryside below, then it was no longer a thing apart. It had touched down. Softly as a feather landing in a cushion of air.

Gently as the kiss of a snowflake, and as silent.

Quieter than a rain drop, just a drifting ghost of a ship.

A thing that had arrived with such silence that not even the keenest ear, not the ear of a bat, or the ear of a bird, or the ear of a listening animal could have heard its approach. The disc ship had landed.

Once it had landed the silence was gone – like an illusion that is destroyed when the curtains of a stage are pulled aside. The silence was broken by metallic noises. Harsh clanking, jarring, metallic noises. Things were stirring within the disc ship. Strange metallic things; things that were alien to the soft green grass of earth.

Terrifying things, steel things; metal things; things with cylindrical bodies and multitudinous jointed limbs. Things without flesh and blood. Things that were made of metal and plastic and transistors and valves and

relays, and wires. Metal things. Metal things that could think. *Thinking metal things*. Terrifying in their strangeness, in their peculiar metal efficiency. Things the like of which had never been seen on the earth before. Things that were sliding back panels... *Robots!* Robots were marching... Robots were marching, and were about to spread havoc and destruction across the earth, and as yet the sleeping earth knew nothing of their coming. As mysterious as anything in the great mysterious universe.

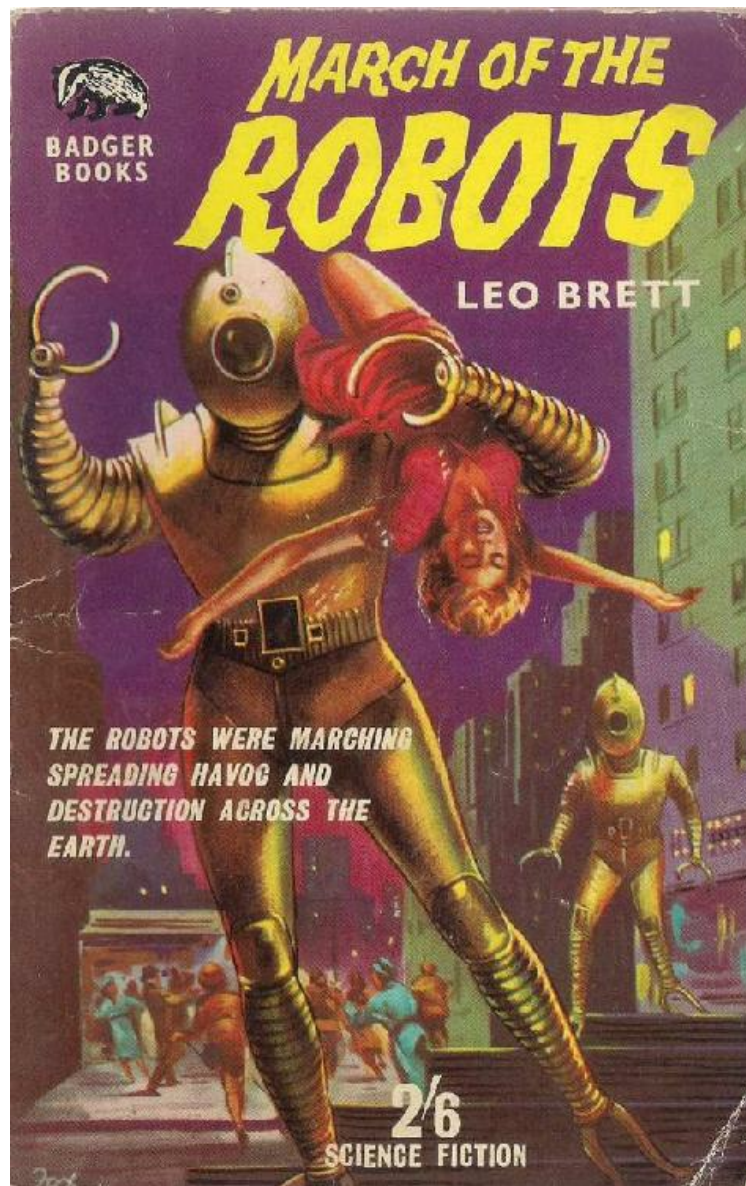
The robots in their disc ship had arrived....

There were strange flickering lights all around the ship. Terrifying lights, weird lights, uncanny lights, awful lights, inhuman lights, alien lights, robot lights; and all around a great hemispherical glowing shield sprang up. A thing with a pale, greeny blue luminescence. An electronic thing, a mechanical thing. A thing that was part of the robot genius. A thing that was as strange as the ship and its occupants. A force field, a glowing greenish blue force field....

Within the ship great activity was taking place. The robots, like actors behind a greenish blue curtain, were preparing to present themselves to their audience – their unwitting audience! That audience of earth-men, and earth-women and earth-children that lay innocently asleep just beyond the green sward. The green sward of earth on which the alien ship had landed. They were as alike as green peas in a pod, every one of those robots. A gleaming line of them began emerging from the disc ship. A gleaming metallic line moving industriously with calm, tireless mechanical efficiency. Clashing metal arms against metal sides. The clang of metal hawsers, moving machinery here, there, everywhere, *each one with the strength of a hundred men!* Pulling, pushing, lifting, twisting. Iron creatures, metal things, like cars coming off a factory assembly line, one after the other, every one of them identical. Not one possessing a separate identity. Metal entities. The ship was full of them, twenty – forty – sixty – a hundred – and still more ... moving around industriously. Arranging their mechanical contrivances; setting up their apparatus; preparing ... *preparing ... for what?*

Then the glowing, green-blue curtain, that shrouded the ship with its hemispherical protection, switched off and disappeared, and a long line of robots, like ants emerging from a colony – gigantic ants – began moving from the confines of the ship, from the confines of their original landing space, their spear head, their bridgehead, across the undulating green turf in the direction of the sleeping city. They had chosen their time well... It was

typical of their efficiency, they had chosen their time very well indeed! The city slept. Men slept. Women slept. Children slept. Dogs and cats slept.



Short but Meaningful

“Yes.” The monosyllable was terse, almost aggressive.

(Barrier 346)

“Hmmm,” he added, the monosyllable was vibrant with meaning. “Hmm,” he said again.

(Orbit One)

“By Yiminy,” said Hans Jansen. It was a simple enough exclamation, but it conveyed volumes of meaning.

(“Voodoo Hell Drums”, SN 39)

“Why?” Mackenzie’s monosyllable was strongly interrogative this time.

(The Return)

“Ah,” said Grafton. The monosyllable was vital with interrogation.

(Power Sphere)

“Yes!” The monosyllable was terse, almost unnecessarily so.

(Spectre of Darkness)

“Yeah,” agreed Bronet. It was a terse, vibrant monosyllable.

(Galaxy 666)

“Yes,” said the Professor. It was only a monosyllable but it was packed with meaning. It scarcely seemed possible that one tiny sound could have all that meaning jammed into it.

(Formula 29X)

“Mmmmmm,” said Maginty. It was an unwriteable, unpronounceable burble.

(Dark Continuum)

“Forcefield?” Jergins sounded interested and interrogative.

(Dark Continuum)

“Oh,” said Gascoigne. The monosyllable was rich in meaning.

(Reactor XK9)

“And then?” Jean Abercrombie’s voice was interrogative.

(Reactor XK9)

“You snore very distinctly,” he said. “There is meaning in your snoring.”
(*Beyond the Void*)

“So?” Longman Sharp was looking interrogatively from one to the other.
(*The Planet Seekers*)

“Sshss!” hissed Hardcastle, sounding like an outraged archbishop, in the presence of a well-meaning layman who has just inadvertently uttered some hideous blasphemy or heresy, in the course of an otherwise well constructed sermon.
(*The Negative Ones*)

“Oh?” Clive Hardcastle’s monosyllable was interrogative.
(*The Negative Ones*)

So, he thought to himself and the monosyllable was alive with meaning in his own mind; it was the kind of monosyllable that could convey more thought than volumes of elaborate prose.
(*Nemesis*)

“Oooohhh!” the psychiatrist’s voice was loaded with meaning, and interrogation.
(*Flame Mass*)



Rodent Mutation

A boy is missing from along the banks of the Thames and giant paw prints are found nearby. Private investigator Eddy Sinclair is brought in on the case. He discovers that Leroy Manufacturing has been dumping radioactive wastes into the river for fifteen years. Then he goes to see Professor Septimus Harbottle who identifies the print as belonging to a giant beaver.

Septimus Harbottle had to be seen to be believed. He was far more like something out of a Dickensian comedy than a real live, walking, breathing, human being. That was probably because Septimus Harbottle didn't do much in the way of living, moving or breathing. He was a singularly sedentary individual. He had a gigantic head, a microscopic body, long tapering fingers, and gigantic eyes which bulged in the manner of a koala bear.

The reader is then treated to a lengthy discussion of beavers and rodents in general. In a special radiation proof suit, Eddy dives beneath the river looking for the beaver lodge and perhaps the missing boy.

The chances of his survival were several thousand to one against. There was another worry in Sinclair's mind – what if the *boy* had been *changed* by the radiation? Had been transmuted, translated, into *something else...* what if he was no longer a *normal human being*? Would he be some kind of weird *thing* – a thing that had been changed by radiation?

The boy is discovered and while he is recovering in the hospital, Eddy sees Professor Jimmy Brogan. He tells him what he knows about the beavers...

“As for there being other powers in the beavers besides the mutation, you're more than right there, sir.”

“What else can the blighters do? Stand on their heads and play the national anthem on a tin whistle?”

“I wish that was all they could do,” said Sinclair, “They also appear to have got hold of telepathy and telekinesis.”

“What!” rumbled the giant. “Now you have shaken me. That's one of

my experimental fields. I begin to see now why Harbottle sent you to me. This problem is even further in my field than I had imagined at the outset. Mutated beaver's pretty good. But mutated beavers that can telepath and teleport are really something."

The boy, it appears, has caught super intelligence and the power of telepathy and telekinesis from being in the proximity of the giant beavers.

"Your minds are so small in comparison with my own that I could tell you what the three of you were thinking about, and most of what you've ever remembered."

"Heavens above!" ejaculated Brogan, "and to think that a few days ago you were a nine-year-old schoolboy."

"Life is measured not so much in age as in experience," said the lad, "and it wasn't just the radio activity that did it. It was being in contact with other, gigantic minds that did it. You see, those beavers are not just atavistic" – he was using technical terminology as though it was the simplest of A.B.C. Primers – "they have developed special mental powers, and anybody in contact with them for any length of time develops similar mental powers. About the nearest analogy I can get is that of putting a piece of soft iron near a magnet – it picks up the magnetism... you understand this?"

There was something weird, almost frightening, about the boy. Something so strange and incalculable that, watching him, the three men felt their blood run cold. Colrayn was not by any means a squeamish man – there is no such thing as a squeamish sanitary inspector – a man doesn't take on that job unless he has a constitution like an ox. Yet, Colrayn felt icy shivers running up and down his back as he looked at Ricky O'Jordon. It was weird, frightening, bizarre, to see a nine-year-old child rattling off mathematical formulae so complex that he had had to innovate entirely new symbolism in order to make the necessary equation for the fantastically compound work upon which he was engaged.

In the meantime, the beavers begin terrorizing citizens.

Only the younger woman escaped, and as she saw the gigantic, shadowy figure outside, she screamed in terrified disbelief.

But her terror was not of the paralytic variety. She retained the use of her legs – and she ran! She ran as though all the devils in hell were after her.

She ran until she came to the nearest light, the nearest sign of human habitation. There she panted out her story to incredulous neighbours. They looked through the window and saw the thing that lumbered towards them. Taller than the house. Broader than a haystack. Huge! Horrible! Terrifying! With eyes filled with blazing hatred. A gigantic beaver, a thing like something out of the very worst nightmare. They saw it while it was still fifty or a hundred yards away, in the gloom, and they reached for the phone.

“Police!” screamed the neighbour in terror. “Police! Help! We’re being attacked. We’re being attacked by a gigantic beaver!”

The boy, using his super-intelligence, gives directions to build a special machine.

The machine itself was a fantastically complicated tangle of wires and valves, pistons, levers, relays, switches, insulators, electrodes, anodes, cathodes, and a hundred-and-one other peculiar devices, which were largely a pure brilliant invention of the miracle boy. They were attempting a practically impossible feat. They were attempting to reproduce a mechanised version of a mutated brain. They were attempting to reproduce an electronic teleportation device, equipped with telekinesis, and at the same time capable of throwing out a teleportation and telekinetic jamming beam. The thing filled an area of ten or twelve cubic yards. It looked like a cross between the engine of an atomic submarine and an electronic brain, and the interior of two or three hundred Swiss watches magnified and geared together.

The machine will neutralize the power of the beavers, but it must first be tested on the boy. It successfully turns him back into a nine year old. The End.



Civilization staggered before the
onslaught of the radio-active giants

2/6

RODENT MUTATION



Science Fiction

BRON FANE

Is There a Thesaurus in the House?

The alien ship landed and the things emerged...

They were about six feet tall, and at a rough classification could have been described as mammalian bipeds. Their forelimbs terminated in digital extremities; they possessed primary optical organs; and the respiratory orifice was sub-divided. The oral orifice was provided with an articulated mandible at its lower extremity, and to sum up – insofar as anything as weird as the alien could be summed up – they bore a striking resemblance to *homo sapiens*.

(*Hand of Doom*)

Donald Bailey was far from being a geologist, but he knew, probably instinctively rather than intellectually, intuitively rather than logically, innately rather than rationally, that this cave was *wrong*. Stalactites hung down from the roof, gleaming like the teeth of some great dragon in the flickering light of the matches, which Bailey and Angela were striking. She, too, seemed to sense the disaccord of the cave. There was a strange quality of non-agreement about it. It seemed to dissent from the rest of the rock around it. There was a feeling of disunity and disunion. It jarred with the rest of the passage, or tunnel through which they had come. It was at variance with the rest of the stone that they had seen. Somehow this huge cavern was a contradiction. It was inharmonious. It was a hostile, antagonistic cave; there was something uncongenial, inimical, and antipathetic about it. It was a contrarious, conflicting, clashing, contradictory cavern. There was something so unnatural and inconsistent about it that Donald Bailey could feel the short hairs rising on the nape of his neck, and trickles of invisible, icy nerve water seemed to be flowing down his spine. It was an incompatible cavern, and an unconformable cavern. There was something odd and “foreign” about the cavern. It didn’t combine; it didn’t mix. It was mismatched, misallied, and misjoined. It was incongruous and different, but its incongruity was not in the least humorous.

(*The Man Who Came Back*)

Every minute looked as though it was going to be their last. Every second looked as though it was to be their penultimate fraction of existence time.

(“Voodoo Hell Drums”, SN 39)

Out there lay the great unknown hyperspace, unspoken, unsaid, unuttered, unseen and unbeheld, hidden and veiled, full of a thousand unrealised mysteries. Unperceived and unexplained, dark enigmatic mysterious, occult and unfamiliar, unidentified, unclassified and uninvestigated, the undiscovered greyness, the unexplored, uncharted, unplumbed, unfathomed canescence; untried and untested, unknowable, unforeseeable, unpredictable and yet *men travelled through it*.

(*The Return*)

The wildest bull in the most delicate china shop could have done nothing compared to what he was doing now. He was blotting out and annihilating the laboratory. Whatever came within his reach was nullified, devoured, consumed and engulfed. He overwhelmed the apparatus. He wrecked and scuppered the lab from one end to the other. He made away with everything that came within his reach; he was decimating the place; he was determined to extirpate, to eradicate, to deracinate and to uproot everything that he could get his “hands” on. He was wiping out the laboratory as an organized structural unit. He was expunging all within reach; from one end to the other he raged. It was a wild fury of obliteration and annulment. The apparatus seemed to evaporate and vapourise before him. Everything was disorganised, confused and confounded. There was a glorious melee of glass and plastic, or wood, stone and metal. All the time he snarled and roared to himself. He played hell with the laboratory and when it was demolished as crushingly as though a hundred men had been round it with sledge hammers, only then did he pause.

(*The Alien Ones*)

The following is part of the retelling of the fable of the fox and the grapes.

Discovering a bunch of succulent raisin precursors the bushy tailed quadruped had attempted to jump and pull them down.

(*The Man from Beyond*)



Alien from the Stars

This is a masterpiece of padding, coupled with a sudden ending, using elements previously unused in the story. A series of bizarre psychic experiences are tied together to foretell of the landing of giant insect-like aliens.

Valder [*in a dream – Editor*] got the impression that he was being scrutinized not only by the dreadful green eyes but that in some unaccountable way the monster which held him was appraising him, *perceiving* him, by means of this black triangle. *It was E.S.P.* It had in its physiology some weird element that enabled it to receive impressions completely independently of those with which we are familiar in this terrestrial life.

So I can try to appraise this work, this piece of poetry, this literary construction of mine, objectively. If it had been written by a dustman, or by an Inca in Peru, or by a Sherpa on the heights of the Tibetan mountains, I should still know that this was one of the finest pieces of modern writing that I had ever seen.

Here is the poetry in question.

Ant. Ant. Ant. Insect. Strange creature of night,
And yet thou art more than this.
For thou art immortal and eternal
Thou art first and last.
Thou art all, thou art greatness.
There is darkness thicker than the darkness of the pit.
There is a darkness lower and harder than the walls of Sheol.
And after the darkness there is light,
The greatest light of all the universe,
And in the light there are worlds
And in the world is home.
Home is a world,
World is a building, the building is home.
And home is a Universe...
There is travel and distress.
There is life and there is death.

There are all things, and nothingness...
This is the way of life since the beginning,
Unto the end.
There are limbs and there are eyes,
And everywhere three lines of darkness.
Everywhere the knowledge
Everywhere the understanding.
There are things we can never know.
There are things beyond our comprehension.
The greater can never be contained in the lesser.
The macrocosm can never be contained in the microcosm.
And yet the atom is the molecule,
The molecule the element.
The element is matter.
Matter is the universe.
Time and Space are one and the same.
All are sides of the eternal triangle.
Bigness. Smallness. Lowliness. Greatness.
From the infinite to the infinitesimal,
Is but a step.

The poem goes on for another two and a half pages. Meanwhile, strange plants are discovered.

No other plant that he had ever encountered had so affected him before. For these were *odd*, these were *wrong*; they did not seem to fit in with any herbaceous principle of the vegetable kingdom. They had no part in the scheme of things as Dai Brodwin knew it. They were strangers. They were aliens. There was something about them which for the first time in his life he did not like.

Trying to classify these plants turns out to be a gold mine of padding.

“Pandales,” he muttered, “Najadales, triuridales, graminales, palmales, cyclanthales, arales, xridales.” He sighed wearily. “Liliales, scitaminales.” He shook his head. “No, no, no.” He took his glasses off. “Orchidales – that disposes of the eleven orders of monocotyledons,” he said wearily.

Rhys Davis joined him beside the chart; he, too, was perplexed.

“Neither, of course, do they come anywhere in the dicotyledon’s pattern,” he said. He indicated the members of that order. “It is certainly not in the order of archichlamydeae. Neither can we find a place for it among the metachlamydeae, so what are we left with?” His companion raised one eyebrow quizzically.

We are left with a four page lecture on plant morphology. This is followed later by a nineteen page lecture on how life is formed. This, of course, takes place at an emergency meeting with the Prime Minister after the aliens have actually landed. The following is a random excerpt from this lecture.

“A natural relationship exists between marsh gas, methane alcohol, and formic acid on one hand, and between marsh gas, ethane and propane on the other, for those compounds are mutually convertible. But there is no natural connection between the paraffins and benzine, the formula of which is C_6H_6 . Benzine, in fact, forms the starting point of a separate class of similarly related homologous groups, in the same way that methane alcohol, marsh gas and formic acid form a series. The benzine derivatives are known as aromatic compounds, whereas the marsh gas series are known as aliphatic compounds.”

Throughout the invasion the British keep their stiff upper lips.

“There’s no means of knowing what deviltry they’ve got up their sleeves.” Saunderson grunted.

“I suppose we mustn’t take these similes too literally.” He had a grim sardonic sense of humour.

“These jokers don’t appear to have sleeves, Captain. They prance about in state of primeval ignorance as regards the decorum of dress.”

The penultimate chapter arrives and so does a Yeti at a tent door somewhere in the Himalayas.

Its triangular nose twitched a little, and the hypersensitive perceptions of Ansell the Sherpa told him that this strange olfactory organ was more than it appeared to be. He made no sound, but the Yeti eyed him thoughtfully for several seconds and its triangular appendage moved again as though it were scenting the breeze. But there was no breeze within the tent, and now Philips himself directed his attention to their visitor’s bizarre respiratory inlet. As he studied it closely in the flickering yellow light of his oil lamp, he realized that

it could not be what he had at first assumed. *There were no visible inlets in it.* Whatever else it was, the triangular projection in the center of the Yeti's face was certainly not a nose.

Amazingly, it turns out that the Yeti used to live on a planet neighbouring the home of the alien invaders. He promises to return with the secret of how to destroy them. In the penultimate paragraph, just when the reader is sure the Yeti will not be mentioned again, and apparently only a few hours later in the action...

With quick menacing movements the aliens began to close in on Ray Tansley...

It was at that precise instant that the weird Tibetan weapon which the Yeti had given to Paul Philips had been rushed to the battle field by the explorer himself.

Much like the Flazgaz Heatray, the funnel-shaped weapon vibrates and tingles and destroys the aliens...

The aliens from the stars had found that not man alone was ready to defend his planet...



ALIEN *from* the STARS by R.L. Fanthorpe

SCIENCE

FICTION

24



THE GLEAMING PANEL SLID BACK,
AND THEY SCREAMED IN TERROR
AS THE ALIENS EMERGED...

Amazing Analogies and Marvelous Metaphors

He suddenly felt that he was the supreme destroyer, the remover, the iconoclast, the nihilist and the anarchist. He was a wrecker, a destructionist, a spoiler, a saboteur, a defacer, an eraser, an assassin. Something of the wildness of the barbarian, the Hun, the Tartar and the vandal raced through his veins. He was the personification of the moth, the worm, rust and erosion – except that he was an accelerated personification of those agents of destruction.

He was an instant corrosive, he was immediate mildew, lightning blight and instantaneous poison. He was an earthquake, a fire, a flood, a sword; he was gunpowder, dynamite and blasting powder. He was a human torpedo which wasn't human any more –

(The Alien Ones)

The opening paragraph...

Captain Keriot looked at his reflection in mirror with a certain amount of mildly amused indifference. At a rough estimate, he supposed that ninety percent of his hair had gone. The domed head was high, and the lack of cranial hair, the complete lack of hirsute coverage in the occipital region, was compensated for to some extent by the thickness of the eyebrows. They stood on the bone ridges like two hairy caterpillars making their way slowly but surely toward a succulent plum.

(Barrier 346)

To play with hyperspace was to be thrown like a minute ball on the roulette board of Destiny.

(Barrier 346)

The sun set, like a fried egg sliding over a pan and being lost in the fire.

(Face of Evil)

Psychology was a juke box into which he dropped the coins of ideas. The record that came out wasn't always the one that he would have selected.

(Hand of Doom)

Mac picked up his spinner, started the engine and skimmed out towards the waiting X12. Like a slim steel needle she towered ready; anonymous scurrying technicians had seen to that; they had been over her like ants building an ants' nest, like bees building a comb, like wasps chewing that strange waxy substance in their weird little jaws. Men, wasps, bees, buildings, wasps' nests, space ships, bee hives, ant hills. Did all of it amount to anything? Did any of it amount to anything?

(The Return)

The past was the mould into which the plastic present was poured to solidify into future possibilities.

(No Way Back)

It was night; dark terrifying night. Night as it can only fall in Egypt; night as it can only fall across the ruins of ancient temples and necropoli; night, as it can be, a black, velvet terror and not a friendly herald of Morpheus. The Egyptian night of the ancient burial chambers, and of the timeless sands of the desert, was a dreadful thing; a hideous, frightening thing. Night was a living black monster whose first touch, like the first touch of the sundew that engulfs the insect, was gentle and somehow, sickly sweet. Then, with inexorable, relentless pressure, night seemed to close in upon the sleeping country.

(The Eye of Karnak)

Trinkle did not possess a legal mind. He was a mental grasshopper, an intellectual kangaroo, a mind wallaby.

(Beyond the Void)

A hack might have described it as a "barrel chest." But it wasn't; it was too square. It was as deep as a cedar forest, as powerful as a framework of steel girders, and the muscles rippled over the top like layers of vulcanized rubber – strong, unbelievably strong and resilient.

(Hand of Doom)

Only a few pages later he describes the man as "the barrel chested Smithson".

Phrgg felt as an intelligent blood corpuscle would feel when caught in the circulation and fed unceremoniously through a palpitating aorta!

(Dark Continuum)

The heat and the power and the sheer energy bolts, had seemed to flash down from the alien, played around that jet squadron, made them dance, as puppets dance on strings and then, as their proud, sleek shapes crumpled and melted, they dropped one by one, like stones. Dropped like the shattered bodies of some little harmless carnivore that has been caught by a predator.

Dropped like the regurgitated particles of a mouse that has been eaten by an owl. Drop *[sic]* like dead fledglings over the edge of a nest, from the height of some great eyrie. Dropped and plummeted into the waters of the sea. Dropped to the watery grave in which the bodies of the crews of the two great Western Allies battleships so recently sunk to their final resting place.

(The In-World)

Val Stearman was capable. He was one of the toughest and trickiest fighting machines the world had ever seen. And although metaphorically speaking, the first fall of snow had made itself evident on the roof, there was still plenty of fire in the cellar. The great muscles of the colossal frame had slowed a little, but they hadn't weakened. The oak was more gnarled than it had been in the Spring, but the wood was as strong as ever and many a winter gale would blow over it before Stearman was finally felled by the tempest of Time.

(Softly by Moonlight)

Ken Andrews suddenly gave vent to a completely meaningless string of gibberish, which bore about the same resemblance to human speech as chalk bears to cheese. It was a singularly odd sort of noise.

(Radar Alert)

All in all, Mr. Eustace Evans was a thoroughly unlovable character. Beside him was Charlie Davenport. Like Evans, he was a nephew of old Angus, but the cousins were as opposite as chalk and cheese.

(“The Haunted Pool”, SN 21)

Warm beer never agreed with him... and the rather primitive facilities for keeping the juice of the hop succulent and cool in the village pub were not always successful. The difference between a good iced lager and the lukewarm village beer were as great as the differences between chalk and cheese.

(Mind Force)

There were three of them aboard the ship. Norge Jansen, big, fair, and as

Norwegian as his name. As far as they had a skipper, Norge did the job. Then there was Paul Whiteland, as different from Jansen as chalk from cheese. Which of them you preferred depended on which type of character you preferred – chalk or cheese. They are both useful in their own way. You can't write on a blackboard with a lump of Cheddar. You can't satisfy your appetite with three sticks of coloured writing apparatus.

(Juggernaut)

When he awoke it was pitch dark, dark as the pit, dark as the tomb, dark as the grave. A thick, black velvet darkness that seemed almost tangible in its intensity. The kind of darkness that got into the pores of your nose, the kind of darkness, decided big Dan Jeffreys, that went creeping into a man's ears, like the poison in the ears of Hamlet's father in that ancient play from distant earth.

(Orbit One)

They were hanging on every word he said, listening very carefully indeed, weighing up his thoughts. He could feel their attention. Mentally, he was a swimmer towing cerebral rafts through waters of thought, heading for logical landing stages.

(Galaxy 666)

It went without saying that a good security man was as tough as leather and nails and whipcord; as strong as iron and steel; as hard as oak; and as rugged as granite. That was just one of the *minor* qualifications. There were no dapper little security men. Genteel they might look; refined they might be in manner and bearing, but underneath all that were muscles of stalite and tungsten steel, and bone of solid rock. They were phosphor bronze and flint. Not flesh and blood and brittle bone. They were men, and at the same time they were supermen, in so far as any human being can be a superman.

(The Synthetic Ones)

Schulutski's body lay revoltingly supine, the distorted eyes staring up, like two accusing fingers, shrouded by a thick, pink glove.

(The Negative Ones)

It was as though his soul, like some infernal yo-yo on the end of demonic string, had been lowered to within inches of the very caverns of Hell itself, and now was reascending by that same strange method.

(The Golden Chalice)

His enormous hand closed over the telephone receiver like a bunch of bananas falling off a tree and landing on a small black beetle.

(*Android*)

A sentence is a complete thought expressed in words, like a carriage in a train, and a paragraph is the locomotive and coaches complete. Some trains move extremely slowly; Croberg's for example, pulled their way slowly uphill, like weary wagons loaded with lead ore. Dill Blanthus' moved a little faster, the gentle swirl of a pullman on a gentle gradient. But Gene Asker spoke like the fastest express going down the Pittsburgh-63Denver run with the throttle wide, and the green light shining the all clear.

(*Android*)



Hygiene 101

The desire to clean her teeth grew absolutely compulsive, she could have no more resisted it than she could have flown unaided between two planets.

Moving quickly from the radio to her living quarters, she squeezed a little water into a plastic container and put a few dabs of toothpaste on her brush. She slipped the brush into her mouth and pressed the small button in the end which activated its electric motor. The bristles – soft, gentle bristles, guaranteed not to damage the enamel or the gum – moved swiftly against the teeth. She began with the top left molars, worked round to the bicuspid, and came round again from them to the incisors, the canines, the laterals and the centrals. Once she had reached the front of her mouth, she changed her grip on the brush so that it moved round to the top right, travelling over the bicuspid and molars as it moved. Coming down the sides of her teeth, she paused and took a deep breath, placed a little more paste upon the brush and moved it round again this time beginning with the actual chewing surface of upper right molars, coming round and cleaning again between the crevices until she had worked round to the left-hand molars.

Once more she put paste on the brush in this same elaborate ritual and concentrated her attention now upon the inside of the upper left molars, the inside of the upper left bicuspid, round across the incisors and so back to the right-hand masticators. She rinsed the brush, reapplied the paste and repeated the whole ritualistic process with the lower teeth. She cleaned the brush very carefully and then, in a set way, put it back and moved back towards the radio set.

She had taken barely a dozen paces when she was assailed by a horrible thought that she had not cleaned the top left inside molars. She stood in an agony of uncertainty for five minutes, then went back to the bathroom area of her living quarters, recharged the brush and carefully cleaned again the top left molars on their inside surfaces. She looked at her reflection in the mirror; it foamed back at her like a rabid dog.

“This time I have done them all,” she said. “What about the bottom inside molars?” asked her reflection. “I have done them all,” said Marian firmly. “If you have forgotten them the bacteria responsible for dental caries will get in,” said the voice in her mind. “It is no good being clean on the

outside if you have forgotten the inside. Are you sure you have done the left inside?” “Yes, I have, I have.” Marian picked up her toothbrush and flung it savagely across the dome; it bounced from the thick plastic glass and broke on the floor.

(Dark Continuum)

Marian Lassiter and Jergins in Domes 187 and 186, respectively, had adhered to the highest of service traditions, but there is a difference between polish and super-polish. There is a difference between bright and dazzlingly bright. There is a difference between the meticulous and the geometrically meticulous. There is a difference between order and an arrangement of such exactitude that is of itself an infinite challenge to chaos as an abstract principle. Where Marian and Paul had been well up to standard, Conrad Hirschk in Dome 185 had reached a new plane. A blue-belt judo expert is a formidable opponent, but a black belt is that much higher.

If belts had been awarded for cleanliness, then Conrad Hirschk in Dome 185 would have held the highest possible dan of the black belt. It was almost an obsession with him, yet it was not sufficient of an obsession to constitute any degree of mental imbalance.

(Dark Continuum)

Full, warm, moist red lips parted, displaying two rows of bright, white teeth. She had a perfect smile. It would have been too good for a tooth-paste ad., he thought. She did not appear to be wearing perfume, yet there was a fragrance in the car that hadn't been there before. It made him think of new mown hay or a freshly scrubbed dairy. It reminded him of violets and primroses, hiding under leaves. She made him think of amaranth and brambles, of burdock and clover, of dewberry and flax. Yet there was a strangeness about her wild freedom. She also made him think of wood anemones and enchanter's nightshade.

(The Shadow Man)

Helen Powell kept her head and began working away bravely at the gag. She was glad that she had washed her cardigan in soft, gentle soap flakes, in accordance with the instruction on its ticket. She would not have fancied chewing her way through wool that might have been flavoured with powerful detergent!

(Projection Infinity)

When he cleaned his teeth, cleaning his teeth, for those twenty-five or thirty seconds, cleaning his teeth alone was the most important operation in the world, even if bombs were dropping around outside, or if the atmosphere itself was on fire.

(Android)



Colourful Prose

The whole dome was suddenly bathed in a bright red glow. Maginty felt like an actor on stage caught in a red spotlight. The spotlight went orange; Marian Lassiter and Phrgg went orange. The recently sorted out equipment went orange, the floor went orange, the whole plastoglass fabric of the dome glowed like the peel of the biggest fruit that an ambitious orange tree could ever hope to produce.

The orange turned into an enormous lemon and the lemon went from ripe, through lime green to under ripeness, and then the colour of verdant spring grass. The grass turned blue like the blue grass of Kentucky; the blue grew deeper until it was a deep, undeniable ultramarine. It grew deeper still and now everywhere was bathed in a kind of Prussian blue, that powerful tint so beloved of artists. The blue became so deep that it was blue no longer but indigo, and then the indigo began fading into a rich violet. The violet grew deeper and deeper until it had gone and there was no visible light at all in the dome.

(Dark Continuum)

The whole of the interior of the “Waltzing Matilda” became suffused with a warm red glow. The warm red melted into a violent orange, which mellowed into a kind of ochre and gave way to a strikingly verdant green.

Maginty looked at a grass-coloured Marian Lassiter, a verdant Jergins, and an olive-leaf Phrgg.

(Dark Continuum)

Maginty turned a delicate shade of aquamarine. It was a kind of turquoise which Marian Lassiter, Jergins and Phrgg all shared for a few seconds, until it gave place to a deep, dark, midnight blue that was, in turn, succeeded by a violet tinge that was itself forced out of their range of vision by a strange, colourless, achromatic greyness. It was as though they were looking at the interior of a ship, or perhaps a photograph of the interior of a ship in black and white. The blacks and whites faded towards a kind of uniform greyness, which reduced the visual contrast of the lines almost to nothingness. It was as if reality had become a kind of television picture on a badly adjusted set.

(Dark Continuum)

He looked at them, and felt a shudder of revulsion flowing through his muscular physique. There was something hideous about these blue things. Perhaps if they hadn't resembled men quite so closely, they wouldn't have been so repulsive. But something about the colour blue didn't seem to fit the form of the human figure. Blue is fine on some things. It looked good on plants, it made a pretty nice colour for the sky; it looked all right on hover craft. It was a pleasant colour, a noble colour, but it just didn't suit human skin.

It had a repulsive texture, as though it were suffering from a hideous and incurable disease. Blue skin always made him think of death and arterial troubles. And yet their skins were not tinged with the unhealthy blueness of circulatory patients. It was a healthy, glowing blueness, matching in hue and intensity, although at the opposite side of the spectroscopic circle, the ruddy tint of glowing exertion. It was some kind of pigmentation. But what was it?

(Hand of Doom)

Whether a man was brown or yellow, black or white made very little difference, provided his heart was the right colour – that was all the doctor was concerned about.

Yet colour made a difference, not between fellow earth men, because although their colour was different they fitted in with one another. There was some gap, some difference of personality and temperament between black and white, but it was as nothing to the difference that existed between black and blue or white and blue. These blues were obviously so utterly alien that Smithson Steele felt physically sick, and for a thing to nauseate the gigantic leader of the masked swordsmen, it had to be strange and revolting indeed!

(Hand of Doom)

It was a strange feeling, difficult to describe without unchaining the might of a Johnsonian dictionary. The original achromatic quality of the light was gradually going through the spectrum; the colourlessness and pallidity, the apparent pigment deficiency and the monochrome effect faded until the colour was back, and it was wonderful to see it back. It was pure, natural, positive colour, primitive and primary; the complementary colours caressed one another like old friends at a reunion after a long absence – the chromatic dispersion was beautiful, the range of colours that were now coming to life on the surface of the planetary disc, which they guessed to be Xarax, was a glory in itself; it was a prism – a spectrum – a rainbow. There were variations

and mixtures of colours, harmonies of colours, riots and splashes of colour. There was warmth and softness, and as the many-hued world became absolutely clear to them [as] the *norm*'s eyes became used once more to the light of reality in the three-dimensional Universe for which nature had intended them.

(*The Planet Seekers*)

The greyness grew deeper, became tinged with purple, and the purple in turn gave way to the blackness of night. The blackness grew thicker and darker and deeper, until it became Stygian in its intensity, until it became almost as tangible as black velvet...

...Then, imperceptibly at first, gradually more noticeably, the darkness began to lift. It was less gripping, less velvety, less tangible. It became more like the darkness of a subterranean cave, and from there it thinned and was diluted till it resembled the darkness of an ordinary night. From the darkness of night it became the pale grey darkness of dawn, and now the purple tinge was discernible once more.

The purple gave place to grey, and the grey to a greyish white. The greyish white became a kind of opalescent translucency once more...

(*Time Echo*)

The greyness came as it always came when the X12 dipped into hyperspace. It was a strange, sad, neutral, sombre, dull, leaden thing. There was something cool and quiet about it; it was crescent and grizzled; it was a hoary greyness. There was a glaucous quality about the light through which the ship was now diving. It was a steely, pearly, silvery, frosted environment into which Mac and the X12 were now plunging... *plunging*... It was the grey of powder; it was the grey of state; there was an ashen quality enveloping the ship. The whole of X12 seemed to have become as coloured and cinerary.

Mackenzie and his cinereous vessel plunged on into the greyness that was gradually turning from pearl grey to oyster to charcoal and from that into a peculiar, colourless, achromatic state. It was as though the ship and the man within it had been bleached or etiolated. Mac felt that the ship around him was a huge under-exposed negative, everything was faded and fading. There was an unpigmented quality surrounding him and the strange albino ship. The world seemed to have gone anaemic. The ship was without colour, drained of colour, drained of blood. It was washed-out, pallid and sickly-looking. There was an unhealthy, blank, glassy, lacklustre quality about everything. The

greyness was like the greyness of death, the ship had become a cadaverous, pale corpse.

(The Return)

Now he was looking at a panoramic displays of colour. There were reds of deep, bright quality, really opaque, pillar box reds, poster reds, eye-catching reds, and there were oranges of such brightness that had they grown upon the trees of Florida they would have astounded those fine, natural, spherical fruits that grew beside them. Had they showed their rotund bodies amid the sun-bathed glory of California they would have put to shame even the finest fruits of that fructose State.

Oliver watched the glorious orange colours lose their reddish tinge and burst into yellow flame. The whole screen was a mass of shining gold, gleaming like the target of an ancient warrior about to go into battle, some general of a bygone epoch, leading his Bronze Age warrior to death or glory, for a cause, they knew not what; to a destiny, they knew not where.

It was the gold of the sun, it was the gold of the rich yellow metal which men, for millennia, have dug out of the Earth in one place, and carefully reburied somewhere else...

The yellow took on a greenish tinge, Marland found himself thinking of an Irish friend who had described to him the superb beauties of the Emerald Isle itself. This green was of such clarity and purity that could only have been an Irish green, thought Marland. The green gave way at last to turquoise, and the turquoise to a pure blue, a deep underwater blue, the kind of blue that sings to men of sea and sky and infinity of space beyond: the divine kind of blue.

Marland felt strangely proud as he looked at it. There was something noble about it; it appealed to all that was best in him. He took a deep breath and waited to see what would come after the blue. Gainsborough's favourite colour subsided, and Marland found himself looking at a deep and mysterious indigo.

The whole screen filled with it, and as it finally faded, a violet that was almost too deep to see took its place. The colours finally died.

(The Man from Beyond)

Everywhere was dark, dark darkness. Blackness. Black. Black blackness.

(A 1,000 Years On)



Philosophically Speaking

Am I flotsam and jetsam on the tidal beaches of life?

(The Triple Man)

He spoke with the air of a man who is trying hard to be optimistic, in direct opposition to the pessimism that he feels. Yet, as he looked into the depth of his own mind, Donald Bailey saw that he was not a pessimist but a realist. He was not gloomy, he was only trying to avoid euphemistic escapist phraseology.

(The Man Who Came Back)

He looked at his three colleagues. “Stand by,” he said quietly. He repeated the two syllables into the public address system. Odd sort of message to send and yet so poignant with meaning, he thought. Stand by! A verb and an associated preposition. A command sentence, because as with all other command sentences the “you” was missing. It was understood by the listener. Stand by! Really meant “You stand by!” You – whoever are listening, stand by! What did “stand by” mean? Stand ready? Be prepared? Why not use either of those phrases. Why use “stand by?” he wondered. Perhaps, he thought, as his hand flexed across the switch, it does not do to question motives too closely. Perhaps it does not do to analyse words, sentences and the construction of phrases and clauses too minutely, otherwise we finish up in a position where even that which we thought we understood has become meaningless, and that which we thought had a meaning has either no meaning at all, or a vastly different meaning. Instead of a happy straightforward, untroubled comprehension of the words which we hear and the words which we speak, we find ourselves groping in dark difficulty and black despair for the kind of words which might enable us to express something which we previously understood in a different way.

This, however, decided Blake, was no time for verbal speculation. This was no time to allow his mind to go wandering off along uncharted, philological or semantic alley-ways. He put the brakes on his train of thought and it shuddered to a stop in the mental station labelled “Reality.” His consciousness got off the train and reviewed the station. The station was a switch in his hand; he pulled the switch.

(*Space Fury*)

“I am ready to listen or to move. I am, in fact, standing water.”

“Then let me teach you how to flow.”

“I wish you would,” said Bastian. “Hereditary laziness teaches me how to ebb.”

(*Beyond The Void*)

It was one of the million incalculables that form part of the everlasting gear wheels of the rotating cylinders of “if”... Fate’s own machinery.

(*Crimson Planet*)

This supernatural story begins thus...

Bellenger was dead when they found him. That Bellenger was dead was probably the understatement of the year. Bellenger was horribly, violently dead!

If there can be various degrees of anything so terrible and so final as death, then it could be said that Bellenger was a dead as it was possible to be. There is the restful, peaceful death of the very old, who with the quiet mind have slipped away from one world to the next. They have crossed the twilight bridge on tiptoe. There is the death from “natural causes” where the victim – no matter what his age – looks naturally dead. But there is also the kind of death that Harold Bellenger died.

It wasn’t that anything violent had happened to Bellenger. It was the look on his face. There was an expression in Bellenger’s eyes that was completely beyond description. The eyes looked as if they had been trying to escape from his face when whatever it was that had got him had approached. Men who are strangled; men who are hung; men who are suffocated, or asphyxiated, take on that awful bulge-eyed rabbit look, but none of them had it as bad as Bellenger had it. It was as though his eyes were two planets that had suddenly broken free from gravity and got whirled off – victims of centrifugal force.

(*Out of the Darkness*)



Mental Olympics

“I suppose you are the only woman for whom I have ever been able to have any regard *mentally*.”

“Mentally?” she asked.

“Yes,” he nodded. “I didn’t feel that I could have any kind of affinity with a girl who was unable to understand my thoughts. I suppose I wouldn’t be able to have any real mental affinity with you, either.”

“Why not?” murmured Ursula. She was grinning impishly.

“Because you’re as far ahead of men intellectually as most of the other women I’ve ever met were below me intellectually.”

(The Last Astronaut)

Locksley had won every single letter by the sweat of his brow and that was literal, for profuse perspiration was a by-product of his keen thought process.

(Flame Mass)

There was evidence which was not evidence. There were facts which were not facts; there were clues which were not clues. He was in a fantastic mental muddle; a phantasmagoria of thoughts winged swiftly through his mind. They were followed by frenzied thoughts, and they in turn by quiet, placid, but nevertheless penetrating thoughts.

(Orbit One)

Not all of the Fanthorpe’s characters could be described as mental giants.

“I’ve seen stuff like that somewhere,” said Ray, “but I can’t quite remember where.” He paused with his hand on his brow, in an attitude of deep thought.

“Come on,” said Kel.

They left the veldt stuff behind them and stepped onto the green. Brant had taken three steps when he found himself in it – up to his knees.

“What the devil – ” he began.

“Swamp!” jerked Ray. “I thought it was!”

(Lightning World)

His mind became filled with unanswerable question marks. He tried to ponder the imponderable; he tried to answer the unanswerable; he tried to

believe the unbelievable, and to comprehend the incomprehensible. The result of these valiant mental efforts was a headache, so he lay back on the raft and relaxed; there was nothing else he could do.

(Orbit One)

Jeffreys plied the security chief with questions, but Bridger would say no more, and when Glen Bridger chose to be silent he could teach clams and oysters quite a lot about their profession. But for all his silence, his mind was a seething mass of activity. Perhaps, by direct contrast with his absence of speech, he was thinking like a machine gun. Thought was following thought in various logical sequences, until it seemed that he would either come up with a solution of some kind, a working hypothesis, or else his head would burst in the attempt. When Bridger got one of these moods, and they were fairly rare for he was a physical rather than an intellectual type, there was no stopping him, and like Sherlock Holmes, scraping away on his old violin, Bridger got lost in a mood of the deepest possible concentration. He would think and think and think again, sometimes in machine gun-like spates as he was doing now, sometimes in long, slow, soliloquy-like thought processions. But no matter how he thought, he continued to hammer at a problem till something gave way.

(Orbit One)

“Here we go again,” agreed the co-pilot; it didn’t seem a particularly original remark, but he couldn’t think of anything else to say. A conversational gambit like “here we go again” isn’t the kind of scintillating witticism that calls for a reply which would have delighted Dr. Johnson or Voltaire!

(The Last Astronaut)

Space is very big, and man is very small – even a man with the brain of Andrac.

(Exit Humanity)



Fanthorpe by Any Other Name

Lionel Fanthorpe didn't mind doing a little name dropping from time to time.

Nigel Fairwood had the impression that he was involved in some strange kind of nightmare. This wasn't parish life. Weird inhuman figures just did not come into a man's study window and ask him to guard an earthenware bottle covered in strange hieroglyphics. This was something out of Rider Haggard, or Fanthorpe; this was Edgar Allen Poe, this was Algernon Blackwood...

(Chaos)

"It's a long time since those 19th and 20th century science-fiction theories were aired, but a lot of those great old science-fiction writers had some incredibly good ideas." He paused thoughtfully. "Men like Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, John E. Muller, Karl Zeigfreid, Fanthorpe, and their contemporaries put forward as fiction a number of brilliantly imaginative schemes, which have since come to pass as fact."

(Power Sphere)

His gaze traveled down to the brows. They were almost non-existent. It made Parnell Scott think of a brilliant horror story by that master of the macabre, Leo Brett, which he had once read, of a thing called The Drud – a supernatural predator that lived on vampires. Druds looked like normal human beings in every way, save that they were devoid of eyebrows. This was one sure recognition point of the true Drud.

(The Negative Ones)

In the story "The Drud" (SN 24), the Drud disguises himself by wearing false eyebrows.

Jinks was an intelligent man. He read and understood the novels of Fanthorpe, Muller and Fane.

(Projection Infinity)

There are some literary experts, thought Marland, who regard Dickens and Shakespeare as hopelessly outdated; there are some who survey the immortal science fiction classics of the Twentieth Century, who spend their lives

happily studying the works of Verne, Wells, Fanthorpe, and the other superb pioneers.

(The Man from Beyond)

It sounded like a strange blend of Science Fiction and the Supernatural. Both of those literary *genres* had been favourite reading in the days, long since, when he had had time to read. Fanthorpe had been his favourite author.

(Reactor XK9)

“I’ve read some of the old Nineteenth and Twentieth Century horror classics. People like Edgar Allen Poe, Bram Stoker, Fanthorpe, Lovecraft, Wheatley and the others, but even their books, great as they undoubtedly were, never really terrified me.”

(Special Mission)



A Miscellany

This is the retelling of Aladdin and the Magic Lamp. In this case the lamp is a damaged spaceship filled with spacemen. Until repairs are made, they are unable to leave the alien planet which exists on a much larger scale than theirs.

Often they had to make whole new components; build new transformers from the raw materials which the forage party had brought into the ship. They repaired altimeters and amplidynes; they renewed the broken diode detectors and diode rectifiers. The dipole aerials had to be replaced; the ergometer had to be restored. The eriometer which measured essential small diameters by defraction also had to be given substantial repairs. The gausitron, a kind of mercury arc-valve rectifier, was in serious need of attention, and the heterodynes gave the Alfaxian engineers a lot of work. The orthicons in the environment exploring equipment had gone and had to be laboriously replaced, and the image iconoscopes, devices in which translucent photo cathodes and arrangements of accelerating and decelerating coils were used for the intensification of electron images, also had to be repaired.

The isolation transformers had gone, and the electroscopes had to be repaired in a number of places. Several essential paraphrasing circuits had been knocked out of a number of sensitive pieces of equipment, and two or three of the radiation pyrometers had been destroyed. The servo-amplidyne system had been severely damaged, and as it was an essential part of the control mechanism of the ship's main drive, it was one of the first objects of the chief engineer's attention.

The silicon rectifiers were in good shape but had been slung a little out of position, and the synchrocyclotron accelerator took three time units to repair. The technetron was in need of new valves, and various thermionic cathodes had to be replaced. The tropotron, the vibrotron and the vogad brought them almost the end of their work.

When they had completed repairs to the scanning device and renewed considerable quantities of zinc telluride and zirconium, the zone purifier from which they refined their germanium remained to be repaired.

(Space Trap)

The sinister doctor pointed a long emasculated finger into the deeper recesses of the gloom ahead.

(“Voodoo Hell Drums”, SN 39)

“Of course, if this was Russia, or one of the other totalitarian powers, we wouldn’t have very much difficulty in finding a solution, to the security problem.” He gave a thin, almost bitter smile.

“You mean two bullets, and two bodies in the quicklime, eh?” said the security man. “Well, you know professor, I haven’t got the heart to shoot anybody after I’ve made him a cup o’tea! It doesn’t seem ‘British’ somehow!”

(The Ultimate Man)

The old man opened his eyes metaphorically.

(The Ultimate Man)

Clayton felt sick.

His stomach came up and shook hands with his throat... Fear forced it back again.

(The In-World)

“He got them all together, then gave his treacherous signal for his men to open fire with concealed weapons; he meant to cut down all the leaders of the apparently primitive race...”

“And?” prompted Joe Rogerson.

“And nothing happened! The weapons went off, the heat rays blasted heat, the corrosion shells fired, the energy blasters shot off their bolts, and Mullan himself used his pocket atomic firearm – he reckoned to take a dozen down with that – and when the little mushroom cloud cleared away no one was hurt at all! The chiefs just sat there in stony silence. They hadn’t been touched by it. It was as if Mullan and his men had been firing pop-guns or peashooters!”

“Even acid, high-explosive, atomic hand-guns didn’t touch those people?”

(Lightning World)

The following is typical of the “We’re-in-immediate-danger-so-lets-stop-and-have-a-philosophical and/or scientific discussion” padding ploy.

They backed out hastily, trying to get rid of the stuff, but it clung tenaciously. It clung like mud to a blanket, and continued biting into their skin. It seemed to be digesting them alive!

“Do you know what that stuff is!” cried Kel between yells of pain.

“No idea,” panted Tony. “What is it?”

“It’s a kind of digestive organism,” said the doctor. “Single-celled creatures, millions of little primitive organisms. They simply ingest anything that comes near them like an amoeba does. They will attack anything. That’s why there’s no vegetation in that area; they’ve eaten the lot! This a representative selection of the primeval slime from which the life forms on this world – or any other world – must have developed. Only on this world it’s survived, and gone rogue. Having given birth to the other life forms, it seems to spend its time floating around the place eating them!”

“We’re being digested alive, then! We’ve got to get this stuff off!”

(Lightning World)

Two men are climbing a steep ravine at night to escape from pursuing enemies. Typically, they have a lengthy philosophical discussion of love while fleeing. It concludes with the following:

“But, as I said before, we are talking too much, a great deal too much. I rather fear we may have given our presence away by this unwonted verbiage.”

(The Eye of Karnak)

As he stared through the window, stared past the flood of terrified faces that were racing through the night, screaming and gesticulating, he saw a pair of EYES – *gigantic eyes high in the sky*. He had never seen anything quite like them before. And yet, they were familiar in that they were perfectly ordinary-looking human eyes except that they *glowed*, and were not set in a face. They were disembodied eyes, just like the Cheshire Cat of Wonderland had managed to produce a disembodied grin. There was no sign of a face at all, and yet between the eyes and the area surrounding them was a black shadow, blotting out the stars as though it were the silhouette of a face. The eyes were so vivid that looking directly towards them caused acute physical pain. They shone like the beams of Satan’s own searchlights.

They were evil eyes; terrible, sinister eyes. They stared, and they stared, and they *stared*.

They seemed to have replaced the stars, and the moon, and the sun. Almost that whole area of the sky seemed to have been blotted out by these

gigantic eyes. They must have been a mile or a mile-and-a-half across! It was impossible to tell the size of things because of the height and the distance from the earth's surface, but despite the difficulty of making a judgement, John Sanders was pretty sure that if this was no optical illusion, if he really was looking at the eyes of some gigantic creature, then that creature must stand somewhere in the region of seven or eight *miles* high!

(*Mind Force*)

He went to planet after planet until he was sick of the sight of a space ship: until his ears became nauseated – if an ear can become nauseated – by the roar of a rocket.

(*Orbit One*)

Colonel John Rochdale shouted, “By Gad, sir,” which in any other circumstances would have sounded fiendishly comical, would have made him sound like the larger-than-life Blimp-type music hall character which he so nearly was. But it did not sound comical – it just sounded perfectly natural. It would have been wrong, odd and unnatural if he had said anything else. It would have been out of character; it wouldn't have rung true.

(*Radar Alert*)

There was more, but it was unreadable. Val struck a match and looked at the peculiar lines. It was the embryo of an inscription. It was by no means a full or real inscription. It looked like an unformed carving. It might have been the projection of an idea. There was a vague and amorphous quality to it. The stone wasn't blank, neither was it carved.

(*Softly by Moonlight*)

“Yet I feel a strange fascination toward precipii – I don't know if that's the correct plural, or whether one should say ‘precipices...’”

(*Orbit One*)

Energy! *Unlimited energy!* Energy unlimited, one might say, went pouring out of the machine, went pouring away into the surrounding air, into the surrounding buildings, into the surrounding matter. Energy and yet *more energy*. All kinds of energy. Heat energy, power energy, electrical energy, radioactive energy, deadly, dangerous, vital awful energy, death energy; energy of death.

(*Uranium 235*)

“I’m not getting at you. I’m glad to know a man who can take things with a smile. Take it on the chin with a grin. Stiff upper lip, and all that jazz.” Hal Delaney smiled too. A cynical smile, there were too many blisters on his face for it to be anything else. It was one of those wry, painful smiles that only a hero can produce, in moments of extremity.

(Flame Mass)

Another opening paragraph...

Harry Salford was a slightly taller than average man. He hadn’t got the kind of height that made him stand out in a crowd, but neither was he often in difficulty when he wanted to look over the heads of a crowd. Salford didn’t look his height, for he was well-built with it. He was by no means an old man, neither was he particularly young. He was as much past middle age in years as he was above average height in inches. His hair was still dark rather than grey, his eyes were clear, and the superb muscles of his powerful body were in their prime. He hadn’t quite the wind that had been his twenty years before, but there was a toughness and stamina about Harry Salford which had come with maturity and which seemed – as far as he was concerned – to compensate for those mild inroads which age had made.

(Power Sphere)

...Salford was an experienced traveller who had met many and varied types of terrain. “Terrain,” he told himself, was hardly the best word to use. It was a term which, strictly speaking, should apply only to terrestrial surfaces, but now here he was, moving across Nephthis. He supposed that he ought to refer to the ground upon which he now trod as Nephthian.

(Power Sphere)

Oliver found himself lying on his back in a vast, dimly lit, subterranean amphitheater. “Subterranean” was hardly the best possible choice of word, he thought, strictly speaking, anything “subterranean” had to be under the Earth. This was sub-Azorbian.

(The Man from Beyond)

...the transmission was going nowhere outside this room, this strange underground chamber, this peculiar subterranean cavern. Subterranean, he reflected, even in that moment, was not the ideal word for this; *subterranean* meant under the *earth*, this wasn’t subterranean in the literal sense!

(Special Mission)

Val realised, that in referring to the shaft as being subterranean, he was subconsciously thinking in terrestrial terms. The shaft led from the ground, true, and they were moving equally into the ground but it was not a *subterranean* shaft. In all truth and honesty the word subterranean could only be employed, thought Val, for that which was under the *Earth*. A shaft which merely sank into Awan, 6th Planet of Polaris, was not *subterranean*, but *subawanean*.

(*Nemesis*)

The Voice, by Pel Torro is the story of an old actor, who rehearsed with a tape recorder. The trouble was the recorder didn't understand little human weaknesses... such as death!

(Cover blurb, SN 59)

Up, up, up flew the tiny craft with its cargo of sadness, courage and high explosives.

(*The Venus Venture*)

He gave his report briefly, but not so briefly as to be terse. They chewed it over with the same kind of ruminant distraction as he would have expected from an ancient herd of pedigree Guernseys.

(*A 1,000 Years On*)

Thud-thud, thud-thud, thud-thud; then the rhythm changed. *Thud-thud-thud, thud-thud-thud, thud-thud-thud*; the native anchored to Croberg's massive waist appeared even more terrified. The rhythm of the drums changed yet again, *thud-thud-thud-thud, thud-thud-thud-thud-thud*.

"They must be all around us," said Croberg, "Above us; below us; everywhere."

"Yes, this is a kind of nerve warfare," said the professor. Once more the rhythm changed subtly – thud – thud – thud – there was a longer pause between the beats and in the silences terror seemed to move between the leaves of the trees. *Thud-silence-thud-silence-thud-silence-thud-silence...* The silences grew longer still, thud, long silence, thud; long silence, thud – . They were *louder* now, but even less frequent. *Thud!* very long silence; thud! very long silence; thud, very long silence... THUD! *complete silence*. No more thudding.

(*Android*)



Galaxy 666

Of all the novels, this is probably the richest in humour. Fortunately it has American reprints that can still be found from time to time.

Two old spacemen meet to discuss old times...

Milka began tucking into magellanic pseudopods with schurgle grass and chipped funkweed. Bion began carving a deliciously cooked leg of hurklebeast with oogonga sauce.

Bion's grandson Korzaak and his friend Ischklah have not been able to make sense of conflicting data on Galaxy 666. A few men, including Bion, have been to the galaxy and returned, each with fantastic tales and conflicting data. A four man crew takes off to explore it first hand. Before long they start having problems with the instruments...

"Here's something up your street, if you're problem experts," said Bronet. Ischklah and Korzaak were already pouring over the mutinous astro-navigator, the astro-astrogator.

"What the devil has gotten into the thing?" said Korzaak.

"Right; let's run some quick checks," replied Ischklah.

"Have a look at the cathode ray tube for any sign of aberration."

"Check," said Ischklah. "None."

"Very odd," said Korzaak. "Any abnormal glow discharge?"

"Slight one. The working voltage is increasing as the current increases."

"Give me that ergometer," said Ischklah suddenly. He ran the ergometer over the power output.

"Reading normal," he said grimly.

"What's the attenuation constant?"

"Standing steady; four above zero," said Korzaak.

"Is the transducer separating the waves O.K.?" asked Ischklah.

"As far as I can see."

"The trigger tube satisfactory?"

"Trigger tube perfect."

“Monoscope?”

“O.K.”

“What about the intermediate anode?”

“Intermediate anode is fair.”

“How about the dielectric?”

“That’s all right.”

“Is the capacitor in?”

“Yep. Capacitor’s fine.”

“Check for fluorescence.”

“None.”

“It’s not that, then. Is the transition temperature up to normal?”

“Transition temperature’s fine.”

“Any transistors gone?”

Korzaak was checking rapidly.

“Not that I can see.”

“Is that rheostat free to function?”

“Running free.”

“See if the ripple filter is all right.”

Korzaak unscrewed the top of the ripple filter holder.

“Nothing wrong that I can see.”

“See if the extrinsic semiconductor is functioning,” suggested Oski.

“The surface conductivity’s a bit high,” interrupted Ischklah.

“The wave guide is moving a little along its axis,” said Korzaak suddenly.

“That in itself isn’t a fatal error.”

“Look at that oscillator,” said Captain Bronet. They looked. It was a phase-shift oscillator, and it employed resistance and capacitances in a bridge circuit to control the frequencies.

“The thermionic valve has gone at the bottom now,” said Oski. “The whole thing’s breaking down.”

“It wouldn’t have,” said Ischklah, “if it hadn’t been for this abnormal signal it was picking up. I mean, this is the equivalent of hitting it with a hammer. Look at that blasted pointer!”

There was a final dismal splutter as two of the relays packed up. A dead short followed, and the fuse leaped out of its socket like a pip squeezed out of an orange.

“So much for the auto-astrogator,” grunted Bronet.

“Now we’re properly up the proverbial creek, without the metaphorical paddle,” said Oski.

“Yeah,” agreed Bronet. It was a terse, vibrant monosyllable.

“Co-ordinates 1,9,7,5,4,862/003,” called Ischklah.

“9071¾. 0024 co-ordinates CBJ, para-co-ordinate 198,002,” called Bronet.

“Hyper co-ordinate 10467,” said Korzaak. “Ultra-co-ordinate 194/312/564/8179,” said Ischklah.

“Infra-co-ordinate,” began Bronet. “987.56 reference co-ordinate 1325.”

“Alpha reading high,” said Ischklah.

“Beta scale medium,” called Bronet.

“Gamma steady,” said Korzaak.

“Aleph pointer, zero. Beth pointer, zero.”

“Gimel pointer minus 2,” cut in Korzaak.

Eventually the ship crashes on a planet in Galaxy 666 where they explore the landscape...

The ground beneath their feet was a very odd sort of terrain – though “terrain” is not strictly speaking, the kind of word that ought to be used to describe the ground of a planet which is not earth. Like so many of the old earth words, it has crept into the vocabulary of the empire. So they examined the terrain.

Across to their right they could see two round hillocks coming out of the ground itself. Between their own position and those two hillocks, there was an expanse of flat smooth rock, so flat and smooth that it was slippery and difficult to walk on. There were pinkish streaks among the rock, and it seemed that some of the chromatic tint from the atmosphere owed its origin to these. There were a number of white veins in the rock, which bore some kind of resemblance to marble, but the majority of it was grey. It gave an overall impression of greyness streaked with pink and white, rather than an overall impression of whiteness tinged with grey and pink, or an overall impression of pink streaked with grey and white.

Greyness was the dominant background shade; neither black nor white, but something midway between the two. It was a light rather than a dark grey, yet it could never had been so light that it might be mistaken for an off white.

An unusual creature rolls by the spacemen...

“Odd little devil, wasn’t he?”

“Odd is hardly the word for it,” said Ischklah.

“A wheel beast, I suppose,” said Bronet.

“Outside science fiction, I’ve never come across one of those,” said Korzaak. “I mean the classic science fiction, the 20th century stuff.”

“Um,” said Oski, as he watched the wheel beast departing. “Uum,” he said again.

“Well?” said Ischklah.

“I don’t know whether it is well,” said Bronet. “It may be far from well.”

A ship lands....

“How do we know that thing is real?” he demanded. “It might be a vision, a dream, a nightmare, a phantom. Perhaps we are seeing a ghost ship. It’s a mirage, a shadow, a vapour. It’s a visual fallacy, a delusion, an hallucination.”

“You’re rich in adjectives this morning,” said Bronet.

“How do we know it’s morning?” said Oski interrogatively.

“You’ve got a point there,” agreed Korzaak.

Oski pointed to the ship again.

“There you are,” he announced. “It’s a chimera. It’s a sick fancy, a piece of delirium; a castle in the air, a make-believe. It’s a day-dream, a piece of escapism. It’s something that came from the fabled land of Erewhon. It’s a bit of Shangri-La, a piece of Atlantis. It’s come from fairyland, part of the kingdom of Prester John. It’s not pie in the sky, but a rocket ship in the sky. It’s a Flying Dutchman of space. It’s an idle fancy, a myth, a fable – call it what you like.”

“There’s nothing much left to call it now that you’ve finished,” commented Bronet prosaically.

Aliens in the form of giant pseudopods have landed...

The things were odd, weird, grotesque. There was something horrible uncustomary and unwonted about them. They were completely unfamiliar. Their appearance was outlandish and extraordinary. There was something quite phenomenal about them. They were supernormal; they were unparalleled; they were unexampled. The shape of the aliens was singular in every sense. They were curious, odd, queer, peculiar and fantastic, and yet

when every adjective had been used on them, when every preternatural epithet had been applied to their aberrant and freakish appearance, when everything that could be said about such eccentric, exceptional, anomalous creatures had been said, they still remained indescribable in any concrete terms.

The aliens use a weird bell-shaped weapon against the men...

The air around them suddenly began to hum loudly and violently. The grey, white and pink veins of the smooth, slippery stone upon which they trod seemed to find the vibrations as intolerable as the humanoids did. The sound and the awareness of the vibrations were accompanied by a peculiar smell. It seemed to rise and fall in intensity with the noise and the frequency that was being released in their direction. There was no wind, no breeze to carry it, and yet, paradoxically, it was somehow being driven toward them, as though they were a nexus between it and the auditory effect. It was a fragrance, a savour, a peculiar odour. There was a redolence about it. It had a very specific aroma, a distinct bouquet. There was a distinct effluvium, a particular emanation. They were not just made aware of it by the normal olfactory processes; it seemed to come in through their ears as well.

It was a very strange light, a very peculiar and unusual light. Whether the strangeness and the peculiarity were occasioned by the weirdness of this apocryphal planet in Galaxy 666, or whether it was something that was entirely due to the aliens, they had no means of knowing.

There was an incandescence, a sheen, a gloss, a lustre; it seemed to be the very essence of light. It was blazing, dazzling, flaring prominently. It was a flame and more than a flame. It was as though a thousand flames were dancing together. A great halo of light shone around the bell-shaped end of the peculiar alien weapon; a rainbow of colouration, an entire riot of colour. The flashes were continuing, distinguished by fulguration and coruscation. Beams and rays scintillated and sparkled, while the pink, white and grey rocks beneath the alien weapon glinted and glittered as the light played on them. Twinkling, flickering and glimmering, the rocks turned to spangled tinsel and the light ate into them like fireflies eating into a summer twilight.

Then the light began to die down to a glow, a soft flush. It became lambent; it turned from a bright, flashing power source into a dull aurora. It was like the Gegenschein; it fluoresced and phosphoresced for a few seconds more and then, like a jack-o'-lantern or a will-o'-wisp, it died into

inexplicable invisibility.

And yet it died reluctantly. It was glimmering and flickering still, as though reluctant to say farewell. It was crepuscular, blurred and bleary; the weapon looked strangely leaden and lacked lustre. A kind of nebulous cloud remained around the bell. It was umbrageous and shadowy.

The men are paralyzed and carried away by the pseudopods to their space ship...

It was like going for a ride on the back of an animated haggis.

Eventually the paralysis wears off and the spacemen begin to explore the alien ship...

All around him were banks of complicated-looking machinery and control handles. They were not designed for hands with the advantage of prehensile thumbs. They were obviously meant to be “manipulated” if the term may be purloined, regardless of its itymological origin, by pseudopods.

Korzaak stood at the bottom of the alien staircase, feeling like truth at the bottom of a well. He looked up in the dim grey light of the alien ship. It was an odd sight; it made him feel rather like a splinter of wood about to be severed by the biting, keen blade of a brace and bit. He felt like a woodworm looking up at the drill as its rotation brought it closer and closer to him.

The spacemen seize the control room of the alien ship and begin negotiations with the pseudopods. (Oh, did I mention the aliens are telepathic, thus overcoming the language barrier?) They discuss an offer to be returned to a known planet...

“Hmm, ” said Oski. He was very good with his “hmms,” was Oski. They conveyed far more meaning on most occasions than an articulated sentence would have done.

They strike a bargain just at the moment the ship begins to be tossed about for no apparent reason. Bronet has formed a theory that Galaxy 666 exists in total chaos so that the rest of the universe can be ordered. Oski grasps the concept and explains to the aliens...

“This crazy galaxy is the price that the universe pays for order. 666, eh? By the seven green moons, it was well numbered! There’s something strangely capricious about this place. Just as our universe is a motivated universe, this

one is motiveless. The real universe, the universe to which we belong, has purpose, this is purposeless. Our universe is straight-forward; this one is whimsical, fanciful and fantastic. This is a temperamental galaxy, an hysterical galaxy, a mad galaxy. This is an insane, freakish, wanton, erratic, inconsistent galaxy; it's a completely unreasonable galaxy. It's undisciplined, refractory, uncertain and unpredictable. It's a volatile galaxy, a mercurial galaxy."

He turned round and shouted up the air vent:

"It's a frivolous galaxy; it's inconsistent and inconstant; it's variable; it's irresponsible and unreliable."

He suddenly collapsed on the floor of the alien ship, his arm across his face.

"This is a playful galaxy," he sobbed, "and we are the toys with which it plays."

At this point Bronet deliberately works himself into a incoherent frenzy and randomly pushes buttons and flips switches. This satisfies the chaotic nature of the galaxy and the ship escapes to Galaxy 665 where the aliens drop them off near known civilization.



Curse of the Khan

R. Lionel Fanthorpe

The final appearance of Fanthorpe in the Badger Supernatural series was in issue SN 105. Knowing his relationship with John Spencer was soon ending, he decided to have a little fun. The lead story was “Curse of the Khan” by R. Lionel Fanthorpe. The seven main characters are himself and six of his pseudonyms, including the four remaining “authors” in SN 105.

“Something more subtle than barbarian fury united the Golden Horde.”

IT was an ordinary sort of evening to begin with, I suppose, a mid-September Saturday; traffic was purring spasmodically past the study window – if I’d thought about it more I’d have had it at the back of the house overlooking the garden, but a lawn that’s a week overdue for a short back and sides depresses me. I looked up at the clockwork Frankenstein’s Monster on the marble mantelpiece. He moved a two inch arm in commiseration and I remember thinking he looked about as inspired as I felt. My gaze roved from Franky to the plastic lion, the gorilla from the same stable, a cardboard box of miniature rock samples labelled “Souvenir of the Peak District,” a “fossilised” watering can and a small inaccurate globe. A photograph and two more plastic figures completed the ensemble – human being (transparent, with all the inside machinery gaily showing its glossy paint to the anachronistic world) and skeleton (luminous variety which makes me wonder if he’s radio active, so I don’t sit too close to him!). Getting no inspiration from the mantelpiece collection I tried my other infallible(?) method of working up a plot. The basic equation is, typewriter plus fingers over the square root of plot equals story, equals *money*. I started working up a mild sweat; the car needed a tyre, I wanted a suit, assorted merchandisers who rashly supplied me with their wares wanted payment. Last week’s post had bills outnumbering letters by five to one and letters outnumbering cheques by the same ratio. But still no plot...

There was a ring at the front door bell. Temperament – whatever the hell that is – tried to sell me an interesting line in excuses about not being able to

work because of interruptions. Fact said: “You’re glad of it – admit it.” I left them arguing and answered the door.

It was dusk and the porch was in shadow, but the light from the hall glinted on a metallic war helmet. My first reaction was surprise, the second was laughter. I have friends with practical turns of humour; but there was no rubber mask under the helmet, no papiér maché werewolf, no cardboard leopard man; the flesh and blood reality was more than their equal in ferocity. Glaring eyes and snarling mouths are unfashionable with literary critics; I wasn’t exactly enthusiastic about them myself at that moment. The third reaction was pure unadulterated fright. This character was tall; he looked down at me from somewhere over the six foot mark. It was a cool evening but his arms were bare to the shoulder, muscular and hairy. The rest of him was covered in fur and leather, not his own though he looked mean enough to grow quills. The big right arm waved a sword of a pattern I’d never seen before – ugly and primitive – a deadly, lethal blade. There is artistry in a ceremonial sword, and a cold functional beauty about a well-turned military bayonet, but this sword had no message except death.

The worst of the fright went. This character was too stark to be real. Either I’d been overworking or... but I hadn’t had a drink all day. If I wasn’t crazy, he must be. With that sword and those muscles I knew I had to hit him first and hit him hard – preferably with a spanner. The face changed with incredible suddenness and he laughed. It was worse than the glaring and snarling.

That wild, hysterical crescendo of insane, cackling laughter rang in my ears like the carillon of hell. I took a pace back into the hall and laughter stopped as though it had been switched off mechanically.

“You disappoint me, sir. I had expected better things from a man who has written of so many horrors.” His voice was quiet, cultured mockingly superior.

“What is this?” I asked without any claim to originality.

“I have a message for you.” As he spoke he sheathed the sword and drew a small square of white card from under his leathers.

“Is this a publicity stunt?” I asked, wondering for an impossible moment if he was the latest in a line of snowmen, supermen, cardmen, and other Madison Avenue miracles. I also wondered if we had the product that won the prize. Maybe he was selling yoghurt? I was still pondering whether he was supposed to be a Mongol or a Tartar when he stepped back out of the

hall light and vanished into the dusk of the shrubbery. I took two half-hearted paces after him and hesitated. Suppose he was insane... waiting in the shrubbery with his primitive, nomadic sword? I went back inside and locked both the front doors. The white card lay in the palm of my hand like a challenge. It was a full minute before I turned it over and read:

You are invited to take part in a test of skill, courage, and intelligence by challenging Genghis Khan and his associates at Black Island Manor, off Veryan Bay.

I turned the card over again. The psychology of it was cunning, or else they knew me better than I knew myself. I suppose that outside the pages of fiction ninety-nine men out of every hundred would have thrown the thing away immediately or notified the police. I went over the events of the last few minutes. Had they really happened? Was it feasible that a medieval nomadic warrior had called with an invitation to God-alone-knew-what in some grim-sounding place off Veryan Bay? It wasn't feasible. I reached for the decanter and poured myself a stiff brandy, but Genghis Khan still didn't make sense. Only the mute evidence of the card testified to the reality of the visit.

I reached for the gazetteer and looked up Veryan Bay; it lay between Dodman Point and Nare Head, a few miles south-east of Truro. The card on the old mahogany table beside my typewriter seemed to twitch invitingly. It was a long way to go on a wild goose chase. Suppose Black Island Manor didn't even exist? I rummaged around the book-shelves for a Cornish guide that had been lying around "just in case" ever since a trip to St. Austell in 1952. Ten minutes browsing produced scant information, but enough to whet the appetite.

Black Island lay four miles off the rugged southern coast and was uninhabited at the time the guide was published. The ruins of the manor were extensive and there were several local traditions and superstitions centred on it. The island had been a naval fortress in Roman times and there were traces of a neolithic ruin on the southern cliff that might have been a shrine to an ancient British sea-god. Veneti traders had used it as a base and a Phœnician coin had been found in a cave. The total area was slightly under two square miles.

I replaced the guide book and started thinking again. This all seemed too good to be true. It was the ideal setting for a horror story, a "whodunit," a

smuggling saga. Black Island – even the name was dramatic – sounded the sort of place to attract authors like a magnet draws iron filings.

I was hatched under the sign of Aquarius – the Man Who Carries the Can – and even the vaguely ambiguous astrologers of the Sunday Spectaculars would agree that Aquarians are inclined to be moody and impulsive. I normally equate the scientific accuracy of the Zodiac with the pin and blindfold system of selecting horses, but I had to admit there was something in the “impulsive” label.

Within an hour of receiving the card I was packed, in the car and heading southwest. I had supper in a greasy-spoon lorry drivers café near Aylesbury and breakfast at Exeter. The roads were surprisingly clear considering there was still a month of the season to run, and I wound my battered pre-war three-and-a-half litre S.S. Jag. into Veryan village as the church clock struck ten. There was a pleasant little olde worlde café near the harbour and I strolled across for coffee and information. Two henna-rinsed spinsters who could not have been indigenous looked up with mild disapproval and then resumed their verbal destruction of somebody’s reputation in hushed whispers. An ancient mariner with a peg leg and a blue jersey that was longer than most contemporary skirts (I’m happy to say!) sat contemplating an empty mug with an air of infinite sadness. He smiled slowly as I came in, his salt beef complexion wrinkled into friendly creases around rheumy grey eyes. I sat at the table beside him.

“Good morning.”

“Good morning to you, zur. ’Tis a fine day.” The sad eyes regarded the empty mug meaningfully.

“Fine,” I agreed without undue cerebation. “Will you have some more?” I couldn’t see whether the brown dregs in the mug were tea or coffee, but what’s in a name?

“Thankee, zur. I’ll have coffee, please.” A plump middle-aged Cornish woman, with a complexion to match the sailor’s and ramified varicose veins under lisle stockings, came across to our table, smiled warmly and took our order. My coffee arrived in a dainty china cup which held slightly more than half peg-leg’s mug. Apparently he was a regular with special privileges.

“This is my first time in Veryan,” I began. “I’m interested in seeing Black Island. Do you know anyone with a boat who’d be willing to take me?”

“Ahh, zur, that’s a funny thing. You’re the fifth man to want the island in two days. I wondered when you came in if you was one of ’em.”

“One of whom?” I asked in bewilderment.

“The men who wanted the island,” answered pegleg. “You’ve got a similar sort o’ look.” He eyed me up and down carefully before continuing. “I’ll take ’ee for a pound,” he said at last. “I took two o’ the others, a little dark Welsh fella and a tall grey party with a strong Scottish accent.” He paused and pulled thirstily at his mug.

“What about the others?”

“Dan Trelawny took a big Londoner, built like a wrestler, and young Tregarth took the other man.”

“The other man, what was he like?”

“Curly red hair and an Irish voice,” answered the old fisherman.

“I don’t see any similarities.”

“You’m all got the same *look*,” he replied thoughtfully.

“What is it?”

“Curiosity and doubt, mixed up.”

“Can you expand that idea?”

“I knew a man once who tried to find King Arthur’s treasure in Lyonesse. He didn’t believe in it, but he still had to look. You five put me in mind o’ him.”

“When can we go?”

“When you like, zur. The boat’s ready and the bay’s calm as a pond this morning.”

“As soon as it suits you,” I began before remembering the car. “Is there a garage where I could store it?” I pointed through the window at the rakish outline of the three-and-a-half litre.

“Johnny Hawke’ll take it for you, zur. She’ll be safe wi’ him. I’ll show you where.” I was surprised at peg-leg’s alacrity as he led the way out of the café. We garaged the car and I walked beside him along the harbour wall. He pointed to a neat little corvel under the shelter of sea-weeded steps. Alaria and ceramium grew beside the ancient flight. I reflected that those steps had probably been there when Drake beat the Armada. We reached the boat and he started the oily old inboard with the skill of long practice; I settled back in the stern as the “Veryan Princess” chugged out across the bay at a steady seven knots.

The sky was clear, almost riviera blue, and the only punctuation was a low bank of fleecy white cloud away to the west. The smell of the sea was fresh and good, the lapping of the gentle waves strangely soothing. Five

minutes later I glimpsed Black Island. It stood stark and bare against the water, challenging and forbidding; it seemed a suitable setting for the character who had looked like Genghis Khan. The minutes passed slowly and the island looked increasingly forbidding as we drew nearer.

I began to have second thoughts. "How do I contact you when I want to come back?" I asked.

"There's a signal beacon on the cliff," he answered. "When we see a light or a column o' smoke, someone'll come if the water's calm."

"And if it isn't?" I could feel the vestigial remains of courage trickling out of my feet.

"'Fraid you'll have to wait, zur. The bay can get very rough this time o' year." I sat in undecided silence for a full minute. Go back and lose face or risk getting marooned out here with God-alone-knew-what? It was stubbornness or old-fashioned pride rather than guts that persuaded me to stay. We reached the island.

A flight of steps, even older than those in the harbour at Veryan, led up between steep black cliffs, and, even though the sea was calm elsewhere, there was a strong tide running against the tiny landing stage as though angrily trying to pluck it from the rocks.

"Mind how you go, zur." Pegleg handed me my case and I jumped to the landing stage. It shook ominously under the twelve-stone impact. He turned his boat and chugged away from the island while I stood hesitantly on the steps. Something about the speed with which he left the place was ominous, even in broad daylight. I began to climb the cliff stairs.

The lower steps were wet and weed-festooned, the treads badly eroded by the elements and worn by centuries of feet. It was more like the prelude to a Gothic horror novel or a de Sade fantasy than anywhere I had ever seen. If I had met a drowned zombie on those stairs it would have been no real surprise; Franky would have been at home there; the atmosphere would have been salubrious for Count Dracula. I was relieved to reach the top intact.

A small, fast-walking figure came towards the cliff top as I stood looking round for the manor. His brisk walk became a trot as he hurried towards me. He looked about thirty-five with a sallow complexion and a shock of almost blue-black hair. I put his height at five-foot-five or six. He was as thin as a rapier and every movement had the characteristic springiness of a lightweight boxer. This man was a classical example of the ectomorph, a dynamic bundle of nervous energy. His deep, dark eyes glowed from a thin

face and his smile, though quick, looked genuine.

"How do you do?" He had a broad Welsh accent. "May I introduce myself? Lerteth – Oben Lerteth." We shook hands and I noted that his grip was firm despite the lightness of his build.

"Fanthorpe," I said. He snapped his fingers.

"The supernatural writer?"

"Guilty."

"Me too," he smiled. Memory came in with a rush. Oben Lerteth, *the* Oben Lerteth, author of "Lord Of The Crag," "Reading Room," "The Border Raider" and a score of other literary gems with a Welsh background.

"Somebody seems to be collecting authors," I grinned.

"You'd say that again if you knew who else was here," answered the diminutive Welshman. I raised a quizzical eyebrow. He held up a slender, artistic hand and began ticking off points on his fingers. "There are five of us now you're here: Peter O'Flinn the Irishman – I think 'Isles of The Blessed' in S.N. 97 was one of his best, Neil Balfort – he wrote 'The Laird', and the big Londoner who writes the Val Stearman series. What's his name now? He looks so much like a real life Stearman that I tend to forget he has a name of his own."

"Fane," I prompted, "Bron Fane."

"That's him," exclaimed Oben excitedly. "Well over six feet tall and as heavy as you and I together."

"What do the others look like?" I was remembering the fisherman's descriptions.

"Balfort is tall, grey and dour. The O'Flinn is about your build with curly red hair and freckles – a typical Irishman in manner, friendly, talkative and good company."

We began walking together along a small path worn through the cliff-top grass. A pair of ominous black gulls wheeled overhead, screamed and veered away from the island.

"Unnerving creatures, the gulls," volunteered Oben.

"Very," I agreed. My curiosity was brimming. "How did you come to be here?" I asked him.

"This!" He pulled a card from his pocket. It was identical to the one I had received. I told him briefly how mine had arrived.

"Mine came on the road near my home in Portmadoc," he answered. "Not far from the toll-bridge; do you know it?" I nodded a little wily.

“I had a holiday there once. It rained most of the time and I frequently scraped the car on concealed roadside boulders. It’s not an experiment I’d care to repeat.” He became suddenly defensive.

“Wales is a wonderful place for holidays,” he barked.

“I prefer Yarmouth, but then, as a Norfolk man, I’m biased.”

“There’s peace and solitude in Wales,” he said scathingly.

“That’s the trouble,” I answered grimly. “I like company, pubs, fish and chips, fun fairs, girls in – or out of – bikinis, theatres, cinemas...” He looked at me in horror for a moment.

“You’re a Philistine,” he whispered aghast. “An extroverted barbarian.”

“I admit it.” We walked on in acute silence for a few yards.

“I’m sorry,” he volunteered. “I had no right to speak to you like that. You have as much right to your way of life as I have to mine. It is wrong for man to condemn the tastes of his fellow. A week in a crowded, popular resort would come close to destroying me. I am a man who needs to be alone.” With an effort I refrained from the obvious, puerile crack about deodorants, which flashed unbidden across the screen of consciousness. It dropped back disgruntledly into the mental saloon-bar spittoon where I store most of my jokes.

“You were on the point of telling me how you got here,” I reminded him.

“Oh yes, my car broke down on the Talsarnau side of the toll-bridge and as I was peering under the bonnet a stranger stepped out of the boulders on the eastern side of the road. He was either the same man you described or one very like him. Like your courier, he laughed wildly and then handed me the invitation. Before I could question him he had vanished among the rocks and undergrowth.”

“And your curiosity played the same trick as mine?”

“I’m afraid so – and here we are.”

I stood beside the little Welshman and surveyed the ruins of the manor. The outer wall was a broken octagon giving frequent glimpses of a garden and courtyards, filled with crumbling statues and mossy pavements. The central gates had once been impressive, now they hung drunkenly from tottering pillars of black stone.

We passed the broken gates and walked over cracked, overgrown stones between dark shrubberies and lifeless fountains in whose pools dark life moved sluggishly beneath oily green waters.

“Has anything happened since you arrived?” I asked.

“There was a message on the table in the saloon; that is all – unless there has been a new development while I was meeting you.”

“What was the message?”

“‘When all are ready I will come to you – Genghis Khan’,” he quoted.

“A laconic host.”

“We have no means of guessing how many ‘all’ is supposed to mean,” he said glancing at me sideways; it was part question and part statement.

“I’d guess seven, if I had to guess anything, if only for its traditional mysticism.”

“Three we’ve passed,” he agreed, “so seven or nine it must be.”

“Who else can he have in mind?” I asked.

“We have something of an international flavour,” he answered. “I can think of several other writers with a cosmopolitan outlook.”

“Such as?”

“Rene Rolant the Edgar Allan Poe of Marseilles, for one, and Elton T. Neef, the Manhattan Magus, for another. But the list is long. We could consider Olaf Trent and Robin Tate; Neil Thanet, Thornton Bell, the Barton brothers, Lee and Erle...” He broke off and shrugged despairingly.

“You’re knowledgeable on the subject of supernatural authors,” I commented.

“I believe in being well informed on the opposition, look you.” He smiled enigmatically.

“Do you live entirely from your work?” I asked.

“From writing? Bless you, no.” His voice dropped to a sepulchral whisper. “I’m also a medium.” He looked sensitive enough to be psychic, I thought, as I looked at him again below the crumbling, unrecognisable coat of arms above the manor door.

“How about you?” he asked penetratingly.

“This will add to your conviction that I’m a barbarian,” I grinned, “I wrestle when there’s a chance.”

“*Professionally?*” he whispered as though it were the last word in infamy or blasphemy.

“Semi-pro., yes. Welter-weight.”

“I’m so sorry.” He paused breathing deeply. “I deplore physical violence of any sort. It retards the development of the soul. Fighting for *money*...” I could see from his expression that I had already dropped several notches in

Lerteth's estimation. I decided to drop a few more.

"Isn't professional mediumship much the same thing?"

"How could you suggest it?" He was aghast. "I give hope and encouragement to the fearful and the bereaved."

"Fine, so why charge for it?"

"The labourer is worthy of his hire'," he protested.

"So is the fighter; so is the entertainer."

His face contorted for a moment. "I am sorry, I am trying to impose my opinion again. It must be in the blood, you know. My father was a preacher at a village chapel for many years; he felt it was his duty to impose righteousness on his congregation."

"It's a view that appears to be declining," I said dryly.

I appreciated Lerteth's courtesy in coming to meet the boat, but I was beginning to tire of his company. We entered the house and drew a hingeless door to behind us. It leant against the wall like a tired nuclear disarmament on all night picket duty at a disused air base. We walked forward into a musty corridor, open to the sky in most places. The plaster was flaking off the walls and the ancient reeds and laths of the ceiling were exposed in those few places where it existed. Two decaying oil paintings dangled insecurely from the mouldering picture rail. The first showed a battle scene in the eighteenth century, the second depicted a dark Victorian face with mutton chop whiskers and homicidal eyes. Maybe the sitting had gone on too long and the expression was desperation – I tried to be charitable.

"This is the salon," announced Oben, opening a door on the left. I was glad to leave the smell of musty decay that clung to the cheerless corridor. The salon was a corrupt English copy of a Louis Quinze but it was in a better state than the corridor. Most of the ceiling was intact and the room above appeared to be waterproof. A rotting tapestry in indistinguishable colours seemed oddly anachronistic. I tried unsuccessfully to make out the scene. Three men sat playing cards at a gilt table with a leg missing. It was propped on a packing case to compensate for the deficiency. The legend "Golden Drop Plums" could still be read on the stencilling. The three men glance up as I came in with Lerteth. He introduced us quickly and I dragged up a rickety chair. Fane scooped up his winnings, winked broadly and nodded to the fourth place.

"Do you play solo?"

"Occasionally." He began dealing.

I stared at six useful trumps, ace high, and a trio of kings. It looked reasonable. The Irishman passed; I called. Balfort grunted something about misere and Fane passed. I looked up at Peter. He led clubs high; I disposed of the king and watched the Scot relieve himself of a jack. Fane flipped the ace on and led back the two. O'Flinn had the three and I laid the five. With an audible sigh of relief Balfort played the four. I scraped up the trick ruefully and was about to lay the six when Lerteth called from the window.

"Somebody's coming down the drive."

"Recognise him?" asked Fane without looking up.

"Big man, with a white jacket and stetson," answered Lerteth.

"Could be Neef," said Bron, pushing his chair back and crossing to the window. He took his cards with him as though it were a long ingrained habit. It gave me a rough indication of the kind of card company he was used to. There was a crash as the front door went down.

"Well I'll be doggoned!" exploded a rich Yankee voice from the hall. Elton T. Neef didn't come in, he made an entrance. His almost luminous white tuxedo made the room look drab. His stetson challenged the sagging chandelier. He wore a vivid check shirt and a pair of green trousers that fitted like a film cowboy's outfit. To have called him flamboyant would have been a cretinous understatement. He would have distracted attention from the bubble dancers at a Chicago stag party. He introduced himself as though anxious to comply with the instructions in "How To Win Friends And Influence People." As he shook hands with Fane I compared the two men for size. The Londoner was a shade taller and considerably broader than the American, but Neef's clothes produced an optical illusion which almost reversed the position.

The American came straight to the point. "What is this Genghis Khan stuff?" he demanded. We exchanged the stories of our invitation cards. In one way or another, someone dressed like a nomadic medieval Asian had passed a card to each of us. Fane had got his on a nearly deserted tube station; O'Flinn had met the courier outside his local shebeen in the small hours of the morning; Neef's man had appeared on a Comanche Reservation while he was looking for something authentic to photograph. It didn't tell us much.

There was the throb of a helicopter from above our heads and Fane dashed outside to look. A dark blob – roughly anthropoid – was swinging down on a rope. He removed his beret and waved it cheerfully at Fane. The American emerged, removed his stetson and waved back enthusiastically.

“You know him?” asked Bron.

“Sure I do; that’s Rene Rolant. I met him in Marseilles last year. He’s the best guide to Riviera nightlife in the whole goddamned Mediterranean. Boy! He took me places Frank Harris never heard of. He’s the best.”

“Revolting,” whispered Lerteth. I grunted noncommittally. Of the two I greatly preferred the American. The volatile Frenchman dropped lightly from his rope while still three feet above our heads. He landed with an authentic roll and I admired his breakfall technique. He was somewhere between forty and fifty and a bullet scar on his left cheek looked suspiciously like evidence of an active part in the Maquis. His hair was thinning and receding but what remained was iron grey and had a tendency to curl. He was about five foot nine which gave him a shade over O’Flinn and myself, although he was not so thick set. His eyes were his most exciting and attention-riveting feature. They were black as wet coal and seemed to flash with Latin fire. I began to appreciate what Neef had meant. A man like Rolant obviously knew his way around. While I watched, the helicopter veered away and disappeared towards the French coast.

“No papers,” grinned the Frenchman. “I am regarded as undesirable because I was a *souteneur* during the war. It was the simplest way to get information from the Boche officers. The British War Office were very glad of my information, but they preferred to ignore the biological details of my methods.” He laughed cynically.

Neef effected the introductions and explained all he knew of the situation.

“Fascinating,” murmured the Frenchman. “All you need to know now is how I got my invitation. Yesterday I was in the *Place de Pigalle* looking up some old friends, you understand. It was late when I left, say an hour before dawn. The men of my world had finished their business, the respectable citizens were not yet awake. It was very quiet, very still. Suddenly, I hear hoof beats in an alleyway. I stop; I look. There is this maniac on a horse, dressed like a Tartar lord. For a moment I wonder if I have a mad cossack enemy. Then he does what he did with you. He laughs; he gives the card; he gallops away. I do not often look for a gendarme; I do not love the Sureté, but I would have been happy to see the whole corps at that moment.” His voice dropped to a low whisper. “Things were not good in the war. I have not led what you call a sheltered life, but *sacré bleu*, I have never felt so strangely afraid as I did at that moment.” He paused and looked at his six companions.

"I have a friend who sprays crops. He brought me as you saw. That is all I can add."

"Let's go back into the house," said Lerteth in a strange, faraway voice, "I have a feeling we are complete." We moved quietly into the salon again, and sat around the rickety table.

"What puzzles me," began Fane, "is how this character can get from the States to Wales, to Norfolk, London, Paris, Ireland and Cornwall without apparently bothering about the time process which hangs so heavily above the heads of mortal men."

"You have an important point there," agreed Rolant.

"We have two alternatives," boomed the American. "Either Genghis is a superb illusionist or he's the first real magician I've encountered."

"Do you believe in magic?" asked Oben challengingly.

"I don't know," broke in Fane. "I make a living from writing on it but if it comes to the push I genuinely can't decide. I think the poet is probably right when he says: 'There are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamed of in our philosophies' but that's still a long way from being a whole-hearted supporter of the paranormal." He looked at O'Flinn.

"Did you ever see an Irishman who didn't believe in the Little People?" asked the copper-haired son of Erin with a twinkling grin that might have graced the face of a clurichaun. There was a sudden noise of galloping hooves from the western side of the house.

"Ten to one that's Genghis," grunted Fane.

"I'll fix him," boomed Neef and drew a massive Colt from under his dazzling tuxedo.

There was an aura of the Alamo about him for a moment as he brandished the six-chambered widowmaker. I followed Fane towards the door of the salon. Rolant leapt over the sill and ran around towards the rear of the house. The Irishman paused in the corridor outside the salon and picked up a sinister looking thickthorn shillelagh which I had not previously noticed in the gloom. Oben clasped his hands in an attitude of concentration and walked after us as purposefully as a Buddhist priest keeping an appointment with a do-it-yourself cremation kit. Balfort turned left as we reached the door and a minute later I heard him shouting something to the Irishman. It sounded like the ancient Gaelic tongue and the words were meaningless as far as I was concerned. Both men reappeared from behind the corner of the ruined house.

"Nothing to be seen, begorrah?" exclaimed O'Flinn.

“Nozzings at all!” agreed the ebullient Rolant, appearing from the other side.

“Damn it, I heard a horse,” persisted Neef as he reluctantly holstered the gargantuan Colt. Fane studied the ground near the salon window.

“I can see Rene’s prints clearly,” he murmured, “but nothing else.”

“Then our visitor is not from this world,” sighed Lerteth.

“He could still be a clever illusionist,” I argued without too much conviction.

“I’m waiting, gentlemen,” came a summons from the interior. The unexpectedness of the sound startled Lerteth, who jumped visibly and clutched dramatically at his lapels as though to steady a wildly beating heart. I felt myself growing tense; stomach nerves were coiling like mainsprings; my throat felt strangely dry; a careless wine waiter had dropped an ice cube down the back of my shirt – gravity ceased to function and the cube slid slowly up again before Newton reasserted himself.

“That sounds like the man who brought my card,” said Fane ponderously. He spoke as though he wanted to hear a human voice. The words and their import were secondary.

“Shall we go?” asked the Irishman. His knuckles whitened around the handle of the shillelagh. I gulped and swallowed something that tasted like fear. A voice that I didn’t recognise as mine said, “Okay.” Fane went first, a huge human shield. O’Flinn and I followed him a pace to the rear. Rolant bounced toward us; his eyes flashed like sparking plugs. Neef had his gun out again. I heard the click as the hammer came back. I hoped his nerves were steady. His hand didn’t tremble, anyway, and that was considerable consolation. There was something disconcerting in the idea of a cocked forty-five a few feet from my back. I glanced round a Balfort, grey and grim in the gloomy passage. Lerteth came last. The gaze of his deep, dark, psychic eyes seemed to penetrate the mystery of the salon’s shrouding walls.

There was a nerve shattering crash as Fane flung open the door. We blinked a little in the light. A solitary figure sat at the broken table. I read the words “Golden Drop Plums” on the prop beside his leg and wanted to laugh. Genghis Khan and a derelict packing case just didn’t integrate; they didn’t fit; the whole damned thing was so incongruous... It had assumed the proportions of a bizarre comedy thriller. Films I had seen years ago flashed vividly across the screen of memory: “Abbott And Costello Meet The Ghosts.” Was there a thread of reality running through it all, or was this a colossal nightmare in

which the seven of us had somehow become involved? As I stood staring at the strange figure beside the table I wondered if I was the only reality. Had I been writing supernatural thrillers for so long that I could no longer distinguish fact from fantasy? Were Lerteth and the other men real, or figments of an over-active imagination? I stared hard at my companions. None of them wavered; none of them dissolved in the cold solvent of reality. They seemed as substantial as the house, the rocks of the island... as substantial as I was myself. A line of the bard went through my mind, chasing the memory of the Abbott and Costello film into the limbo of forgotten things: "We are such stuff as dreams are made of and our little life is rounded with a sleep." I couldn't recall the words exactly. Was it "life" or "day" that was rounded with a sleep? It seemed disproportionately important. My thoughts were cut short by the wild barbaric figure at the table.

"Sit down, gentlemen. I have some explaining to do. When you have heard what I have to say I will issue my challenge." His incredible eyes roved around us, holding each in turn spellbound. Even the flamboyant American subsided into a man in a white suit. I felt overawed by the stranger. Rolant seemed to shrink into himself like a dried garlic clove. Balfort grew older and greyer in the Khan's presence. The twinkle died in O'Flinn's eyes. Lerteth's psychic probe struck something hard and impenetrable. Big Bron Fane set his great square jaw and glowered undecidedly at the weird figure in the costume of a nomadic warrior from the Middle Ages. We looked like miscreant schoolboys in the head-master's office.

"Thank you for coming," began the Khan. The words were strangely sincere. "It means that life will hold a little interest for me, once again." He heaved a sigh that almost made me pity him. "Can you understand what boredom is?" he asked softly.

"I've been bored," said Fane. He was the only one of us who seemed to approach the Khan on anything like equal terms at this stage.

"You can know nothing of true boredom," sighed Genghis. "You with your three-score and ten mortal years, you with your human frailties, your accidents, your diseases... Death, the Great Adventure, is never far from you." He paused again, dramatically. "I have paid the price of unutterable folly. The curse of immortality is upon me."

"You're joking," contradicted Fane.

The grim figure of the Khan shook its head. "I was never more serious, and never is a longer time than any of you can contemplate." He looked at us

searchingly. "Time is a road you travel only once. You are pawns on a cosmic chess board, single pieces on a checker board. I am a king, I travel back and forth... forever. The familiar road is the last refinement in self-destruction. I can transcend time and space. Only the future is unknown to me. The past is as familiar as a well-trodden garden. Pleasure does not lie in the familiar. Enjoyment is an attribute of surprise. The pursuit of happiness is linked with danger. The ultimate danger is death; for me this no longer exists. My psyche is eviscerated because nothing I have encountered for millennia can harm me. I have tried the natural disasters like a man tries rare foods and exotic wines." He spread his hands on the table. "I have tasted the champagne of volcanoes, the claret of war, the dry graves of famine, the absinthe of the earthquake and the liqueur of fire. The sobriety of immortality refused to leave me, despite them all. These hands have embraced lepers. Once I kissed a woman dying of smallpox. I have clasped plague victims as though they were long lost brothers. I have swum in sewers in hope of infection; I have leapt into whirlpools and maelstroms. I have flung myself under chariots and gathered armfuls of spears to my body, as other men might gather rosebuds. I have drunk poison that could corrode the Alps. Yet I remain as you see me now... trapped in a body that cannot die."

"A lot of men would be grateful for your complaint," I said drily.

"You think so?" he sneered.

"Undoubtedly," broke in the American. "The commercial possibilities are..."

"Money! Fool!" snarled the Khan viciously. "What use is money? Are you an idiot who collects green papers? I have all time and space at my disposal. I can go where I like; I can take what I please. No millionaire lives as I live."

He crashed his great fists together angrily. It was an oddly frightening gesture, intended, I thought, to show his imperviousness to pain. "Money is a medium of power, nothing more. I have all the power a man could ask... more than a sane man would ask. The pursuit of money gives men ambition. When money is of no consequence life has no meaning. Why play a game when all the while you cannot lose? If I need money I travel through time to an unguarded moment and take all I can carry. I can sell secrets worth the treasure of Atlantis or all the rubies of the East. *Money!*" He spat expressively under the rickety table. His saliva turned to a strangely symbolic globe in the dust at our feet. Here was a man who could spit worlds derisively, I thought,

and shuddered accordingly.

“How do we fit into all this?” asked Fane quietly. There was more strength in his deep quiet voice than in the Khan’s melodramatic histrionics.

“A novel is a slice of life?” It was part question, part statement. He looked at us inquiringly.

“That’s one definition,” I answered guardedly.

“It must have conflict?” He was throwing it to us as a comment, waiting for an answer. His conversational style was disconcerting. There was something vaguely socratic about it. He made me feel as if he were a lecturer at a tutorial group-meeting trying to elicit information from ill-prepared students.

“It must have conflict,” conceded Neef.

“Man versus man, man versus beast, man versus environment or any permutation of all three?” he challenged.

“You’re beginning to sound like a do-it-yourself plot guide for young writers,” chuckled Fane, and the Khan’s aggressive features contorted angrily for a second.

“Perhaps,” he choked. Then his expression changed and he gave us the superior look again, the O’Brien to Winston Smith look from “1984.” “I like your sense of humour,” he continued coldly. A smile played around his lips for a second or two, but there was no reflection of it in his eyes. “My only pleasure now is vicarious,” he went on.

“Even physically?” asked Bron with a raised eyebrow. I laughed and the Khan rounded on me savagely. “Sex is as unimportant as money to a man who can take any woman he wants – from any period of history. Cleopatra or Cressida, Helen of Troy or some twentieth century film star...” He sighed.

“You must be the ultimate Valentino if you can attract universally,” said Bron softly, mockingly.

“Who said anything about *attracting*? I take what I want by force... in money or flesh. Courtship and romance are for the weak and the spiritless.”

“I think I begin to see your problem,” said Balfort, speaking for the first time. “You have satiated your desire for sex and conflict. There is nothing left except the problem of passing time.”

“You are the oldest of the group. You understand better than the others,” said the Khan. His voice was almost gentle.

“You have come to arrange a contest for us,” went on Balfort.

“I have.” The Khan was smiling now.

“Why are you dressed as a nomad?” asked the Scot.

“Once, centuries ago, I involved myself in the Mongol wars. It is of no consequence, but the role suits me, don’t you think?”

“Are you still susceptible to vanity?” asked Fane.

“I don’t think so,” sighed the Khan. “I can pretend to a little vanity occasionally, but it is a poor shadow of the vanished reality.”

“How long have you had this power?” asked Balfort interestedly.

“Since the days of Lemuria, the vanished land in the Indian Ocean. I lived in Atlantis for a time, then Troy. I have passed my time in Phœnicia and Carthage. Once I was a member of Caligula’s court.”

“Does your power stem from magic or science?” I asked.

“It would be difficult to explain to you, because of the way your western minds work in the Age of Materialism. Science and magic are sisters under the skin. Shall we say that I am acquainted with the family?”

“Are you a native born Lemurian?” asked Bron.

The Khan shook his great head. “I am not even native to your quaint little planet,” he retorted.

“Then how?” I began.

“Your curiosity pleases me,” he answered. “Briefly, I was born millennia ago on a planet revolving around Aldebaran. For crimes you would not even begin to understand I was exiled here, and the curse of immortality was placed upon me. I have suffered for my crimes, but my punishment is far from over. Often I pray that they will bring me the sweet balm of death, but they are merciless. Don’t you think an agonised mind is as worthy of euthanasia as an agonised body?” He asked the question rhetorically and none of us answered him.

“What have you planned for us?” asked the American.

“What indeed?” echoed Genghis. “A contest such as even I have never seen before, a contest which would have gladdened the blood-soaked heart of Caligula and delighted Nero to the verge of ecstasy.”

“It sounds promising,” said Balfort dourly. I wanted to laugh at his laconic humour, but a sense of awe restrained me.

“You seven are very remarkable men,” said the Khan, quietly. His eyes held each of us in turn. “Bron Fane – you have the strength and tenacity of a wild bull; Oben Lerteth – yours is the gift of second sight; Peter O’Flinn – in you there lives the eternal reckless daring of the traditional Celtic hero; Neil Balfort – you have the wisdom of age and experience and the steady

character of the dour northern races; Elton Neef – yours is the vigour of the dynamic extrovert and the physical courage of the mountain lion; Rene Rolant – in you the Latin fires burn brightly, combining ruthless daring with Mediterranean violence and mercurial impetuosity.” The Khan paused and looked at me. He read the unspoken question in my eyes.

“What have I got?” I challenged. Sudden anger welled up as I stared back into his mocking, powerful face.

“You are the leader,” he said quietly.

“Why?” I challenged. “*Why me?*”

His claw-like index finger touched the golden pin in my left lapel. “You have heard of Hobbes’ Leviathan, the headless social monster?”

“Of course.”

“That is why you must lead them. Without you they are doomed. It would be as if they did not even exist.”

“What’s the badge?” asked Rolant, eyeing the gold blob.

“Mensa,” I answered softly.

“Then he’s right,” said the Frenchman. “You must lead us, otherwise we are a headless monster, as he says. You must plan our side of whatever campaign he has in store.”

“That’s your contribution,” agreed Balfort.

“You’re the ideas man,” said Neef.

“All right,” I said suddenly. “What’s the challenge, Genghis Khan?”

There was a tense, electrical silence for a time. The Khan rose, stretched himself with infuriating deliberation and took a pace around the salon.

“I have seven ‘creations’ to oppose your team. I shall introduce them to you and then throw a force field around the island for twenty-four hours. At the end of that period I shall return. If you have survived, you have won and there the matter will end. If you lose...”

“Yes, if we lose?” I asked.

“The matter will also be ended,” said the Khan slowly. “You will be dead.”

“Wheel ’em in,” I ordered grimly, sounding a great deal more optimistic than I felt.

The Khan made a mystic pass in the air. There was a strange shimmering vibration. Something seemed to fall through a hole in the sky.

“Teleportation,” he explained. We stared through the salon window at the first of the Khan’s team. “I shall keep them trapped inside individual

forcefields until it is time to begin,” he added. We looked in frozen silence at the black shape outside the window. Once it had been a man, a negro slave possibly, now it was a walking corpse. Tatters of flesh and rags hung to its skeletal form. Sightless sockets turned in our direction as we studied the decomposing skull.

“One of the Walking Dead,” explained the Khan, “in short – a zombie. This one is quite genuine, from the Jamaican slave period. Had you guessed?”

“Yes,” I affirmed coldly.

“Number two,” announced the Khan. He made a further mystical pass with his clawlike hands. The sky seemed to shimmer again. Reality dissolved for a second; something weird and ungainly flapped down from nowhere and took its place beside the zombie. “Transylvania – 1711,” said the Khan in the voice of a connoisseur pronouncing his verdict upon an antique bureau. We stared out at a disgruntled thing which flapped a black cloak in the twilight and seemed uncomfortable in the vestiges of day. The last of the light gleamed on two hideous fangs protruding over its lower lip. The eyes, beneath black, beetling brows, glowed like coals. The hair was arranged in the traditional style of an operatic Mephistopheles.

“Is that real?” asked Bron incredulously.

“As real as anyone or anything on this island,” answered the Khan.

“My God!” exclaimed the Scot.

“Number three,” announced the Khan. His passes in the darkening air heralded the arrival of a raging thing that clawed violently against the forcefield in which he had trapped it temporarily. It was difficult to make out a shape in the dim light, but I thought it looked vaguely anthropomorphic and vaguely lupine at the same time.

“Werewolf!” blurted the Welshman.

“Correct, Lerteth,” said the Khan. “It is indeed a werewolf. I came across this one in Austria at the turn of the last century. You might well say it is among the newest of my pets.”

“I’d always regarded most of my literary creations as fiction,” said Rolant breathlessly. His Mediterranean eyes were rivetted on the snarling fury of the werebeast.

“And now they have come home to roost,” smiled the Khan. “I felt that somehow it was poetic justice to select a group of science-fiction and supernatural authors who do not really believe in their own creation to be the

subjects of my contest. It has a certain whimsy, a certain aptness, don't you think?"

"I think you're mad," said Fane quietly, but with a deep conviction.

"That's a harsh term. I much prefer to be regarded as eccentric," replied the khan. He smiled again, but it was a humourless contortion of the face.

"My next item is a ghouL." He spoke like the *maitre de la Maison* in some great fashion house introducing a new creation. In a way he was probably right; there was a perverted satanic artistry about his collection. "They are most rare, you know. Writers so often confuse the genuine article with some hungry necrophiliac harmlessly indulging his appetites. The adjective ghoulish is too loosely applied. It has lost much of its force. But I intend to correct the situation in your minds, if not universally. In the unlikely event of any of you surviving this little comedy I expect your literary treatment of the ghouL will be more deserving of so significant a subject. Behold!" We beheld. And the ghouL beheld us. It had eyes like a vulture waiting for something to die so that it could eat. It had a face like every nightmare I ever had after too much stilton and stout last thing at night. It was a cartoonist's horror caricature gone strangely sour at night. It looked so corrupt I felt as if I could smell it, despite the field on which it was trapped. Apart from those general impressions, the actual shape was hard to describe in the darkness. It seemed a hybrid between a Babylonian lion and a griffin. Medusa had married her Cyclops and this was their Caliban progeny.

We were still staring helplessly at the snarling fangs of the ghouL when Genghis made his fifth pass. This time the horror appeared gradually. It crystallised very slowly into the shape of a crinolined woman – minus her head. The magyar-sleeved arms moved up weirdly to the place where the head ought to have been and adjusted an invisible hat – perhaps a crown.

"God," spluttered Rolant, "*c'est formidable!*" His bilingual oaths seemed strangely incongruous. The made the spectre incongruous too. I laughed. It didn't sound hearty, like third row Palladium, but it was good enough to irritate Genghis. I felt better after looking at the angry frustrated face. It was the most minuscule victory imaginable, and it was Rene's rather than mine, but nevertheless I had accomplished *something*. I had laughed at one of Khan's monsters.

"Tower of London, sixteenth century?" I asked. His irritation grew more marked.

"The wraith of Ann Boleyn," he declaimed loudly, as though trying to

retrieve the situation.

“You could have fooled me,” said Neef. We all laughed again, with the exception of Lerteth. It seemed that the supernatural was too scared to raise a smile on the Welshman’s prim features.

“What do you say, Oben?” I had to challenge him directly, something deep down was forcing me to make an issue of it.

“I say we must realise our responsibilities,” answered the Welshman gravely. “This is no laughing matter. We are on the brink of mortal combat with unknown foes...”

“Is he on our side?” asked Neef. It was obvious that the American found Lerteth even less amiable than I did. With the opposition as it was, I decided we couldn’t afford the political luxury of an internecine split.

“He’s entitled to his point of view,” I said coldly.

Neef looked at me in amazement. “For God’s sake! You don’t agree with him, do you?”

“By no means, but I still respect his right to his opinion.”

“Thank you,” said the Welshman gravely. “A bold stand.”

“Voltaire said it first... and better,” I apologised.

The headless queen glided to and fro inside the narrow confine of her force field like a moored balloon tugging restlessly at its anchor cable. She was less repulsive than her four consorts but I didn’t think she’d exactly boost our morale if she got loose inside the salon. Obviously Genghis regarded the headless wraith as a kind of fifth column, maybe a propaganda machine – a sort of headless Hess and decapitated Goebbels?

“What’s the next object?” asked Balfort dourly. He raised a quizzical brow at the Khan.

“Animal, vegetable or mineral?” challenged Fane.

“Your impersonation of the Crazy Gang is a pathetic attempt to conceal your fear,” said the Khan drily and not entirely without truth. “My sixth selection may change your minds.” He made his inevitable mystical passes in the air.

“My money’s on Lon Chaney as the Phantom of the Opera – unless he’s got hold of a Yeti,” said O’Flinn brightly. We all laughed dutifully, but the Khan’s shaft had gone home. Most of our laughter was a thinly unsuccessful attempt to disguise our fear.

“Number six!” announced the Khan with theatrical ostentation. She was a hag – a witch to be more precise. A red-eyed cat crouched on her shoulder,

a willow-twigg broom rested impatiently on the ground beside her as though impatient to be aloft. Her conical hat looked like a black volcano. Her face, mercilessly clouded by the gloom, was a ruined mask of flesh. She gave a cackling laugh and our own desperate laughter died away. This sound was the quintessence of evil mockery. It was fiendish. There was the smell of brimstone about her. Cruelty and dark power surrounded her like an impenetrable garment.

“One especially for you, Balfort,” sneered the Khan. “She is eighth century Scottish, almost contemporary with your ill-fated MacBeth.”

“Very droll,” commented Balfort laconically.

“Time presses,” answered the Khan. “Here is the last of my collection – a hill troll from beyond from beyond the eastern mountains, old when Cathay was young, a survivor from a period that has been described as ‘Middle Earth’.”

“Is he the captain?” I asked awkwardly. For some odd reason it seemed important to know who led the opposition.

“He is the oldest; he shall lead them,” announced Genghis dramatically.

I looked at the troll as it leant heavily against the sides of its force field. The brute must have stood twenty feet tall in the darkening night. Its huge head was almost as conical as the witch’s hat. The eyes glowed with a strange green luminescence, like poison emeralds in a forbidden temple. The nose was a squat, truncated thing athwart the grotesque face, and pendulous lips revealed tombstone teeth. This, I thought grimly, was the captain of the eldritch team that opposed mine. I wondered vaguely how David must have felt as he looked at Goliath across the valley of challenge. The Philistines had only been ten foot six – a mere pygmy beside the troll of Black Island. Besides, there was no sign of a sling in the salon. I felt that abdication had a lot to commend it.

“The time is ripe,” boomed the Khan theatrically. “Let battle commence!” With a strange vibrating shudder that shook the fabric of reality until it resembled the join lines in the first cinerama films, the strange creature in nomadic battle dress vanished as though he had never been. The restraining force-fields vanished with him. The troll and his minions were loose.

With a wild shrieking battle cry they poured towards the salon like barbarian hordes of Huns and Goths bent on pillaging Rome. There was a strange sense of unreality about them. For a few split seconds I couldn’t bring

myself to accept them as *real* in any normal or absolute sense.

This all seemed to be happening to someone else. Seven other men... Yul Brynner and his gunslingers... the legendary Samurai... I looked around the salon coldly and dispassionately. Thoughts came with surprising clarity and vividness. It reminded me of Huxley's descriptions of peyotl visions... a sense of heightened perception. A voice I didn't immediately recognise as my own was saying: "We can't defend the salon... or the house. Make for the gardens." Then there were seven running men – I supposed I was one of them. The sense of dissociation and disorientation persisted for perhaps a minute more. The cold air of the rank gardens, laced with the salty tang of the surrounding sea, brought involvement and acceptance of the hyper-clear environment. The situation seemed no less bizarre, no less macabre – but it was happening to *me*. Death in its most loathesome shapes waited to engulf *us*; the Black Reaper's personal representatives were brandishing their calling cards. In another moment I realised that precipitate flight around the island was going to be almost as inappropriate as sitting in the salon and waiting for the troll and his followers to lift off the roof.

Memories of school football matches came darting up from the subconscious as though in answer to the desperate search for ideas in my consciousness; it was the relevant response of a semi-automatic mental filing system. "Mark a man," I called. "Concentrate on one opponent each." Was it bravado or pride that made me add, "*I'll take the troll!*"?

Maybe it was a mixture of the two. That was the aspect of my semi-pro wrestling that I enjoyed most. The noise of the crowd, the corny jokes from the back, where the comedians paid half-a-crown to stand behind a wagon rope. Did it protect them from the gladiators in the ring, or vice versa? I'd often wondered. Have you ever seen the avid expressions on a sea of eager faces as some green kid, trying to make his name, grinds your nose into the canvas? A hundred mouths open with anticipation, upside-down, before you crash on to the front row stalls? Then some moronic female uses a steel tipped umbrella to help you back into the ring. I once broke three ribs on a corner post which had lost its padding. Some goon in the third row yelled: "Watch him! He's foxing!" I wish to hell I had been. But the cheers and acknowledgements compensated for everything. The commentator's remarks on the telefilm when you see the recording: "Watch for his flying head butt... Look at that back-hammer – vicious, very vicious – but he won't submit... What a body-slam – the whole ring vibrated from that one." I didn't want to

fight the troll... I wanted the glory that would come if I won... *if*. The monster's knee-cap was just about level with my shoulders.

As we dodged around ornamental pools and broken statues that gleamed like wan ghosts in the moonlight, I paired off my team with the horrors that opposed us.

"Rene – take the vampire," I ordered.

"*Oui, mon vieux*," he answered crisply and made directly for the cloak-flapping parasite from a by-gone age.

"Bron, get the werewolf."

"Roger!" He dodged past the headless thing that floated near a green-skinned lily-pond and made for the snarling bestial fury of the halfling.

"Neil, will you take the witch?"

"I'll do ma best, the noo!" exclaimed the grizzled Scot. He walked towards the hag like a determined marine engineer approaching the jammed safety valve of a gigantic boiler which is nearing explosion point; his attitude was confident, but it was a grim confidence. Before I could see the outcome of their encounter the ghoul took a spring at the copper-haired Irishman. "I'll take this one, bejabbers," exclaimed O'Flinn, and suiting the word to the deed struck savagely at the blemished morehead with his shillelagh.

The black zombie was silhouetted against a white marble statue of a Greek god. It was unidentifiable, sexless, eroded by wind and shrouded by moss. The frost had resculptured the outline with broad craggy edges; it furnished a fitting backdrop for the broken form of the decadent zombie.

"Can I have him, chief?" yelled the American. His near luminous white tuxedo flapped a challenge to the black corruption.

"Be my guest."

"Thanks!" Elton and the living dead thing vanished into the shrubbery like impatient clandestine lovers.

"Then I have Hobson's choice, look you," sighed the Welshman resignedly. "And I was never much success with the ladies!"

The troll towered over me like the Colossus of Rhodes. It didn't take many seconds to realise that without some sort of powerful mechanical advantage, or the assistance of natural forces – like gravity – this particular bout was going to have only one inevitable end. I wondered idly what odds the bookies would have put on this one... ten-thousand to one if they were cautious; a million to one if they were realistic.

I didn't enjoy being the long-shot. Memory prompted me with a quick

picture of a cliff edge by moonlight. It had been a long climb up the steps. Getting down was the work of a few seconds. The bigger they are the harder they fall. I wondered if the man who wrote that platitude had ever done battle with a hill troll on a ricky island off the South Cornish coast. Come to that, I wondered if *any* man had ever done battle with a hill troll *anywhere* and lived to tell the tale. Maybe there was a first time... With my luck I could have fought a dormouse and lost by tripping over its tail. Do dormice have tails? Crazy incongruous thoughts, and death is ten feet away, twenty feet tall...

"Troll, can you hear me? Can you understand?" This was the Odysseus technique; one-upmanship Cyclops style. Have a dose of Ulysses. (I never really understood why he left Circe; some men are impossibly hard to please!). The great conical head inclined slowly. The vast torso bent curiously to listen to the knee-high mortal.

"Speak, doomed one," boomed a foghorn voice a few feet from my head.

"I hate to kill strangers; what's your name?"

"You jest in the face of death?"

"Do you know a better idea?"

"Cease your insolence, be dignified in the presence of Orakos, Lord of the Eastern Mountains."

"It sounds like a brand of toothpaste, but you must have the wrong image, I don't think it's selling."

"Toothpaste?" stormed the troll. All the time we were talking I was threading my way backwards through the overgrown gardens.

"Yes, toothpaste. Maybe your best friends didn't tell you?"

"What foolishness is this?"

"It goes with soap and deodorants. We call it culture... the peak of five millennia of civilisation... cave men used to smell; they also had dental caries; I expect you remember? Didn't your breakfast taste high the era before yesterday?"

"Are you insane?" asked the troll with almost clinical interest.

"Not yet, but I'm trying hard."

We had reached the gate. I was out of the garden and moving along the cliff path, across the sparse stringy twitch plants of the small open plain between the house and the edge of infinity.

"You are a strange mortal. You speak in riddles. Are you a soothsayer?"

"Yes, but only for a gas on Halloe'en. I wouldn't want the neighbours to

know.”

“You are laughing at me,” accused Orakos.

“Who, me?” I sounded shocked.

“Yes, you jest, but why?” he demanded.

“I’m a friendly character. Laughter helps to break the ice. Invite me to your next party and we’ll thaw out the frost giants. You’ll be the toast of Sheol.”

“It is some trick,” he muttered ponderously. “You play for time, but why? I am tireless. When you grow weary I shall crush you into the rock.”

“That’s fine. I always wanted to be preserved for posterity.”

“Is it that you expect reinforcements?” he asked rhetorically.

“You guessed!” I looked up at him steadily in the moonlight. The great eyes glared down balefully.

“How can you expect help against me?”

“You’re not indestructible,” I bluffed, “and the secret’s out.”

“Who told you?” The troll’s voice was a shallow, fading echo of despair. It was almost theatrical. A glow of unexpected hope kindled a flickering optimism in the hinterland of my cerebral continent. I felt as improbable as Walter Mitty simulating a Mississippi gambler with plantation deeds stacked on the green baize in front of him. I could almost taste a casual Havana.

“All strength is relative,” I said softly.

“There was Balder,” sighed the troll.

“And Achilles.”

“My friend the Cyclops,” sighed the troll.

“And Orakos is next,” I announced coldly.

“Before you destroy me, tell me how you discovered that gold was deadly poison to my mind,” begged the monster. In that moment of apparently abject weakness there was almost a pathetic air about the creature, I thought. Something too close to sympathy to be anything else welled up from a lower level of my mind. Yet I knew it had to die. How many centuries of experience, how many millennia of history and pre-history were being wiped out here? What was I thinking about? I had no gold on me and little chance of getting any. Wait a minute, though. My watch! It was old, and somewhat battered (like the car) but it was gold for all that. How do you turn a watch into a weapon? And in what form was gold poisonous to a troll? Did you have to scratch the great hide and inject it? Had the metal to be

swallowed?

A noise like thunder filled the sky above me. The troll was laughing. Orakos stood with his claw-hands on his gigantic hips and swayed back and forth in the moonlight, guffawing like an erupting volcano. His conical head moved from side to side in rhythm with his laughter. Great glistening tears trickled down his hideous face.

“Fool,” he gasped. “Did you think to outwit Orakos with the mind of a mortal scarcely a third of a century old?”

I felt sick, angry and humiliated. I had tried to play Ulysses – the Cyclops had won. I had seen myself as Odysseus – but lacked the ear plugs. The troll had tricked me with a device that wouldn’t have deceived a ten-year-old who had read “A Child’s Mythology.” Back to square one, I thought bitterly – use the original strategy – the cliff. Perhaps he’s laughing too much to notice... The moonlight showed the gaunt edge of the incredible island, the inverted blade of a black stone guillotine.

“Death,” whispered the breeze.

“Death,” sighed the tough, tangled grasses at my feet.

“Death,” moaned the waves on the boulders and jagged rocks a hundred and more feet below.

“Death!” screamed the troll. His change of mood was incredible. The wild, helpless laughter had fallen from him like a rudely discarded cloak in a stage magician’s quick-change act. He was primitive, evil, violence and destruction – coming my way at the best part of sixty miles an hour. There was no hope of out-running him. I flung myself sideways like a matador and the vast hulk thundered past. Scrambling up, I sprinted for the cliff edge. The boom of the waves grew louder and more realistic. Was it Shaw who said “Death is the only reality?” It had a Shavian echo in my mind. The troll didn’t appear to have disc brakes or stabilisers. Optimism tried to flicker a little higher. Were the waves booming for him or for me? “Ask not for whom the bell tolls.” Who wrote that? Swith or Donne? Did it matter? The troll had turned and was charging back. I was directly between Orakos and the edge of infinity. Maybe trolls could swim? The waves crashed reassuringly on the jagged rocks: not here, said the waves. Dead trolls don’t swim. He’s tough, maybe he’ll bounce? The waves licked shingle lips around the hard black teeth below. Let him come, said the fangs of stone. The talons descended... the mouth opened in a bloodcurdling roar... The eyes blazed with hungry anticipation. The troll looked enthusiastically anthropophagy. He was six feet

away when I flung myself sideways and clung desperately – a human limpet – to the black strength of the cliff top.

The troll passed me with a wild, incoherent shriek of fear and surprise. His great foot skimmed my back as he sped past. The screaming grew weaker as I scrambled up and turned around on my stomach to look over the edge. The troll was still falling. A second later he hit the rocks with a noise like a haggis falling from Glamis Castle during the Hogmanay celebration.

I couldn't believe it at first... the great broken figure only stirred at the promptings of the sea. Orakos the mountain troll was dead. Maybe I had something in common with Ulysses after all? Move up, Odysseus, I'm joining the club! *The club* reminded me of the others. I began running back towards the house.

Rolant, as I had guessed from his appearance, was something of an expert in *savate*. The Transylvanian was not having a bloodless victory. (A Pyrrhic thing, in any case!). The flapping cloak opened to envelope Rene in an embrace of foully contagious deathlessness, but the volatile Frenchman darted forward with a flying headbutt that exploded viciously in the vampire's face. The monster staggered back. Rolant saw me coming and waved cheerfully, but he sounded breathless as he called: "C'est bien, mon brave?"

"Tres bien," I replied, wondering if my accent had vanished entirely. I had not been in Paris since 1950, and I reflected that it had been a vintage year. My mind moved salaciously over wild-oat memories. But this was no time for reveries. The vampire turned and its piggy little red eyes looked at me in disbelief. The lips curled back; the fangs opened.

"You defeated Orakos?" He sounded dumbfounded.

"I threw him over the cliff," I joked grimly.

The vampire said something that sounded like an eighteenth-century Transylvanian oath. It flung itself towards Rene, who side-stepped adroitly, and we watched the vampire flapping clumsily and angrily into the air. This time it tried a power dive and its talons narrowly missed my throat. Having landed heavily it cursed again before taking to the air once more.

"Play it while I find something," whispered the Frenchman, and there followed a nightmare matador act in three dimensions. The vampire flew at me from first one angle then another. I was exhausted by the time Rene returned.

"This way," hissed the Frenchman. "Lead him over to me, mon brave." I

stumbled wearily towards Rene. The vampire fluttered after me, hovering five or six feet above my head. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed the sharpened stake the wiry Frenchman held point upwards, with its butt-end resting on the ground. Despite the tiredness I started thinking again. Rene was carefully concealed in the shadow; so was the stake. I had seen it only because I was close to him. I doubted whether the flying Transylvanian had realised his danger. The cloak flapped ominously in the night breeze as the hideous thing suddenly descended. I flung myself earthwards on the dark side of the deadly stake. It must have been a passable impersonation of final exhaustion because the vampire screeched with triumph and dived towards me.

I heard the stake go in and the dying scream as the heart was pierced. I smelled a terrible putrefaction in the cold, clear air. Shreds of centuries-old flesh fluttered past as I clambered wearily to my feet and leaned on Rene's shoulder.

"A tough one, eh, mon brave?" he grinned irrepressibly.

"Five to go," I answered hopefully. He nodded.

"Let us hope the others have been as fortunate," he agreed.

Big Bron Fane and the Austrian werewolf had almost fought themselves to a standstill by the time we arrived. The massive Londoner leant against a broken marble Venus. His coat was torn to ribbons. The muscular shoulders beneath it dripped blood from a dozen deep claw marks. His face was chalk-white but his eyes blazed furiously with a cold, angry determination. The werewolf crouched on its strangely misshapen haunches. Its tongue lolled from between broken fangs – not all the blood in its mouth was Fane's. The coat was lathered with sweat and in places contusions and grazes showed where the power of the big man's fists had been painfully accurate. As we approached, the combatants leapt at each other once more, as though our coming had somehow signalled the end of the inter-round break. Locked in a deadly life and death embrace, Fane and the werewolf rolled over and over among the broken statues and mossy stones of the derelict courtyard. For a moment it was impossible to distinguish friend from foe, even if Rene or I had had the strength to act. Then the fighting furies whirled apart and we flung ourselves at the werewolf. It had the strength of a supercharged tiger. Rolant and I clung to it like lilliputians trying to hold Gulliver. The most we achieved was a temporary respite for Fane.

"Is my tie-pin in place?" shouted Rolant excitedly.

“Your what?”

“Tie-pin... my *silver* tie-pin,” he gasped. As the Frenchman and I clung desperately to the snarling, raging lycanthrope, Bron pulled the pin from Rolant’s tie. It gleamed silver-white in the moonlight. The werebeast redoubled its efforts. Rene was flung yards away. The Austrian monster gave me the full benefit of its superhuman powers. I have been thrown from a wrestling ring more than once. I have been thrown hard by bigger, heavier, faster men... but they were *men*, and there was a human limit to their throwing power. The werewolf flung me across the flagstones like a missile from a catapult. I fetched up in a clump of abandoned rhododendrons and lay winded for a full two minutes. It was Bron who picked me up and Rene who searched anxiously for broken bones.

A pile of rags and a few strangely shaped bones near a mossy flagstone told the end of the werewolf’s story.

“I got him with the tie-pin,” explained Fane, “about half a second after he put you into orbit. You must have a magnificent breakfall technique. We thought you were dead...”

“So did I.” Somehow it was funny in a way. “I didn’t breakfall at all – it was pure luck and decadent rhododendrons.”

“Four to go,” said Rene meaningfully.

“The witch and the ghost,” I began.

“The ghoul and the zombie,” finished Bron.

A flickering light on the far side of the house turned our steps in that direction. Horrific ululations rent the air. The flickering light grew stronger and more vividly red. An orange glow surrounded it. The screams reached a crescendo and died away into nothingness. Neil calmly appeared blackened and smoke-begrimed. He waved calmly and beckoned to us.

There was a strange iron quality in his calmness. Something colder and harder and Aberdeen granite had taken possession of his normal nature. Behind the quietly taciturn exterior lurked something ruthless as Macbeth and bloody as Banquo’s corpse.

I couldn’t stare at the charred thing, vaguely like a log with branches in the shape of limbs, as it settled deeper into the glowing ashes of the fire.

“Angus, Laird of Balfort, 1603-1679,” began Neil, “was my remote ancestor, and a man whom I often prefer to forget. Nevertheless his blood – it still runs truly in my veins – refused to be forgotten.” He shook his head with a sigh and the hardness faded gradually. A minute or two more and he was

transformed again into the Balfort I knew. His humanity had reasserted itself. The granite statue had melted back into a man.

“Angus was chief assistant to the Witch Finder General,” he said softly. “He was a dedicated man... a fanatic perhaps...” His voice tailed away uncertainly, lost among the depths of his thoughts.

“What happened to the witch?” I asked gently, one eye on the settling black shape vanishing into the embers.

“Gone, as all witches go,” he answered cryptically, following the direction of my reluctant glance.

“You burned her?” Asked Bron, as though somehow unable to believe his ears. “*Alive?*” Fane had looked shatter-proof, but he was shaken now. His great, tough, craggy face drained of blood.

“It was a power that lay within me, hidden and waiting,” said Balfort, speaking like a somnambulist.

“What sort of power?” asked Rolant interestedly.

“Hatred,” answered Neil thoughtfully.

“Hatred?” I didn’t see what he was driving at.

“I think the black power of the witches lies in their capacity for hatred. There is an inherent quality in the Balforts which out-hates a witch... any witch.”

“White hatred,” mused Rolant as though undecided. He gave a typically Gallic shrug. “Perhaps?” He glanced at me as though for confirmation. I could give none.

“I suppose your very survival indicates success,” said Neil as his gaze roved around us. Briefly Rolant told him what had happened.

“Is it luck?” asked Fane, ticking off the points on battle-scarred fingers as Rolant accounted for the hideous, macabre things of which we had disposed.

“Perhaps there is a power greater than Genghis?” suggested the Scot. The discussion had turned into a rocking horse. We kept riding it hard, but it never seemed to get anywhere.

The brakes were applied in the person of O’Flinn. He ran towards us waving his arms excitedly and whooping like a schoolboy playing Apaches and Cavalry.

“Bejabbers and bedad! I’ve got him, so I have!” It was several minutes before he settled down sufficiently to tell us his adventures. An excited Irishman is not the most coherent narrator in the world; an O’Flinn who has

just been in a fight is invariably excited; an O’Flinn who has just won a fight is invariably elated to the point of psychological intoxication.

When we finally pieced the yarn together from its oft-repeated and disjointed fragments it transpired that the O’Flinn had recalled an ancient Celtic-Christian exorcism that was said to date from the time of St. Patrick. Peter had recited in what he called the “old tongue” until the ghoul had apparently shrivelled into itself like a slug hit by a gardener’s flame-thrower.

He was calming down somewhat by the time Elton arrived.

“Goddammit, boys! You-all just missed the best fight I’ve had in years. There ain’t been such a tussle since Rodeo Jones fought the Strawberry Roan in Nashville, but you wouldn’t know about that.”

“Hellormity if I ain’t worked up a sweat!” he conceded.

“So what happened?” asked Fane.

“This walking dead guy, the black zombie, man, he kept coming for me like he was the original Uncle Tom and I’d just raised the rates on his cabin! If I’d been Simon Legree’s chief whipper he couldn’t have hated me more!” He paused significantly. “Zombies don’t exactly look at a man on account of they don’t have no eyes, but it was the way he held his head I reckon. There was multi-coloured murder in the way he carried his head on that rickety neck... ” He shuddered.

“What did you do, mon brave?” asked Rolant.

“I shot him, of course,” boomed the Texan. “I shot him so many times he was a walking colander, trouble was he kept walking!”

“And?” prompted Fane.

“I picked up a stone slab and pasted him, but he kept on. Then I hit him with a spear of wood I found on the path, but he wouldn’t quit.”

“An then?” asked Fane interestedly.

“I kept on slugging him, till pieces fell off. They had a disconcerting habit of kinda joining together again...” He paused.

“It doesn’t sound pretty,” said Rolant quietly.

“It wasn’t, believe me!”

“Give us the punch line,” I requested.

“I remembered the well,” explained Elton, “the big, deep well in the courtyard over there.” He gestured vaguely through the gloom.

“What did you do?” asked Balfort.

“I figured that if I couldn’t destroy him, at least I could put him out of harm’s way – but permanently. I slugged him into the well a piece at a time –

like I was making a series of strikes at baseball.” He looked at us almost patronisingly as though wondering if we would understand the sporting terms.

“It is how you say – like the cricket?” asked Rene.

“Near enough,” agreed Fane with a wink in my direction.

“Hellormity!” grunted Neef in mock disgust.

“So we have a dismembered black zombie crawling around at the bottom of a well?” mused Neil. “Charming!”

It seems that only our Welsh friend remains, I thought. It might have been some sort of psychic signal. Lerteth appeared from around the corner of the ancient house. He walked like a man in a dream. His eyes gleamed with Celtic fire, but they were focused on horizons we could not see.

“Beautiful, she was,” he mused as he reached the edge of our group.

“Pretty as a picture, but cold, man, very very cold.”

“How did you dispose of her?” I asked.

“I didn’t want her to go, you understand?” There was a questioning inflexion in his voice. “I was gettin’ quite fond of her, in a way.”

“Did you find an exorcism?” asked Peter.

“Not intentionally,” confessed Oben.

“Well what then?” demanded Bron.

“I recited some of my poetry to her. It took third prize at the Talsarnau Eisteddfod – Junior Section – 1939.”

“Didn’t she like it?” asked Balfort sympathetically.

“Apparently not,” sighed Oben. “She gave a shrill scream and vanished... taking her head with her...” A tear sprang to his entranced eye. “And she was such a beautiful ghost,” he added whimsically.

“So we win: seven nil,” I said grimly.

Genghis appeared with Mephistophelian suddenness amid a flurry of hooves.

“You’ve won.” He was laconic in the extreme.

“Now what” demanded Fane truculently.

“Yes, what about it?” I agreed, feeling unusually bellicose.

“You’ve won. That ends the matter.”

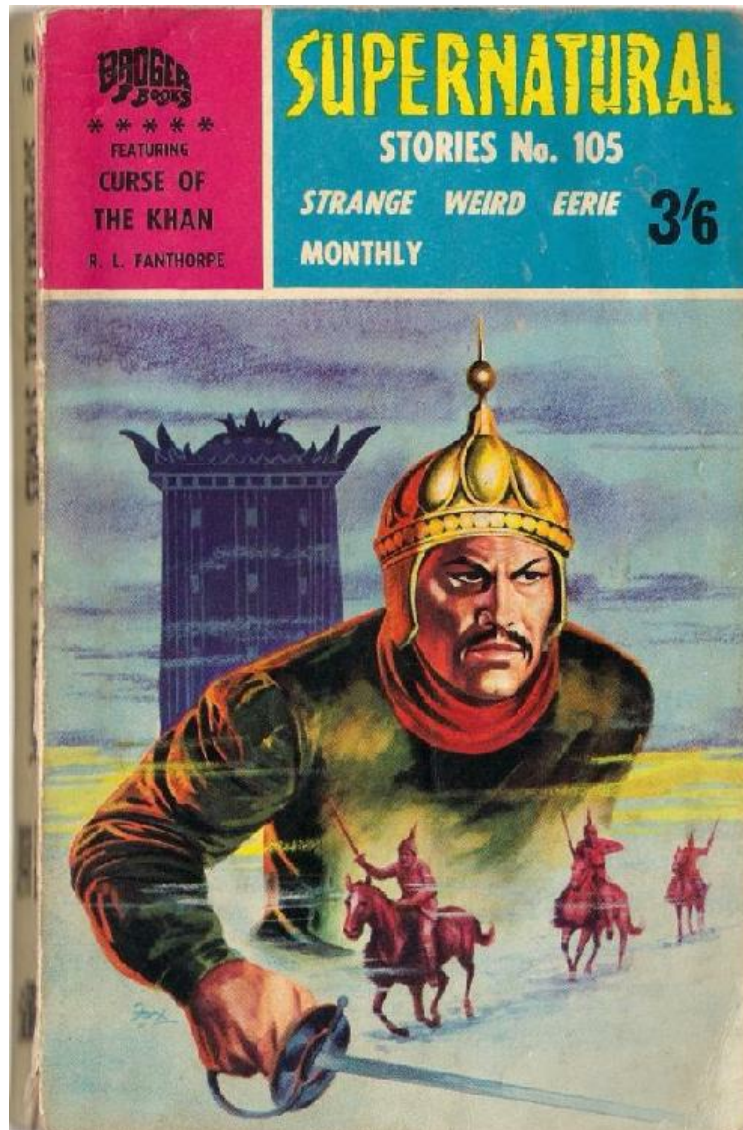
“No cups, no medals?” taunted Rene.

“You are alive. I am amused. The business is concluded.” He vanished as suddenly and as unsatisfactorily as he appeared.

We stood looking at one another in futile bewilderment.

“Is it possible that we shall meet him again?” asked Rene.
“Who knows?” mused Balfort.

THE END



Bibliography

R. Lionel Fanthorpe

A Bibliography

Debbie Cross

The following bibliography is as complete as possible, given that most of the reprints were unknown even to Fanthorpe. I have heard rumors of Italian editions but have never seen one. Probably additional Australian reprints exist, but I have only listed ones of which I am fairly certain.

All of the Badger Science Fiction series titles are listed first and alphabetized by title. It is assumed that there is only one edition and printing of each Badger. However, at least some, if not all, have a variant in which the cover price in Australian or New Zealand dollars has been added, or has replaced the British price. I have seen at least one book which bears a Papua New Guinea price.

All other editions listed are American unless noted. Ambassador, Lennox Hill and Arcadia are hardcover books. I have personally seen binding variants on many of the cloth editions. Without evidence to the contrary, I believe it is safe to assume that the binder used whatever was handy and no order of precedence can be established. All others are paperbacks. Vega books are interesting in that they all have the same art work and same general layout as the Badgers. It would appear that the Uni Books and Leisure editions are bootlegged. The author received no payment for any of the American editions.

The Badger Supernatural series books are listed by number. Most of these are collections of shorts stories, generally all of the stories in one edition are by Fanthorpe under different pseudonyms. I have listed all the stories and pseudonyms in each issue. The feature or cover story is in bold. Stories not by Fanthorpe are in parentheses. Otherwise all names listed are pseudonyms of Robert Lionel Fanthorpe. The Supernatural Specials are novels. There is one known hardcover reprint, which does not say Badger on it, but is an imprint of John Spencer & Co. No other reprints of the Supernatural series are known. They nearly all proclaim on the cover "STRANGE. WEIRD. EERIE."

Some of the pseudonyms, such as John E. Muller and Karl Zeigfreid were house names of John Spencer & Co., the publishers of Badger Books. Therefore, not all titles under those names were written by Fanthorpe.

Mel Jay, Marston Johns, and Robert Lionel are all pseudonyms used only by US publishers of Fanthorpe and have not been used by him elsewhere.

This bibliography is necessarily incomplete. I welcome anyone with corrections or additions to send them to me, Debbie Cross, at the following address:

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Badger Science Fiction Series

THE ALIEN ONES. SF 94, 1963, Leo Brett.

Also: Tower Books, T-060-1, 1969.

Also: Arcadia House, 1969.

Also: Five Star Paperback, Manchester, 1972.

Note: This Five Star edition states copyright © 1969 by Leo Brett.

ALIEN FROM THE STARS. SF 15, 1959, R.L. Fanthorpe.

Also: Arcadia House, 1968.

ANDROID. SF 79, 1962, Karl Zeigfreid.

ASTEROID MAN. SF 35, 1960, R.L. Fanthorpe.

Also: Arcadia House, 1966.

Also: Ambassador, Toronto.

Badger Cover Blurb: "More terrible than a nova, stronger than gravity, he could direct destiny."

ATOMIC NEMESIS. SF 80, 1962, Karl Zeigfreid.

BARRIER 346. SF 113, 1965, Karl Zeigfreid.

Also: Arcadia House, 1966.

BEYOND THE VOID. SF 112, 1965, John E. Muller.

BEYOND TIME. SF 71, 1962, John E. Muller.

Also: Arcadia House, 1966, Marston Johns.

CRIMSON PLANET. SF 60, 1961, John E. Muller.

Also: Arcadia House, 1966.

CYCLOPS IN THE SKY. SF 26, 1960, Lionel Roberts.

DARK CONTINUUM. SF 104, 1964, John E. Muller.

DAWN OF THE MUTANTS. SF 18, 1959, Lionel Roberts.

THE DAY THE WORLD DIED. SF 73, 1962, John E. Muller.

Also: Vega, VSF3, 1963.

DESTINATION MOON. SF 14, 1959, L.P. Kenton.

DOOMED WORLD. SF 25, 1959, R.L. Fanthorpe.

ESCAPE TO INFINITY. SF 82, 1963, Karl Zeigfreid.

EXIT HUMANITY. SF 40, 1960, Leo Brett.

Also: Arcadia House, 1965.

THE FACELESS PLANET. SF 47, 1961, Leo Brett.

THE FACE OF X. SF 39, 1960, Lionel Roberts.

Also: Arcadia House, 1965, Robert Lionel.

FIENDS. SF 22, 1959, R.L. Fanthorpe.

FLAME MASS. SF 49, 1961, R.L. Fanthorpe.

FORBIDDEN PLANET. SF 63, 1961, John E. Muller.

Also: Arcadia House, 1965.

FORCE 97X. SF 110, 1965, Pel Torro.

FORMULA 29X. SF 87, 1963, Pel Torro.

Also: **BEYOND THE BARRIER OF SPACE**, Tower, 43-268, 1968.

Also: **BEYOND THE BARRIER OF SPACE**, Starbooks, Australia.

FROZEN PLANET. SF 42, 1960, Pel Torro.

Also: Arcadia House, 1967.

GALAXY 666. SF 86, 1963, Pel Torro.

Also: Arcadia House, 1968.

Also: Tower, 42-185, 1968.

Also: Leisure Books, 259NK, 1968.

Note: The covers of the two American paperbacks feature what appears to be a model of the Star Trek Enterprise with a red light on top.

GIRL FROM TOMORROW. SF 114, 1965, Karl Zeigfreid.

HAND OF DOOM. SF 44, 1960, R.L. Fanthorpe.

Also: Arcadia House, 1968.

HYPERSPACE. SF 17, 1959, R.L. Fanthorpe.

Also: Arcadia House, 1966.

Note: the Arcadia edition has “Fanhope” on the cover & spine.

INFINITY MACHINE. SF 72, 1962, John E. Muller.

THE INTRUDERS. SF 89, 1963, Bron Fane.

THE IN-WORLD. SF 37, 1960, Lionel Roberts.

Also: Arcadia House, 1968.

Note: The Badger edition has the same cover art as Star Guard, Ace G-599, by Andre Norton.

JUGGERNAUT. SF 41, 1960, Bron Fane.

Also: **BLUE JUGGERNAUT**, Arcadia House, 1965.

Also: **BLUE JUGGERNAUT**, Ambassador, Toronto.

Note: The Badger edition has the same cover art as Threshold of Eternity, Ace D-335, by John Brunner.

THE LAST ASTRONAUT. SF 93, 1963, Pel Torro.

Also: Tower Books, 43-247, 1969.

LAST MAN ON EARTH. SF 46, 1961, Bron Fane.

LIGHTNING WORLD. SF 38, 1960, Trebor Thorpe.

Also: Arcadia House, 1968.

THE MAN FROM BEYOND. SF 111, 1965, John E. Muller

Also: Arcadia House, 1969.

THE MAN WHO CONQUERED TIME. SF 68, 1962, John E. Muller.

MARCH OF THE ROBOTS. SF 53, 1961, Leo Brett.

MARK OF THE BEAST. SF 105, 1964, John E. Muller.

MENACE FROM MERCURY. John Spencer, 1954, Victor La Salle.

MICRO-INFINITY. SF 70, 1962, John E. Muller.

Cover Blurb: "There was something sinister about the new bacteria, it could communicate."

THE MICROSCOPIC ONES. SF 43, 1960, Leo Brett.

Note: Has the same cover art as The Cosmic Puppets, Ace 249, by P. K. Dick.

MIND FORCE. SF 54, 1961, Leo Brett.

Also: Lennox-Hill, 1971.

THE MIND MAKERS. SF 58, 1961, John E. Muller.

NEGATIVE MINUS. SF 88, 1963, R.L. Fanthorpe.

THE NEGATIVE ONES. SF 109, 1965, John E. Muller.

NEMESIS. SF 100, 1964, Bron Fane.

NEURON WORLD. SF 108, 1965, R.L. Fanthorpe.

NO WAY BACK. SF 107, 1964, Karl Zeigfreid.

Also: Arcadia House, 1968.

Note: Arcadia edition has “Zeigfried” on cover and spine only.

ORBIT ONE. SF 69, 1962, John E. Muller.

Also: Pitt Bond, PB512, Sydney, 1963.

Also: Arcadia House, 1966, Mel Jay.

Also: Modern Promotions, 1966, Mel Jay.

Also: MacFadden-Bartell, 60-447, 1970, Mel Jay.

Badger cover blurb: “Out of the depths of space came hands of power and rockets of terror.”

MacFadden-Bartell cover blurb: “Flesh-crawling horrors hide in the depths of a seemingly deserted planet.”

PERILOUS GALAXY. SF 66, 1962, John E. Muller.

Blurb: “He was a conscript astronaut, a galley slave of space...”

PHENOMENA X. SF 116, 1966, John E. Muller.

THE PLANET SEEKERS. SF 99, 1964, Erle Barton.

Also: Vega, VSF7, 1964.

POWER SPHERE. SF 95, 1963, Leo Brett.

Also: Arcadia House, 1968.

PROJECTION INFINITY. SF 103, 1964, Karl Zeigfreid.

Also: Vega, VSF12, 1965.

RADAR ALERT. SF 83, 1963, Karl Zeigfreid.

Also: Vega, VSF4, 1963.

Also: Arcadia House, 1968.

REACTOR XK9. SF 96, 1963, John E. Muller.

THE RETURN. SF 101, 1964, Pel Torro.

Also: Vega, VSF10, 1964.

Also: **EXILED IN SPACE.** Arcadia House, 1968.

RODENT MUTATION. SF 55, 1961, Bron Fane.

Also: Arcadia House, 1968.

SATELLITE. SF 27, 1960, R.L. Fanthorpe.

SOMEWHERE OUT THERE. SF 92, 1963, Bron Fane.

Also: Arcadia House, 1965.

SPACE BORNE. SF 20, 1959, R.L. Fanthorpe.

SPACE FURY. SF 77, 1962, R.L. Fanthorpe.

Also: Vega, VSF2, 1963.

Also: Arcadia House, 1968.

SPACE NO BARRIER. SF 106, 1964, Pel Torro.

Also: **MAN OF METAL**, Lennox Hill, 1970.

SPACE TRAP. SF 98, 1964, Thornton Bell.

Also: Arcadia House, 1966.

SPECIAL MISSION. SF 97, 1963, John E. Muller.

Also: Vega, VSF8, 1964.

SURVIVAL PROJECT. SF 117, 1966, John E. Muller.

Also: Arcadia House, 1968.

SUSPENSION. SF 102, 1964, Bron Fane.

Also: Vega, VSF9, 1965.

THE SYNTHETIC ONES. SF 52, 1961, Lionel Roberts.

A 1000 YEARS ON. SF 50, 1961, John E. Muller.

Note: Same cover art as World Without Men, Ace E-274, Charles Eric Maine.

THROUGH THE BARRIER. SF 91, 1963, Pel Torro.

TIME ECHO. SF 23, 1959, Lionel Roberts.

Also: Arcadia House, 1964, Robert Lionel.

Also: MacFadden-Bartell, 60-459, 1970, Robert Lionel.

Also: Modern Promotions, Robert Lionel.

U.F.O. 517. SF 115, 1965, Bron Fane.

Blurb: "If they were not extra-terrestrial, whence did they come?"

THE ULTIMATE MAN. SF 56, 1961, John E. Muller.

THE UNINVITED. SF 57, 1961, John E. Muller.

URANIUM 235. SF 67, 1962, John E. Muller.

Also: Arcadia House, 1967.

THE VENUS VENTURE. SF 62, 1961, John E. Muller.

Also: Vega, VSF11, 1965.

Also: Arcadia House, 1965, Marston Johns.

THE WAITING WORLD. SF 1, 1958, R.L. Fanthorpe.

WALK THROUGH TOMORROW. SF 78, 1962, Karl Zeigfreid.

Also: Vega, VSF1, 1963.

THE WATCHING WORLD. SF 118, 1966, R.L. Fanthorpe.

WORLD OF THE GODS. SF 45, 1960, Pel Torro.

Note: Same cover art as Secret of the Lost Race, Ace D-381, Andre Norton.

WORLD OF TOMORROW. SF 84, 1963, Karl Zeigfreid.

Also: **WORLD OF THE FUTURE.** Arcadia House, 1964.

THE WORLD THAT NEVER WAS. SF 85, 1963, Karl Zeigfreid.

THE X MACHINE. SF 74, 1962, John E. Muller.

ZERO MINUS X. SF 81, 1962, Karl Zeigfreid.



Badger Supernatural Series

Stories in parentheses were not written by Fanthorpe. The feature or cover story is in **bold**. Four of the story collections below (SN 13, 15, 17 and 19) carry the alternate series title *Out of This World* on cover and spine.

SN 2, 1954. (“Frog”, Max Chartair).

 (“Things of the Dark”, A. J. Merak).

 (“Hunter’s Moon”, Randall Conway).

“The Incredulist”

Note: Lionel Roberts on the cover but John Raymond in the table of contents.

 “...And Very Few Get Out”, Lionel Fanthorpe.

SN 12, 1957. “Fang”, Pel Torro.

“Resurgam”, R.L. Fanthorpe.

 “The Uncanny Affair at Greycove”, Lionel Roberts.

 “I’ve Been Here Before”, Leo Brett.

 “The Sorcerer’s Cave”, Trebor Thorpe.

SN 13, 1957. **OUT OF THIS WORLD**

“Secret of the Snows”, R.L. Fanthorpe.

 “The Spectre of the Tower”, Lionel Roberts.

 “The Black Hound”, Pel Torro.

 “Ghost Ship”, Trebor Thorpe.

 “Sky Herd”, Bron Fane.

SN 14, 1958. “Song of the Banshee”, Trebor Thorpe.

 “The Creature”, Pel Torro.

 “The Old House”, Lionel Roberts.

 “The Seance”, Bron Fane.

Note: “The Seance” is the first Val Stearman & La Noire story.

“The Flight of the Valkyries”, R.L. Fanthorpe.

SN 15, 1958. **OUT OF THIS WORLD**

“Watchers of the Forest”, R.L. Fanthorpe.

 “Out of the Vault”, Lionel Roberts.

 “Voodoo Vengeance”, Bron Fane.

- “Black River Mill”, Pel Torro.
 “The Earthen Vessel”, Trebor Thorpe.
- SN 16, 1958. **“Guardians of the Tomb”**, Lionel Roberts.
 “The Creatures from Below”, R.L. Fanthorpe.
 “The Iron Oven”, Trebor Thorpe.
 “Last Bus to Llangery”, Pel Torro.
 “The Effigy”, Leo Brett.
- SN 17, 1958. **OUT OF THIS WORLD**
 “The Dancing Wraiths”, Lionel Roberts.
“Call of the Werewolf”, R.L. Fanthorpe.
Note: Cover spelling is “Werewolf”.
 “The Secret Room”, Bron Fane.
 “The Screaming Skull”, Pel Torro.
 “The Phantom Hand”, Trebor Thorpe.
- SN 19, 1958. **OUT OF THIS WORLD**
“The Golden Warrior”, Lionel Roberts.
 “Invisible Witness”, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.
 “The Kraken”, Leo Brett.
 “Night of the Ghoul”, Bron Fane.
 “The Phantom of the Goodwins”, Trebor Thorpe.
- SN 20, 1958. **“The Death Note”**, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.
 “Sinister Strangers”, Lionel Roberts.
 “Valley of the Vampire”, Bron Fane.
 “The Other Driver”, Pel Torro.
 “The Spawn of Satan”, Leo Brett.
- SN 21, 1959. “The Silent Stranger”, Bron Fane.
“The Haunted Pool”, Trevor Thorpe.
Note: Trevor, rather than Trebor, appears on both the cover and in the table of contents. Trebor (Robert backwards) is the way that Fanthorpe intended.
 “The Lamia”, Leo Brett.
 “Unknown Realm”, Lionel Roberts.
 “The Stone Crusader”, by R.L. Fanthorpe.
- SN 23, 1959. **“Mermaid Reef”**, R.L. Fanthorpe.

- “The Unrealistic Theatre”, Leo Brett.
“The Other Line”, Bron Fane.
“The Swan Mae”, Lionel Roberts.
“The Clock That Struck Thirteen”, Trebor Thorpe.
- SN 24, 1959. “The Poltergeist”, Pel Torro.
“The Hypnotist”, Lionel Roberts.
“The Green Cloud”, Bron Fane.
“**The Drud**”, Leo Brett.
“Quest for Atlantis”, R.L. Fanthorpe.
- SN 25, 1959. “The Guide and the God”, R.L. Fanthorpe.
“The Man Within”, Trebor Thorpe.
“**The Return**”, Leo Brett.
“Charlatan”, Pel Torro.
“Pursuit”, Bron Fane.
- SN 27, 1959. “The Man Who Was Nothing”, Trebor Thorpe.
“**The Ghost Rider**”, R.L. Fanthorpe.
“White Wolf”, Leo Brett.
“Jungle of Death”, Bron Fane.
“Gestalt”, Lionel Roberts.
- SN 30, 1960. “**The Crawling Fiend**”, Bron Fane.
“Excalibur”, Trebor Thorpe.
“Vault of Terror”, Lionel Roberts.
“Whence? Whither?”, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.
 (“Right Through My Hair”, Noel Bertram).
*Note: all stories written under the pseudonym Noel Bertram are by
Fanthorpe’s good friend, the Rev. Canon J.N.T. (Noel) Boston, M.A.*
- SN 32, 1960. **FIVE FACES OF FEAR**, Trebor Thorpe.
- SN 33, 1960. “**The Man Who Couldn’t Die**”, R.L. Fanthorpe.
“The Sinister Circle”, Trebor Thorpe.
“The Midnight Museum”, Leo Brett.
 (“The Audit Chamber”, Noel Bertram).
“Curtain Up”, Bron Fane.
- SN 35, 1960. **OUT OF THE DARKNESS**, R.L. Fanthorpe.
- SN 36, 1960. “**Face of Evil**”, R.L. Fanthorpe.

- ("The Unseen", A. J. Merak).
 ("Time to Die", Randall Conway).
 ("A Little Devil Dancing", Max Chartair).
 ("The Stairway", Ray Cosmic).
 ("Coven of Thirteen", Michael Hamilton).
- SN 37, 1960. "Bardell's Wild Talent", Trebor Thorpe.
"Werewolf at Large", R.L. Fanthorpe.
Note: Cover spelling is "Werwolf".
 ("Bump in the Night", Noel Bartram [sic]).
 "The Secret of the Lake", Bron Fane.
 "From Realms Beyond", Leo Brett.
- SN 38, 1960. "Black Marsh Mill", Trebor Thorpe.
 "The Loch Ness Terror", Bron Fane.
"Whirlwind of Death", R.L. Fanthorpe.
 "The Carnival Horror", Leo Brett.
 "The Face of Stone", Pel Torro.
- SN 39, 1961. "Land of the Living Dead", Leo Brett.
 "Wolf Man's Vengeance", Pel Torro.
 "The Magician Sleeps", R.L. Fanthorpe.
 "The Deathless Wings", Bron Fane.
"Voodoo Hell Drums", Trebor Thorpe.
- SN 40, 1961. **THE LAST VALKYRIE**, Lionel Roberts.
- SN 41, 1961. "The Green Sarcophagus", Bron Fane.
 "Before the Beginning", Leo Brett.
"Fingers of Darkness", R.L. Fanthorpe.
 ("The Bellarmine Jars", Noel Bertram).
 "Lost Land of Lemuria", Trebor Thorpe.
- SN 43, 1961. **"Face in the Dark"**, R.L. Fanthorpe.
 "They Flew by Night", Leo Brett.
 "Swamp Thing", Trebor Thorpe.
 "Black Abyss", Bron Fane.
 ("The Face at the Window", Noel Bertram).
- SN 44, 1961. **BLACK INFINITY**, Leo Brett.
- SN 46, 1961. **FLAME GODDESS**, Lionel Roberts.

SN 47, 1961. **“The Devil from the Depths”**, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.

“Graven in the Rock”, Pel Torro.

“Forest of Evil”, Trebor Thorpe.

“Rusalka and the Vodyanoi”, Leo Brett.

“Forbidden City”, Bron Fane.

SN 48, 1961. **THE PHANTOM ONES**, Pel Torro.

SN 49, 1961. **“Centurion’s Vengeance”**, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.

“The Twisted Track”, Pel Torro.

“Contract with Satan”, Leo Brett.

“The House of Dreams”, Trebor Thorpe.

“The Secret of the Pyramid”, Bron Fane.

(“The Half Legs”, Noel Bertram).

SN 50, 1961. **THE GOLDEN CHALICE**, R.L. Fanthorpe.

SN 51, 1961. “Something at the Door”, Bron Fane.

“The Eight Immortals”, Trebor Thorpe.

“The Grip of Fear”, R.L. Fanthorpe.

“The Secret of Dr. Stark”, Pel Torro.

(“The Brass Tombstone”, Noel Bertram).

“Mustapha”, Leo Brett.

SN 52, 1962. **THE RETURN OF ZEUS**, John E. Muller.

SN 53, 1962. **“Chariot of Apollo”**, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.

(“The North Cloister”, Noel Bertram).

“Fly, Witch, Fly”, Leo Brett.

“The Room With the Broken Floor”, Pel Torro.

“Forbidden Island”, Bron Fane.

SN 54, 1962. **NIGHTMARE**, Leo Brett.

SN 55, 1962. “Vampire Castle”, Pel Torro.

“Moonlight Island”, Leo Brett.

“Storm God’s Fury”, Bron Fane.

“The Mountain Thing”, R.L. Fanthorpe.

“Return of Lilith”, Trebor Thorpe.

SN 56, 1962. **THE EYE OF KARNAK**, John E. Muller.

SN 57, 1962. **“Hell Has Wings”**, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.

“The Eldritch Chair”, by Trebor Thorpe.
“Vengeance of the Poltergeist”, Bron Fane.
 (“The Barrier”, Noel Bertram).
“The Frozen Claw”, Pel Torro.
“The Phantom Schooner”, Leo Brett.

Cover blurb ending: “All in all, a superb collection of outstanding supernatural stories by a carefully selected cross-section of today’s top authors.”

SN 58, 1962. **FACE IN THE NIGHT**, Leo Brett.

SN 59, 1962. **“Graveyard of the Damned”**, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.

“The Dream of Camelot”, Trebor Thorpe.
“The Voice”, Pel Torro.
“Temple of Quetzalcoatl”, Leo Brett.
“The Persian Cavern”, Bron Fane.
“The Whisperer”, Deutero Spartacus.

SN 60, 1962. **VENGEANCE OF SIVA**, John E. Muller.

SN 61, 1962. “Chasm of Time”, Bron Fane.

“The Unfinished Chapter”, Pel Torro.
“The Snarling Shadow”, Trebor Thorpe.
“**The Darker Drink**”, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.
“The Bevelled Casket”, Leo Brett.
 (“Scraping the Barrel”, Noel Bertram).

Cover Blurb excerpt: “Bron Fane gives us his masterly contribution to this quintet of horror...”

SN 62, 1962. **THE IMMORTALS**, Leo Brett.

SN 64, 1962. **GODS OF DARKNESS**, Karl Zeigfreid.

SN 65, 1962. **“Curse of the Totem”**, R.L. Fanthorpe.

“Vengeance of Thor”, Leo Brett.
“The Voice in the Wall”, Bron Fane.
“WOKOLO”, Pel Torro.
“Secret of the Shaman”, Trebor Thorpe.

SN 66, 1962. **LEGION OF THE LOST**, Pel Torro.

SN 67, 1962. **“The Frozen Tomb”**, Leo Brett.

“Sleeping Place”, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.
“Strange Country”, Trebor Thorpe.
“Cry in the Night”, Bron Fane.
“The Thing from Boulter’s Cavern”, Pel Torro.
“The Coveters”, Deutero Spartacus.

SN 68, 1963. **THEY NEVER COME BACK**, Leo Brett.

SN 69, 1963. **“Lilith Goddess of Night”**, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.

Note: Cover title “Goddess of Night”, R.L. Fanthorpe.

“The Nine Green Men”, Bron Fane.
“The Swing of the Pendulum”, Trebor Thorpe.
“Ventriloquist”, Pel Torro.
“The Silent Fleet”, Leo Brett.

SN 70, 1963. **THE STRANGE ONES**, Pel Torro.

SN 71, 1963. “The Gliding Wraith”, Leo Brett.

“Twilight Ancestor”, R.L. Fanthorpe.
“The Man Who Never Smiled”, Bron Fane.
“Fangs in the Night”, Pel Torro.
“An Eye For an Eye”, Trebor Thorpe.

SN 72, 1963. **THE FORBIDDEN**, Leo Brett.

SN 73, 1963. “Spirit of Darkness”, Trebor Thorpe.

“Sands of Eternity”, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.
“The Friendly Stranger”, Pel Torro.
“Return Fare”, Bron Fane.
Note: As “Return Ticket” on story header.
“The Comedians”, Deutero Spartacus.
“House of Despair”, Leo Brett.

SN 74, 1963. **FROM REALMS BEYOND**, Leo Brett.

SN 75, 1963. **“The Phantom Crusader”**, Leo Brett.

“The Room that Never Was”, Bron Fane.
“The Tunnel”, Olaf Trent.
“Stranger in the Skull”, Trebor Thorpe.
“The Stockman”, Deutero Spartacus.
“The Stone Tablet”, Neil Thanet.
“Footprints in the Sand”, Pel Torro.

SN 76, 1963. **THE TIMELESS ONES**, Pel Torro.

SN 77, 1963. **"Moon Wolf"**, R.L. Fanthorpe.

"The Zombie", Erle Barton.

"The Walker", Bron Fane.

"Old Man of the Snow", Neil Thanet.

"Blurred Horizon", Phil Nobel.

("The Grip of the Unending", Leo Brett).

Note: "The Grip of Time Unending" on the title page. Written by Fanthorpe's good friend, Harry Mansfield.

"The Tragedians", Deutero Spartacus.

SN 78, 1963. **THE UNSEEN**, Lee Barton.

SN 80, 1963. **SOFTLY BY MOONLIGHT**, Bron Fane.

SN 81, 1963. "Forgotten Country", Peter O'Flynn.

Note: O'Flinn on first page of story..

"Invisible Presence", R.L. Fanthorpe.

"The Thing from Sheol", Bron Fane.

"Return of the Hag", Neil Thanet.

"Midnight Ghoul", Robin Tate.

SN 82, 1963. **THE FACE OF FEAR**, Pel Torro.

SN 83, 1963. "Travellers' Rest", Trebor Thorpe.

"The Reluctant Corpse", Rene Rolant.

"The Clubmen", Leo Brett.

"Roman Twilight", Olaf Trent.

"Psychic Circle", R.L. Fanthorpe.

"The Man Who Knew", Bron Fane.

"Land of Green Shadows", Peter O'Flinn.

Note: O'Linn on first page of story.

SN 84, 1964. **UNKNOWN DESTINY**, Bron Fane.

SN 85, 1964. "The Sword and the Statue", Trebor Thorpe.

"Endor's Daughter", Thornton Bell.

"Dark Staircase", Lee Barton.

"The Abbot's Ring", Robin Tate.

"Avenging Goddess", R. Lionel Fanthorpe.

"Valley of the Kings", Olaf Trent.

- SN 86, 1964. **BEYOND THE VEIL**, Neil Thanet.
- SN 87, 1964. “The Warlock”, Bron Fane.
“The Eldritch Guide”, Robin Tate.
“Lord of the Black Valley”, Oben Lerteth.
“Bell Book and Candle”, Thornton Bell.
“**Death Has Two Faces**”, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.
 (“The Chinese Lustre Vase”, Phil Nobel).
Note: probably by Harry Mansfield.
“Vengeance from the Past”, Lee Barton.
- SN 88, 1964. **THE MAN WHO CAME BACK**, Neil Thanet.
- SN 89, 1964. “Vampire’s Moon”, Rene Rolant.
“Curse of the Incas”, Robin Tate.
“Return of the Banshee”, Peter O’Flinn.
“I’ll Never Leave You”, Phil Nobel.
“The Phantom Galleon”, Lee Barton.
“**The Shrouded Abbot**”, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.
- SN 90, 1964. **THE MACABRE ONES**, Bron Fane.
Also: John Spencer & Co., 1974.
Note: This is the only known hardcover Badger reprint published by John Spencer.
- SN 91, 1964. “**The Hand from Gehenna**”, Phil Nobel.
“Suddenly... At Twilight”, R.L. Fanthorpe.
“The Troll”, Bron Fane.
“The Manhattan Warlock”, Elton T. Neef.
“The Bow and the Bugle”, Othello Baron.
 (“The Lady Loves Cats”, Thornton Bell).
Note: probably by Harry Mansfield.
“The Devil’s Brood”, Robin Tate.
- SN 92, 1964. **CHAOS**, Thornton Bell.
- SN 93, 1964. “Time Out of Mind”, Lee Barton.
“The Ghoul and the Goddess”, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.
“**The Walking Shadow**”, Bron Fane.
“Dungeon Castle”, Trebor Thorpe.
“In a Glass Darkly”, Robin Tate.

- “The Laird”, Neil Balfort.
“The Lake Thing”, Pel Torro.
- SN 94, 1965. **THE EXORCISTS**, John E. Muller.
- SN 95, 1965. “The Return of Albertus”, Leo Barton *[sic]*
Note: Lee Barton on story header.
“The Golem”, Leo Brett
“Dragon’s Blood Mountain”, Trebor Thorpe
“Grimoire”, Thornton Bell
“Spring Fever”, Robin Tate
“**Bitter Reflection**”, R. Lionel Fanthorpe
- SN 96, 1965. **THE TRIPLE MAN**, R.L. Fanthorpe
- SN 97, 1965. “**Call of the Wild**”, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.
“The Zoologist”, Pel Torro.
“Isles of the Blessed”, Peter O’Flynn.
“The Border Raider”, Oben Lerteth.
“The Accursed”, Bron Fane.
- SN 98, 1965. **SPECTRE OF DARKNESS**, John E. Muller.
- SN 99, 1965. “Shadow of Fear”, Rene Rolant.
“The Prodigy”, Bron Fane.
“The Paint Box”, Elton T. Neef.
“**Vision of the Damned**”, R.L. Fanthorpe.
“Reading Room”, Oben Lerteth.
“The Attic”, Deutero Spartacus.
- SN 100, 1965. **OUT OF THE NIGHT**, John E. Muller.
- SN 101, 1965. “**The Sealed Sarcophagus**”, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.
“Girdle of Fear”, Bron Fane.
“Trouble in Mind”, Neil Balfort.
 (“God’s Sin Eater”, Robin Tate).
Note: by Harry Mansfield.
“The Unconfined”, Othello Baron.
“The Wanderer”, Peter O’Flynn.
- SN 102, 1966 **THE UNCONFINED**, R.L. Fanthorpe.
Note: The title is the same as a short story in the previous issue.

SN 103, 1966. "Repeat Programme", Bron Fane.

"The House that Wouldn't Die", Robin Tate.

"Corporal Death", Lee Barton.

"Stranger in the Shadow"

Note: Elton T. Neef on contents page and R.L. Fanthorpe on cover.

"Au Pair", Rene Rolant.

"The Reluctant Corpse", Lionel Fanthorpe.

Note: This is the same title as a different story in SN 83.

SN 104, 1966. **THE SHADOW MAN**, Lee Barton.

SN 105, 1966. **"Curse of the Khan"**, R. Lionel Fanthorpe.

"Chimney Piece", Peter O'Flinn.

"Uncle Julian's Typewriter", Elton T. Neefe.

"The Resurrected Enemy", Bron Fane.

"Lord of the Craggs", Oben Lerteth.



Miscellaneous Short Stories Published by John Spencer & Co.

- *Futuristic Science Stories*, Badger #6, 1951
“Worlds Without End”, Lionel Roberts.
- *Futuristic Science Stories*, Badger #7, 1952
“Discovery”, Lionel Fanthorpe.
- *Futuristic Science Stories*, Badger #11, 1953
“The Clipper Ships of Space”, Lionel Fanthorpe.
“Raw Material”, Lionel Roberts.
- *Futuristic Science Stories*, Badger #13, 1953
“Time Tangle”, Lionel Roberts.
- *Futuristic Science Stories*, Badger #14, 1954
“Saucers from Space”, Trebor Thorpe.
- *Futuristic Science Stories*, Badger #15, 1954
“The Green Hell of Venus”, Pel Torro.
- *Wonders of the Spaceways*, Badger #10, 1954
“Marauders of the Void”, Lionel Roberts.
- *World of Fantasy*, Badger #5, 1952
“Vengeance of Trelko”, Lionel Roberts
- *World of Fantasy*, Badger #10, 1953
“Princess in a Bubble”, Trebor Thorpe.
“Last Command”, Lionel Roberts.
- *World of Fantasy*, Badger #12, 1954
“Martian Bonanza”, Lionel Roberts.
- *World of Fantasy*, Badger #14, 1954
“Conquest”, Bron Fane
“Twin”, Trebor Thorpe.



Non-Badger Books and Stories

This is necessarily an incomplete listing of some of the other works by Fanthorpe. Most of these are much more recent than the Badgers and of a more serious nature. He and his wife Patricia are extremely prolific authors, and have published a wide variety of materials from books on unexplained mysteries, religious texts, children's books, and even greeting cards. I'm including this section out of a sense of fairness, lest the reader think that the hastily written Badgers are Lionel Fanthorpe's sole contribution to the literary world. They were in fact written only during a brief portion of his very young writing career and should be judged accordingly.

- *Phantom Magazine Stories*, January 1958, "Ye Antique Shop".
- *Phantom Magazine Stories*, February 1958, "The Manuscript".
- **THE BLACK LION**. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. Cardiff, Greystoke Mobray. 1979.
- *Pictures at An Exhibition*, Ed. Ian Watson. Cardiff, Greystoke Mobray. 1981. "Et in Arcadia Ego".
- **THE HOLY GRAIL REVEALED: THE REAL SECRET OF RENNES-LE-CHÂTEAU**. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. Hollywood, Newcastle Publishing. 1982.
- **THE STORY OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI**. Lionel Fanthorpe. London, Bishopsgate Press. 1989.
- **GOD IN ALL THINGS**. Lionel Fanthorpe. London, Bishopsgate Press. 1987.
- *Horror: 100 Best Books*. Editors S. Jones and K. Newman. London, Xanadu. 1988. "The Dark Tower".
- **THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS FOR TROUBLED TIMES**. Lionel Fanthorpe. London, Bishopsgate Press. 1989.
- **BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF THE BIBLE**. Lionel Fanthorpe. Hildenborough, Kent, Bishopsgate Press. 1990.
- **THE CHRISTMAS STORY**. Lionel Fanthorpe. London, Bishopsgate Press. 1990.
- **SECRETS OF RENNES-LE-CHÂTEAU**. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. York Beach, ME, Samuel Weiser Inc. 1992.

- **JOSEPH: DREAMER, PRISONER AND PROVIDER.** Lionel Fanthorpe. Hildenborough, Kent, Bishopsgate Press. 1992.
- **NOAH AND THE GREAT FLOOD.** Lionel Fanthorpe. Hildenborough, Kent, Bishopsgate Press. 1992.
- **THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS FOR LONELY TIMES.** Lionel Fanthorpe. Hildenborough, Kent, Bishopsgate Press. 1992.
- **THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS WEEK BY WEEK.** Lionel Fanthorpe. Hildenborough, Kent, Bishopsgate Press. 1992.
- **THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS.** Lionel Fanthorpe. Hildenborough, Kent, Bishopsgate Press. 1992.
- *Orycon 15 Program Book.* Lionel Fanthorpe. Portland. 1993. “The Smoothbundia Hypothesis”.
- **CHILDREN OF THE BIBLE.** Lionel Fanthorpe. Hildenborough, Kent, Bishopsgate Press. 1994.
- **THE ABBOT’S KITCHEN.** Lionel Fanthorpe. Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex, Bellevue Books. 1995.
- **THE OAK ISLAND MYSTERY.** Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. Toronto, Hounslow Press. 1995.



Bibliographic Supplement (1999)

Debbie Cross and Brian J. Hunt

At this time, all the bibliographic information in *Down the Badger Hole* remains true, however some additional information has been brought to my attention. Also, Lionel and Patricia keep writing new books so it's time for a brief update. Thanks to Sean Wallace and Steve Holland who contributed many of the foreign language titles. Also thanks to Denny Lien and Lance Casebeer for identifying of some of the cover art. I have also drawn from *Badger Tracks* by Steve Holland.

– Debbie Cross



Science
Fiction

DOWN THE BADGER HOLE



Bibliographic Supplement

Debbie Cross • Brian J. Hunt

Corrections

Corrections to *Down the Badger Hole*: *

Page 15, line 7 should read *Menace from Mercury*.

Page 152, SN 74 is *From Realms Beyond*.

* Both corrections have been made in this ebook.



Badger Science Fiction Series by Number

The Badger Science Fiction series is here listed by number only. For a numeric listing of the Supernatural series see [Badger Supernatural Series](#) in *Down the Badger Hole*. Only issues by Fanthorpe or with stories by him included are listed. You may assume any number not listed is written by someone else. Where I have actually seen Badgers with Australian or New Zealand prices replacing the British price, I have noted it. It seems reasonable to assume that many more if not all have foreign counterparts.

- SF 1 *The Waiting World*
- SF 14 *Destination Moon*
- SF 15 *Alien from the Stars*: AH
- SF 17 *Hyperspace*: AH
- SF 18 *Dawn of the Mutants*
- SF 20 *Space Borne*
- SF 22 *Fiends*
- SF 23 *Time Echo*: AH, MB, MP
- SF 25 *Doomed World* (Cover art similar to Ace D-103 *Solar Lottery* by P.K. Dick)
- SF 26 *Cyclops in the Sky*
- SF 27 *Satellite*
- SF 35 *Asteroid Man*: AH, AM
- SF 37 *The In-World*: AH (Cover art from Ace D-199 and G-599, *Star Guard* by Andre Norton)
- SF 38 *Lightning World*: AH (Cover art from Ace D-345 *Voodoo Planet* by Andrew North, pseudonym of Andre Norton)
- SF 39 *The Face of X*: AH (Cover art from Ace D-237 *The Secret Visitors* by James White)
- SF 40 *Exit Humanity*: AH (Cover art from Ace D-391 *The World Swappers* by John Brunner)
- SF 41 *Juggernaut*: AH, AM, TC (*Blue Juggernaut*)
- SF 42 *Frozen Planet*: AH

- SF 43 *The Microscopic Ones*
- SF 44 *Hand of Doom*: AH (Same cover art as Ace D-421, *Slavers of Space* by John Brunner)
- SF 45 *World of the Gods*
- SF 46 *Last Man On Earth*
- SF 47 *Faceless Planet*
- SF 49 *Flame Mass* (Same cover art as Ace D-455 *Best from Fantasy and SF: 4th Series*)
- SF 50 *A 1000 Years On*: CA
- SF 52 *The Synthetic Ones*
- SF 53 *March of the Robots*
- SF 54 *Mind Force*: LH
- SF 55 *Rodent Mutation*: AH
- SF 56 *The Ultimate Man*
- SF 57 *The Uninvited*
- SF 58 *The Mind Makers*
- SF 60 *Crimson Planet*: AH
- SF 62 *The Venus Venture*: AH, V
- SF 63 *Forbidden Planet*: AH
- SF 66 *Perilous Galaxy*
- SF 67 *Uranium 235*: AH
- SF 68 *The Man Who Conquered Time*
- SF 69 *Orbit One*: AH, MB, MP, PB
- SF 70 *Micro-Infinity*
- SF 71 *Beyond Time*: AH
- SF 72 *Infinity Machine*
- SF 73 *The Day the World Died*: V
- SF 74 *The X Machine*
- SF 77 *Space Fury*: AH, V
- SF 78 *Walk Through Tomorrow*: V
- SF 79 *Android*
- SF 80 *Atomic Nemesis*
- SF 81 *Zero Minus X*: AH
- SF 82 *Escape to Infinity*
- SF 83 *Radar Alert*: AH, V
- SF 84 *World of Tomorrow*: AH, TC (*World of the Future*)
- SF 85 *The World That Never Was*

- SF 86 *Galaxy 666*: AH, LB, T
- SF 87 *Formula 29X*: T, TC (*Beyond the Barrier of Space*)
- SF 88 *Negative Minus*
- SF 89 *The Intruders*
- SF 91 *Through the Barrier*
- SF 92 *Somewhere Out There*: AH
- SF 93 *The Last Astronaut*: T
- SF 94 *The Alien Ones*: A, AH, FS, T
- SF 95 *Power Sphere*: AH
- SF 96 *Reactor XK9*
- SF 97 *Special Mission*: V
- SF 98 *Space Trap*: AH
- SF 99 *The Planet Seekers*: V
- SF 100 *Nemesis*
- SF 101 *The Return*: A, AH, V, TC (*Exiled in Space*)
- SF 102 *Suspension*: A, V
- SF 103 *Projection Infinity*: V
- SF 104 *Dark Continuum*
- SF 105 *Mark of the Beast*
- SF 106 *Space No Barrier*: LH, TC (*Man of Metal*)
- SF 107 *No Way Back*: AH
- SF 108 *Neuron World*
- SF 109 *The Negative Ones*: A
- SF 110 *Force 97X*
- SF 111 *Man from Beyond*: A, AH
- SF 112 *Beyond the Void*
- SF 113 *Barrier 346*: AH
- SF 114 *Girl from Tomorrow*: NZ
- SF 115 *U.F.O. 517*
- SF 116 *Phenomena X*
- SF 117 *Survival Project*: AH
- SF 118 *The Watching World*: A

Key to abbreviations above

- A = Australian-priced Badger seen.
- AH = Arcadia House hardcover edition.

- AM = Ambassador hardcover edition.
- CA = Same cover art as another book, noted in *Down the Badger Hole*
- FS = Five Star Paperback edition.
- LB = Leisure Books paperback edition.
- LH = Lenox Hill hardcover edition.
- MB = MacFadden-Bartell paperback edition.
- MP = Modern Promotion paperback edition.
- NZ = New Zealand-priced Badger seen.
- PB = Pitt Bond paperback edition.
- ST = Starbooks paperback edition.
- T = Tower Books paperback edition.
- TC = Title Change in non-Badger editions.
- V = Vega paperback edition.



Foreign Language Editions

The following list of foreign language editions was taken from a list of foreign edition Badgers compiled by Sean Wallace for PBO. It is probably not comprehensive. I welcome any additional information.

- *Android* (SF 79) by Karl Zeigfried
 - Germany:** Utopia Zukunft 372, 1963 as *Gift sate Hass*.
- *Asteroid Man* (SF 35) by R.L. Fanthorpe
 - Germany::** Terra Utopische Romane 223, 1962 as *Der Herr der Asteroiden*
 - Italy:** I Romanzi del Cosmo 96, 1962 as *L'uomo asteroide*
 - Spain:** Toray/Espacio 13, c.1960s as *El Hombre Asteroide*
- *Atomic Nemesis* (SF 80) by Karl Zeigfried
 - Germany:** Utopia Zukunft 399, 1964 as *Das Atom-Gespenst*.
 - Italy:** Urania 332, 1964 as *Il Nemico di nebbia*
- *Beyond Time* (SF 71) by John E. Muller
 - Barcelona:** Cenit 68, 211p., 1964 as *Mas alla del tiempo*
- *The Darker Drink* (SN 61)
 - Barcelona:** Molino, 156p., 1966, short story collection as *La pocima maligna*
 - “La pocima maligna” by R.L. Fanthorpe. “The Darker Drink”
 - “Una laguna en el tiempo” by B. Fane. “Chasm of Time”
 - “El capitulo incompleto” by P. Torro. “The Unfinished Chapter”
 - “La sombra que grune” by T. Thorpe. “The Snarling Shadow”
 - “La urna tallada” by L. Brett. “The Bevelled Casket”
 - “Buscando la musica” by N. Bertram. “Scraping the Barrel”
- *Destination Moon* (SF 14) by L.P. Kenton
 - Germany:** Utopia Zukunft 293, c. 1961 as *Spinne 4 Totet Den Grunen*
- *Die Todesboten* (correlating Badger undetermined) by Pel Torro
 - Germany:** Bastei-Verlag Gespenster Krimi 304, c. 1970s
- *Dominaré la Tierra* (correlating Badger undetermined) by Lionel Roberts.
 - Spain:** Toray/Best-Sellers del Espacio 7
- *Doomed World* (SF 25) by R.L. Fanthorpe

- Germany:** Zimmermann and/or Balowa Verlag, 1962 as *Welt des Verderbens*
- *Exit Humanity* (SF 40) by Leo Brett

Germany: Utopia Zukunft 339, 1962 as *Der Weg zur Vernichtung*
- *Face in the Night* (SN 58) by Leo Brett

Germany: Bastei-Verlag Gespenster Drimi 126, 1975 as *Das Geister-schloss*
- *The Face of X* (SF 39) by Lionel Roberts

Germany: Utopia Zukunft 367, 1963 as *Qualta weckt Tote*
- *Fiends* (SF 22) by R.L. Fanthorpe

Italy: I Romanzi del Cosmo 79, 1961 as *La Leggenda del dio d'oro*
- *Flame Mass* (SF 49) by R.L. Fanthorpe

Germany: Utopia Zukunft 363, 1963 as *Die lebende Fackel*

Spain: Toray/Best-Sellers del Espacio 9, c1960s as *Ladrón de Cerebros*
- *Forbidden Planet* (SF 63) by John E. Muller

Spain: Vertice/Galaxia 63 as *El Planeta Prohibido*
- *Frozen Planet* (SF 42) by Pel Torro

Germany: Utopia Grossband 178, 1962 as *Der Sucher*

Italy: Super Spazio 4, 1962 as *Il pianeta congelato*
- *Galaxy 666* (SF 86) by Pel Torro

Italy: I Romanzi del Cosmo 130, 1963 as *Galassia 666*
- *Gli Eredi del Potere* (correlating Badger undetermined) by John E. Muller (maybe not Fanthorpe)

Italy: Urania 269, 1961
- *Gli Stranieri invisibili* (correlating Badger undetermined) by John E. Muller (maybe not Fanthorpe)

Italy: I Romanzi del Cosmo 131, 1963
- *The Golden Chalice* (SN 50) by R.L. Fanthorpe

Germany: Bastei-Verlag Gespenster Krimi 130, c.1976 as *Der Kelch des Satans*
- *Hand of Doom* (SF 44) by R.L. Fanthorpe

Italy: Super Spazio 5, 1962 as *40° secolo*
- *Hyperspace* (SF 17) by R.L. Fanthorpe

Germany: Utopia Zukunft 390, 1964 as *Das schwarze Ungeheuer*

Italy: Super Spazio 8, 1962 as *Quart dimensione*
- *The Immortals* (SN 62) by Leo Brett

- Italy:** I Capolavori della series KKK. Classici dell’Orrore 96, 1967 as *Gli immortali*
- *Infinity Machine* (SF 72) by John E. Muller

Germany: Utopia Zukunft 382, 1963 as *Geborgen in Stahl*
- *The Intruders* (SF 89) by Bron Fane

Germany: Utopia Zukunft 399, 1964 as *Die Seuche reiste mit*
- *Juggernaut* (SF 41) by Bron Fane

Germany: Utopia Grossband 182, 1962 as *Das blaue Monster*

Italy: Super Spazio 7, 1962 as *Juggernaut*
- *The Last Astronaut* (SF 93) by Pel Torro

Germany: Utopia Zukunft 392, 1964 as *Der letzte Astronaut*
- *March of the Robots* (SF 53) by Leo Brett

Italy: Super Spazio 3, 1962 as *La minaccia viene dallo spazio*
- *Mark of the Beast* (SF 105) by John E. Muller

Germany: Eric Pabel Vampir Roman 58, 1974 as *Das Monster*
- *Micro Infinity* (SF 70) by John E. Muller

Germany: Utopia Zukunft 378, 1963 as *Die Mikro-Waffe*
- *Mind Force* (SF 54) by Leo Brett

Spain: Toray/Best-Sellers del Espacio 4, c 1960s as *El Poder Mental*
- *The Mind Makers* (SF 58) by John E. Muller

Germany: Utopia Zukunft 419, 1965 as *Mord im Hyperraum*
- *Negative Minus* (SF 88) by R.L. Fanthorpe

Italy: I Romanzi del Cosmo 131, 1963 as *La menti di Otyr*
- *The Negative Ones* (SF 109) by John E. Muller

Italy: I Romanzi del Cosmo 195, 1966 as *I negativi*
- *Nightmare* (SN 54) by Leo Brett

Germany: Bastei-Verlag Gespenster Krimi 418, [1980] as *Die Alptrauminsel*
- *Out of the Darkness* (SN 35) by R.L. Fanthorpe

Italy: I Romanzi del Cosmo 118, 1963 as *Maledizione Occulta*
- *Pánico en Londres* (correlating Badger undetermined) by R.L. Fanthorpe

Spain: Toray/Best-Sellers del Espacio 3
- *Perilous Galaxy* (SF 66) by John E. Muller

Germany: Zauberkreis SF 175, 1976 as *Gefahr aus der Galaxis*
- *The Planet Seekers* (SF 99) by Erle Barton

Germany: Utopia Zukunft 423, 1965 as *Anders als wir Menschen*

- *Space Trap* (SF 98) by Thornton Bell
Germany: Utopia Zukunft 411, 1964 as *Gestrandet auf Terra*
- *Spectre of Darkness* (SN 8) by John E. Muller
Germany: Erich Pabel Vampir Roman 53, 1974 as *Der Steinerne Damon*
- *The Synthetic Ones* (SF 52) by R.L. Fanthorpe
Barcelona: Toray/Espacio 7, 1962 as *Dominare la Tierra*
- *Time Echo* (SF 23) by Lionel Roberts
Italy: I Romanzi del Cosmo 62, 1960 as *Eco Nel Tempo*
- *The Uninvited* (SF 57) by John E. Muller
Spain: Vertice/Galaxia 72 as *La No Invitada*
- *The Unseen* (SN 78) by Lee Barton
Germany: Erich Pabel Vampir Roman 50, 1974 as *Die Blutsauger*
- *Uranium 235* (SF 67) by John E. Muller
Spain: Cenit/Ciencia-Ficción 69 as *Uranium-235*
- *The Venus Venture* (SF 62) by John E. Muller
Spain: Vértice/Galaxia 54 as *La Aventura de Venus*
- *The Waiting World* (SF 1) by R.L. Fanthorpe
Germany: Utopia Zukunft 417, 1965 as *Dorora, das Marsungeheuer*
Italy: Urania 242, 1960 as *I canali di Marte*
- *Walk Through Tomorrow* (SF 78) by Karl Zeigfried
Germany: Utopia Zukunft 374, 1963 as *Weg ins Morgen*
- *World of the Gods* (SF 45) by Pel Torro
Germany: Utopia Zukunft 362, 1963. as *Im gelben Nebel*
- *World of Tomorrow* (SF 84) by Karl Zeigfreid
Sweden: Lindquists LP-Pocket 8, 1969. as *Morgondagens Värld*
- *Zero Minus X* (SF 81) by Karl Zeigfreid
Spain: Cenit/Ciencia-Ficción 72 as *Cero Menos X*



Non-Fiction

Miscellaneous non-fiction publications not previously listed in *Down the Badger Hole*.

- “Hands on the Wheel” in *Dancing with the Dark: True encounters with the Paranormal by Masters of the Macabre* edited by Stephen Jones, Vista, 1997.
- *The Holy Grail Revealed: The Real Secret of Rennes-Le-Château*. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. Hollywood, Newcastle Publishing, 1982. Revised Third Edition, San Bernardino, The Borgo Press, 1989.
- *Mysteries of the Bible*. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. Toronto, Hounslow Press, 1999.
- *Rennes-Le-Château: Its Mysteries and Secrets*. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex, Bellevue Books, 1991. As *Secrets of Rennes-Le-Château*, York Beach, ME, Samuel Weiser Inc., 1992.
- *Spencer’s Decimal Payroll Tables*. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. London, John Spencer, 1971.
- *Spencer’s Metric Conversion Tables*. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. London, John Spencer, 1970.
- *Spencer’s Metric and Decimal Guidebook*. Lionel Fanthorpe and W.H. Farrar. London, John Spencer, 1970.
- *Spencer’s Metric and Decimal Companion*. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. London, John Spencer, 1971.
- *Spencer’s Office Guide*. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. London, John Spencer, 1971.
- *Thoughts and Prayers for Christian Families*. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. Hildenborough, Kent, Bishopsgate Press, 1999.
- *Thoughts and Prayers for Growing Christians*. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. Hildenborough, Kent. Bishopsgate Press, 1999.
- *Thoughts and Prayers for the Bereaved*. Lionel Fanthorpe. Hildenborough, Kent, Bishopsgate Press, 1995.
- *Thoughts and Prayers for the Healing Times..* Lionel Fanthorpe. Hildenborough, Kent, Bishopsgate Press, 1995.

- *Thoughts and Prayers with the Bible: Volume 1 Old Testament*. Lionel Fanthorpe. Hildenborough, Kent, Bishopsgate Press, 1995.
- *Thoughts and Prayers with the Bible: Volume 2 New Testament*. Lionel Fanthorpe. Hildenborough, Kent, Bishopsgate Press, 1995.
- *The World's Greatest Unsolved Mysteries*. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. Toronto, Hounslow Press, 1997.
- *The World's Most Mysterious Objects*. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. Toronto, Hounslow Press, 2000.
- *The World's Most Mysterious People*. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. Toronto, Hounslow Press, 1998.
- *The World's Most Mysterious Places*. Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe. Toronto, Hounslow Press, 1999.



Miscellaneous Short Fiction

Some of these were previously listed, but here they have been rearranged alphabetically by story title.

- “The Eli Still Show”, a dramatic presentation comprising “The Monster of Gruesome Grange”, “Eli Still Goes On”, and “Frankie and Johnny Part 2” in *The BECCON Plays* compiled by Roger Robinson, BECCON Publications, Essex, 1985.
- “Et in Arcadia Ego” in *Pictures at An Exhibition*, ed. by Ian Watson. Cardiff, Greystoke Mobray, November 1981.
- “The Haunted Showroom” in *Eastern Electricity Magazine*, vol. 10 #1.
- “The Manuscript” in *Phantom*, February 1958.
- “Memory Cell” in *Fear II*, 1978.
- “A Pattern of Pyramids” in *Fantasy Stories* ed. by Mike Ashley. London, Robinson Publishing, 1996. Also as *The Random House Book of Fantasy Stories*. New York, Random House, 1997.
- “Priest-King of Tarxien” with Patricia Fanthorpe in *Interzone* #107, May 1996.
- “The Reverend Doctor Hugh John Green: Rector of the Pond” in *Reminiscon 40 Souvenir Programme*, ed. by Paul V.S. Townsend, 1992.
- “The Reverend Doctor Hugh John Green and the Alien Invasion” with Patricia Fanthorpe in the *Orycon 20 Program Book*, 1998.
- “A Science Fiction Prayer” in *Nexus*, Spring 1992.
- “The Secret Journey of Father Riviere” in *1st UK Paperback & Pulp Bookfair Official Souvenir Booklet*, ed. by Steve Holland. September 1991.
- “Ship in the Night” in *Red Shift*, December 1978.
- “The Smoothbundia Hypothesis” in *Orycon 15 Program Book*. Portland, OR 1993.
- “Ye Antique Shop” in *Phantom*, January 1958.





More Excerpts

Further quotations not previously collected in Down the Badger Hole.

“Well?” It was a monosyllable and yet it conveyed volumes.

A 1,000 Years On by John E. Muller p.90

“Where?” It was a monosyllable charged with meaning.

A 1,000 Years On by John E. Muller p.126

“So,” said the German interrogatively.

The Microscopic Ones by Leo Brett p.153

“Huh?” The single exclamation was loaded with meaning.

Flame Mass by R.L. Fanthorpe P. 93

“Hmm,” said Plumbus; it was a very thoughtful monosyllable. “Hmm,” he said again, as though thoroughly satisfied with the noise that he had made on the first occasion.

The Intruders by Bron Fane p.15

“Go on,” she urged. To see those two monosyllables “go on” in plain black and white, could never have conveyed to the reader one hundredth part of the depth of sympathy and encouragement which they contained, when Thelma Starr’s voice uttered them.

The Immortals by Leo Brett p.52

Earth has been inhabited solely by women for 1,000 years when “humanoid” males finally land. The Earth woman tells them the story of how a form of radiation put all the men into a kind of suspended animation and made all women immortal.

“The story, please,” urged the commander. “What happened then?”

“Oh, we just waited and waited, and we got on with things as best we could, and we discovered to our cost that women have serious liabilities in some fields. We’re just not technically minded. Some women are, we’ve got one or two good scientists, but we can’t fly and man the equipment like we used to. We don’t drive and direct our technology like we used to. We get by;

we're comfortable, but there's no progress any more, we've stagnated. The whole world is a barren and sterile as we are ourselves without our men."

A 1,000 Years On by John E. Muller p.146

The temperature in the freezing chamber was very low indeed, far far below zero. It was the kind of temperature which could only be measured in degrees absolute and not many of them!

Suspension by Bron Fane p.94

The spaceship is making a strange whining sound and the crew can't find the cause.

"You've got no idea at all?" asked the Captain.

"I've got plenty of ideas," returned Schafft, "the thing is, how many of them are right? And how much time have we got in which to test them out? It could, I suppose, be one of the sigmel bearings on the main riffel drive. It could be one of the golandian bars come adrift near the akon chamber....It might be the magnetrox in the helvon compartment."

The Intruders by Bron Fane p.8

Kramer had the kind of personality which you could not ignore. Kramer was the kind of personality whom you could hate, or whom you could regard as a loyal friend; Kramer could never be a nonentity. It was the very antithesis of Kramerism.

The Intruders by Bron Fane p 76

Bonhomme was the epitomisation of all ivy-covered professors. He was the essence of ivy-coveredness.

From Realms Beyond by Leo Brett p.18

He pressed the button of the vibratory emulator; there was an inaudible beam, a wavelength of death, a movement that was less than a movement, and a motion that was less than a motion. And yet there were movements and motions that were more than movements and motions.

Android by Karl Zeigfreid p.151

Weston made a thorough last-minute check, and that one eye of his seemed to take in as much as three ordinary optic orbs.

Power Sphere by Leo Brett p.49

A strange odour came to Hargreaves' nostrils. He could not recognize it at first, yet it frightened him. Then suddenly horribly, he knew what it was. It

was the smell of death, the aroma of decay, the odour of perishability, the effluvium of ephemerality. It was the emanation of doom, the smoke of mortification, the reek of putrefaction. It was the nidor of the lower regions.

The Exorcists by John E. Muller p.118

Time passed.

More time passed.

Power Sphere by Leo Brett p.158

“Our farmer is dead,” said Carruthers, “very, very dead. He’ll never put his hand to the plough again. He’ll never mix another insecticide, or weedkiller. He’s gone where the good agricultural chemists go – wherever that is... if there is a heaven for agricultural chemists!”

The Mind Makers by John E. Muller p.84

The grey voice of the grey Seaforth glided greyly on to their ears, like a tide of putrescent grey molasses.

“The Room With the Broken Floor” by Pel
Torro in SN 53

There was silence for a few minutes. Silence, that is, except for the whining noise, which continued to grow.

The Intruders by Bron Fane p.7

A metal face cannot look surprised, but this one tried to. A metal face cannot really look hurt, but this one had a damn good shot at it.

Power Sphere by Leo Brett p.27

...Ken Andrews contorted his hitherto placid features into the most peculiar grimace that even his expressive face had ever produced in all his thirty-odd years. The face looked at the top as though it had set out to wring itself into a scowl of sufficient ferocity to frighten a cannibal chief. Just above the nose, however, it appeared that the brows had decided not to scowl with the forehead, but to go in for some strange new physiognomical contortion, and had succeeded beyond their most extravagant dreams. The nose was wrinkled from bridge top to tip, until it looked more like an escalator with worn treads than a human nose. Every nerve and muscle in the face was acting and reacting violently with every other muscle with which it was connected. The motor nerves were revving at maximum, and the muscles on the receiving end of those impulses were twitching and contracting like the legendary

private who didn't know whether he wanted a sneeze, a shampoo, or a shave!

On either side of the nose the eyes had suddenly become red hot, judging from their contortions! The cheeks had grown horribly disproportionate. One was puffed out like a Cox's Orange Pippin; the other had fallen oddly in upon itself, as though in a paroxysm of fury, Ken Andrews had sucked it in toward the interior of his mouth and then bitten it savagely to see what it tasted like....

His mouth itself was pursed and wrinkled so hard against his teeth that he looked as if he had been sucking alum crystals which had been given him instead of sherbet by a malicious practical joker.

This oral elasticity had produced a series of dimples in the chin that made it look like one of those rather odd little ornaments with "Best wishes from Blackpool" or "Compliments of the season from Margate" painted over cockle shells that had been stuck into plaster of Paris and then painted a nauseating, sickly color.

Radar Alert by Karl Zeigfreid pp.46-47

The chest was deep, solid; the man's thorax was almost cubic. The arms hung long from the shoulders, thick as the arms of a great ape, and almost as hairy. It was as though the hirsute covering of the scalp had decided that its tenure was incredibly dangerous, and had taken refuge on the arms.

The Exorcists by John E. Muller p.5

In the flickering flame he could see something coming towards him, a thing that had once been human, a thing that had once lived and moved and drawn human breath and pulsed with human blood. A thing that had been partially torn away by the blast of the energy gun. A thing that had no right to live. A walking dead thing....

The corpse of the doorman was moving again.

Flame Mass by R.L. Fanthorpe p.107

He turned to Colonel Rochdale and said, "Mmmmmmmmm!"

Colonel Rochdale turned to his sergeant and said, "Mmmmmmmmm!"

The sergeant cast a knowing glance in the direction of the corporal who waited by the door.

Neither Rochdale nor the sergeant had any idea why they had said, "Mmmm." The sergeant had no particular idea, either, why he had given a meaningful glance to the corporal. If there was a premium on all those meaningful glances which are exchanged by members of the community who

haven't the faintest idea what the meaningful glances mean, then the man who collects the premium would be a millionaire overnight, even if it was only a penny a head.

Radar Alert by Karl Zeigfreid pp.44-45

"Oh, you poor mutt, why don't you connect the primary convertor to the rellar-bar, ad then reverse-pole your cathode."

"Discovery" from *Futuristic Science Stories*
#7 by Lionel Roberts p.101

DEEP, deep down in the labyrinthine laboratory Runy O'Tarka opened his eyes and realised that he was in the unenviable position of having the great grandfather of all living headaches. It was a beaut! It was a corker. It was a supurb thing. An unsurpassable thing. A thing of great magnificence and splendour. It could have adorned the royal porches of Suleiman the magnificent and the Maharajah of Magadore at the same time. There was enough of that headache to share round with ten ordinary men and keep them busy with aspirins and ice packs for ten days.

The Synthetic Ones by Lionel Roberts p.95

Reincarnation, he thought. Silly idea really. He dismissed it with typical British phlegm.

Black Infinity by Leo Brett pp.12-13

Norge Jansen was one extreme, Paul Whiteland was the other, as far as personalities went. Ritz was the "just right," like the washing powder adverts. Ritz MacQueen was the stuff that gave you pure white shirts and bright coloureds. The other two fellows were product X that didn't do so good, and left hidden dirt in, and all that sort of thing.

Juggernaut by Bron Fane pp.1-2

Lana woke feeling warm and comfortable, and strangely light heartedly amoral.

Spectre of Darkness by John E. Muller p.81

The darkness all around him was thick, black, stygian. It was a stifling, overwhelming, suffocating darkness. A horrifying terrifying darkness. A darkness of the nethermost pit of hell. Indescribable. It seemed an oppressive darkness, like the darkness of some foul underground dungeon, to which the blessed light of the sun never gained access. It was velvety, almost tactile. He

was inhaling it; it was penetrating the pores of his skin; it seemed that the world had always been darkness, that the world always would be darkness. It was a timeless darkness, a weird, horrifying, overwhelming eternal blackness. He felt as though this was the darkness of a tomb, and that he had been buried alive...

“Fly, Witch. Fly” by Leo Brett in SN 53 p.65

After capturing an alien spy composed entirely of blue vapour, they decide to expose it to various compounds to see what will kill it. Here they have just exposed it to nitric acid.

“I’m quite prepared to stake my chemical reputation,” said the technician, “that there is no life left whatsoever in that precipitate.”

“What is it?” asked Blish.

“I don’t know,” answered the chief technician. “If I knew what that alien was I could tell you what the precipitate is. All I can tell you is that it’s *something-or-other nitrate*.” he paused “You can call it ‘*alien nitrate*’ or ‘*nitrate of alien*’ but more than that I can’t tell you.”

Atomic Nemesis by Karl Zeigfreid pp.140-141

“No, I don’t believe you’re dead. The dead don’t walk, the dead don’t talk. They certainly don’t drink coffee for breakfast.”

The Exorcists by John E. Muller p.35

The co-pilot was right. Even with the eyes shut a blueness was still everywhere. The world had suddenly turned into a vast blue phantasmagoria, a panoply of blue that was everywhere. A vista of blue desert, of blue twilight. A blue glitter, a blue sparkle, a coralescing, scintillating blue that seemed to have no end and no beginning. There was no escape from it. It was an inevitable blue, an unescapable blue. They could smell it now, it seemed to be penetrating their nostrils, their lungs, the pores of their skin. It was seeping in to their bodies as though they were immersed in a bath of it. They felt that it was invading them, that somehow it was penetrating to the innermost depths of their souls, their minds and their bodies. There was no stopping that blueness.

Return of Zeus by John E. Muller p.101

The little man’s blows were raining into Plumbus’ midriff like rain falling on a haggis left out to cool on the kitchen step.

The Intruders by Bron Fane p 112

Man, ship and robot; three points of a triangle. A triangle, it was believed, was geometrically one of the strongest constructions. A triangle was immovable. Funny how one would think odd, Pythagorean thoughts. So long ago, and so far away, Pythagoras.

Power Sphere by Leo Brett p.52

Plumbus is being crushed by a man eating plant....

Plumbus's face had gone a rather grotesque shade. He was now Plumbus by name and plum coloured by nature! His face was now going through a number of interesting chromatic translations, beginning with puce and ending with magenta. Gradation and tints, subtle hues and colours that are rarely seen in the artist's palette expressed themselves.

The Intruders by Bron Fane p 132

"It's a long time since those 19th and 20th century science-fiction theories were aired, but a lot of those great old science-fiction writers had some incredibly good ideas." He paused thoughtfully. "Men like Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, John E. Muller, Karl Zeigfreid, Fanthorpe, and their contemporaries put forward as fiction a number of brilliantly imaginative schemes, which have since come to pass as fact."

Power Sphere by Leo Brett p.100+

He felt a complete lack of power. The terrible, overwhelming feeling of incapability and incapacity... his body felt totally inefficient. Its ineptitude and unfitness fell upon him like a kind of caducity.

He was disarmed, demobilised, defenceless, powerless. His exhaustion was complete; he was in a state of utter fatigue, complete collapse, and total breakdown. Unconsciousness passed over him in waves. He fainted; he swooned; he passed into a coma. A horrible numbness overtook him; a creeping narcosis stole across his body. He was in an awful torpor, atrophied.

He slowly opened his eyes again; consciousness returned for a fleeting second; consciousness returned long enough for him to be aware of his ineffectiveness and futility. He moved his arms, but it was only a flash in the pan. He felt like a figurehead, a dummy, a man of straw. He felt like an empty thing, a blank cartridge; he was null and void; he was of no effect. His entire body was inoperative.

How far away could death be now? He felt that life would soon be suspended, that it would be in abeyance, that it would be cancelled and

withdrawn. He felt that he was soon to be abrogated, abolished, swept away. That he would soon be gone by the board, that he would be obsolete.

Through the Barrier by Pel Torro pp.75-76

“Gentlemen,” his guttural voice seemed to rise from a corrugated iron stomach, via a barbed wire chest, and rattle out through a concrete larynx.

The Microscopic Ones by Leo Brett p.14

Beyond the sea a coastline, Greek coastline. Rugged, rocky, tortuous. A coastline as strong and as forthright as the nation who lived beyond it. The brilliant cunning of the Greek mind – as twisted as the inlets of their coastline, with its promontories, its peninsulas and its gulfs. Beyond the coastline fields. Cultivated fields; beyond the fields, mountains – high, forbidding, frightening, dangerous, and in the fields and the mountains, men ... Men in the cities too. Men in the cities and in the towns. Men of Athens, men of Corinth, men of Medara, men of the Peloponnesus, men of the great northern mainland, men of Naxos, men of the islands, men of Greece. Farmers, artificers, craftsmen, sailors, politicians, democrats, oligarchs, tyrants; living together in a great tangled heap of humanity. A heap of humanity that led the world in its own time, and whose influence extended for five millennia into the future. The World of ancient Greece. A world of gladness and beauty. A world of pain, and savagery, and death. A world very much like our own, a mixed world, a perplexing world. A world in which everything was different except basic human emotions. A world where there were secrets.

The Last Valkyrie by Lionel Roberts p.5

She hurried to the tiny bathroom and splashed rather than washed; flying upstairs again she dressed with breathless haste and flew through into the kitchenette of her miniature flat. Cornflakes spilled into a Swedish-modern plastic bowl like coins from a perverted Mint. Milk drenched the gold, dissolving it into a miry bog of gooey, yellow white mud. Sugar descended like badly thrown artificial snow in a provincial pantomime. It sank as snowflakes sink into river banks where there is not quite enough frost to freeze ugly mud and provide a safe anchorage for the miniature white stars. Estelle’s spoon dipped into the milk-sugar-grain sog and her even white teeth made some sort of pretence at catching the mouthfuls as they went through. Any relationship between the frenzied gulping and normal mastication was purely co-incidental.

The Girl from Tomorrow by Karl Zeigfreid
p.7

The dictator's wild barbaric eyes danced around the room as though amusing themselves, while the brain behind them thought out some new, and more diabolical scheme.

Formula 29X by Pel Torro pp.16-17

Such light as there was was extremely faint, it was indistinct, blurred, bleary, lack lustre, leaden, and foggy, but nevertheless it was light. It was nebulous and only half-glimpsed, but it was light. It was grey and grisled, but it was light, it was veiled and overshadowed, it was like light that had mildew on it. It was obscure, as though the wick of the cosmic torch had been turned down, but nevertheless it was light. And it began to grow brighter... The obfuscation lessened.

Formula 29X by Pel Torro pp.64-65

"Riddles! *Riddles!* Riddles!" stormed the police chief. "You should talk sense! You talk in conundrums! You speak enigmatically!"

"You speak repetitively," said the alien.

Escape to Infinity by Karl Zeigfreid p.98

Lorri Durak was a number-poet. He was a Wordsworth of the mathematical symbol, he was a slide-rule Tennyson; he was a Keats with the calculus, and a Hausman with algebra. He was a geometrical Burns, and a Shakespeare with quadratic equations.

They Never Came Back by Leo Brett p.7

Dr. Vlad sat back with his large ears poised like sinister microphones of flesh.

Return of Zeus by John E. Muller p.127

She hiccupped but she did it in a dainty, rather tantalising sort of way.

Black Infinity by Leo Brett p.8

It is better to find a rat's tail between your sandwich than not to have the kind of friend who is sufficiently interested in you as a person to be amused by putting a rat's tail in your sandwich.

Reactor XK9 by John E. Muller p.82

"I've carried that sword for twenty-five years. I've sharpened it, I've loved it, loved it like my own flesh and blood. I've run it through the guts of Gauls,

through the throats of Thebans, through the cartilage of Carthaginians,
through the bones of the Britians and through the thorax of Thracians.”

The Timeless Ones by Pel Torro p.24

Whatever you might think about Mike Sterne, he was the kind of man who counted. He was a significant kind of man. He could not be ignored. He could not be included under an “etc.” He was not an incidental, there was nothing inconsequential about him. He was all purpose; he was a big tough character, and every inch of him counted.

Escape to Infinity by Karl Zeigfreid p.7

So there they were – he, Tom and the Irishman, against the sinister, voluptuous Italian, the frozen spinster with the antique rings, the dour enigmatical Scot, and the three deadly solicitors.

The Silver Chalice by R.L. Fanthorpe p.54

“You know, if this wasn’t 1961, and I wasn’t cold sober, I’d say we’d either got into the future or got mixed up in a science fiction story.” said Steele.

The Synthetic Ones by Lionel Roberts p.11



Ebook Extras

Supplement: Deleted Scenes

Debbie Cross and Brian J. Hunt had gathered even more Badger excerpts in electronic form for the [Bibliographic Supplement \(1999\)](#) as above, but space was limited in a booklet of just 20 pages plus covers. Here, from Debbie's digital records, are the quotations that didn't make it into print in 1999.

– David Langford

A THOUSAND MILLION people were glued round their television sets, listening. Europeans, Americans, Russians, Chinese, listening, listening, and waiting.

Listening and waiting, and wondering, and a broadcast such as had never been heard before went out over the air waves. Prime ministers, dictators, presidents, generalissimos, leaders of councils, kings, princes, governors – all the political authority of the earth, gathered together.

Authority gathered together with one accord as it had never been gathered [*sic*] together throughout the whole history of the world. Something that had never been seen before. Something that had never been heard before. Political authority speaking....

Cameras, receivers, flashed their messages back and forth; the speakers spoke, the transmitters transmitted, the viewers looked and listened. Old men, wise men, good, bad, saints, sinners, indifferent, ordinary, extraordinary, normal and subnormal and super normal, the governors of all the states of the world, the worthy and the unworthy, the just and the unjust, each took it in turn to speak to his own people and everyone else's people.

Exit Humanity by Leo Brett pp.48-49

Colonel Carruthers was almost too good to be true! He wasn't just life size, he was larger than life. He was a **character**, drawn in powerful glowing colours. He was the kind of man who it is difficult for an author to describe, because to do justice to the personality and the magnetism which radiated from Colonel Carruthers would be at once to lay the writer wide open to charges of exaggeration. To draw the Colonel with words, to give a pen portrait of the man as he really was, would seem, even to the most conservative of readers, to be depicting an arch-type, a prototype, or

stereotype, rather than a genuine character. But allowing for all objections of that nature the Colonel must be drawn as he really was. He must be portrayed faithfully, or he cannot portrayed at all.

Android by Karl Zeigfreid p.119

The big security man had walked on many strange sands on many strange worlds; purple sand had moved beneath his feet on the great Sirian seashores. He had been out amid the green sand of the weird planets that circled round Aldeheran. He had seen red sand and blue sand; white dust and pink dust; puce and magenta dust; dust the colour of blood, and dust the colour of bone. He had seen dust as deep blue as the colour of space dust itself. Sand and stone and rock and soil of every colour in the rainbow's seven hues; but nowhere had he seen sand to compare with this rather ordinary looking red brown dust of the fourth planet of this strange, forgotten, nine world system.

A 1,000 Years On by John E. Muller p77

"I don't like this place much, do you?"

"No, old boy, I can't say I do," replied the officer, "there's a certain sort of atmosphere about the place – an atmosphere that doesn't appeal to me one iota. I don't like it. I don't like one jot or tittle of it, to use the classical parlance. I don't like the smell of the place, the look of the place, the feel of the place." Big, tough man though he was the ship's commander stood and shrugged his shoulders. "I don't like it," he repeated emphatically.

A 1,000 Years On by John E. Muller p.80

Man is a singularly gregarious animal, on whatever planet he is at home. Roikon laughed at his own thoughts – how could anyone be "singularly" gregarious?

A 1,000 Years On by John E. Muller p.116

Lionel likes to tell the story of how as a teenager he wrote a spoof version of a famous poem by John Masefield. He sent it out to publishers, where it was universally rejected until it reached John Spencer & Co. They replied that they did not buy poetry, but could he write science fiction novels? It would appear that they did buy this one poem, or at least part of it after all.

He thought of some words of the old Poet Laureate, John Masefield:

"I must go back to the sea again..."

He grinned to himself. "I must go back into space again," he thought,

“to the lone space and the stars, and all that I ask is a rocket ship, and job to do on Mars.”

Funny, I’ve only been in space a few hours, and it’s given me a fever. I’ve got to get out there again. There’s something majestic, magnificent, and at the same time completely frightening and unearthly about the darkness and the stars and the size and the grandeur. Something that took a man out of himself, gave him a realisation of his own smallness, and at the same time of his own greatness. A pigmy, and yet a cosmic giant.

He looked at the stars, incalculably greater than he was...and yet, because of his brain, because of his mind, he could hold the very stars themselves in the palms of his hands.

“You’re mine, you know, every one of you,
You belong to the sons of men,
For the universe is ours by right,
And we shall enforce our claim.
From a thousand million silver ships
We shall dart across the sky,
And every man will burn with the truth
To conquer or to die...”

Exit Humanity by Leo Brett p.126

The ulna and radius of his left arm felt as though they were trying to bid good-bye to the humerus.

From Realms Beyond by Leo Brett p.125

The fear which would have driven many a man out of his mind had abated from Dover Cross in the way that water laps back from a mighty break water. The fear receded from Dover Cross in the way water flows back and ebbs away from a basalt cliff.

The Planet Seekers by Erle Barton p.150

Frank Sanders, on the other hand, was lean, not so lean that he looked angular, but very, very lean. He was wiry. There was that about him which exuded an aura and an atmosphere of tremendous strength and capability. Then there were his eyes. Sharp, black, coal-needles. Like polished jet, strong dark, intelligent eyes, set in a bronzed handsome face. A face that was too strong to be handsome in the film-star or matinee-idol way, a face that had more strength than grace, and yet was graceful because of its very strength.

The Microscopic Ones by Leo Brett p.10

Terrifying blackness, as dark and deep as a thousand midnights. It was like being at the bottom of a five-mile mine shaft. It was Stygian, suffocation like thick black, tangible velvet. It seemed to penetrate and permeate. It seemed to lodge in the pores of the skin and the blood vessels of the lungs. You could breath-in that darkness. You could have touched it. You could have cut it with a knife...if a knife was sharp enough! It was an absolute blackness, in which no light could live.

The Microscopic Ones by Leo Brett p.32

“I was just looking out there,” he said, “looking and wondering, and thinking thoughts that are beyond me, thoughts that are too big for me.”

The Welshman nodded,

“Thought is too big for all of us, Sam, far too big. We are like little children on the floor of a room, a gay playroom called the ‘universe’, hanging above our heads, out of our reach, are coloured lights that fascinate us and hypnotise us. We give up many, many other things with which perhaps we might be better occupied, stretching up to reach those coloured lights... and when we reach them we are in danger of electrocuting ourselves, because we are coming into contact with the incomprehensible. When the incomprehensible was beyond our reach there was no danger. When we were very small children and could not reach the lights, look you, it did not matter that they were there, but now we are growing taller, and we can reach the lights. By reaching them, we may be reaching out to our own destruction.”

The Microscopic Ones by Leo Brett pp.46-47

“Good gracious,” he exclaimed. Flower of the Desert, bruised and breathless, but otherwise unhurt collapsed into his arms with a little sigh.... They carried her through on to a bunk, and Sam Johnson fetched the First Aid equipment. A quick multi purpose injection, and two tablets of “Univite” soon restored her, and she smiled timidly at her rescuers.

The Microscopic Ones by Leo Brett p.155

So much for being open minded at first contact. The following is the reaction to intelligent dinosaur-like creatures.

“I think it’s horrible!” exclaimed his wife. “Hideous and horrible! Intelligence in a body like that.! Ugh!” She shuddered. La Noire was a highly sensitive woman.

Aster fired. The white energy blast crackled like the jaws of a hungry carnivore. The natives disappeared in those allegorical jaws. Flesh and blood became fodder in that metaphorical mouth. The energy ball had become the teeth of death.

Every possible weapon has been tried against the alien force field protecting the advancing native hordes. Nothing can penetrate it, not energy rays, not atomic weapons, not even chemical weapons.

Plumbus looked like the Greek scientist about to give a vent to a loud, “Eureka!”

“What a coincidence!” he exclaimed.

“What is it?” asked Val.

“It’s a Flazgaz heatray,” explained the scientist.

“It’s a *what?*”

“Oh, of course, they’re outside your technology, aren’t they?”

“It certainly is,” agreed Stearman.

“Briefly the thing is illegal; which is probably what it is doing on board a police ship.”

“You mean it’s something they confiscated from somebody, much as we might confiscate [*sic*] a set of brass knuckles?”

Plumbus thought hard.

“Yes,” he agreed, “I think that’s a pretty close simile.”

“This Flazgaz –” began Val.

“Flazgaz heatray,” said Plumbus.

“Why is it illegal?” asked Val.

“It’s been outlawed by the Convention,” said Plumbus, “It’s the sort of weapon that isn’t used by a sort of gentleman’s agreement. It is most unusual to find it even among criminal types.”

“Well, what is there about this particular means of destruction that is so obnoxious?” demanded Stearman.

“It’s difficult to say,” Plumbus told him, “but I would say that it’s not used on aesthetic grounds. If you hit a man with an energy charge, you disintegrate, or kill him. Hit him with a photon beam and you cut him to ribbons quite cleanly and scientifically. Hit hit [*sic*] with a corrosive shell and there’s nothing much left but a little pool of something that smells

peculiar as it fumes into nothingness; but hit a man with one of *these* and you are left with the most indescribably revolting sight.”

“I don’t quite follow you,” said Stearman.

“You may not kill at the first blast. You may be left with a half-cooked enemy coming towards you.”

“That sounds funny!” Exclaimed Stearman.

“It isn’t,” said Velos. “It’s revolting!...”

Of course they have no trouble justifying using it against the saurian aliens. It annoys them and they temporarily go away.

The Intruders by Bron Fane p.150

The problem was a parallel one and a very deep and significant one. It was, decided Salford, the kind of problem which could conveniently be tossed to the theologians, the metaphysicians, the psychologists, and that amorphous, unnameable pool of mental troubleshooters who just called themselves “enlightened thinkers.”

Power Sphere by Leo Brett p.33

“You must be quite intellectual in your way,” said Grafton with a kind of grudging admiration in his voice.

“I think I am,” murmured Salford. He smiled at the professor, it was rather a superior smile. “I have never suffered from modesty,” he said, “it is a disease from which I am entirely free. I am inherently, innately free of it! I have never been modest, and by the gods of the galaxy, I don’t ever want to be.”

Power Sphere by Leo Brett p.38

“I saw two round spheres. They seemed very powerful. I would have said they were two *power spheres*.”

Power Sphere by Leo Brett p.100

At first he could see nothing, and then he saw those eyes again, if they were eyes. Huge spheres of power, great power spheres, looking down at him from the mysterious sky on this peculiar planet.

Power Sphere by Leo Brett p.115

He didn’t like the feeling of being looked down on. He got the impression that the watcher was somehow sinister, forbidding. He got the impression that there was something threatening about the watcher, that there was something

altogether sinister, macabre, weird, bizarre and evil.

Power Sphere by Leo Brett p.104

There was one good thing about robots, thought Harry, they were practical. You were prevented from drifting off into some peculiar day dream of your own. They kept your feet on the ground. There was something very matter of fact, very bread-and-buttery and very day-by-day about robots. They had a good, sound pragmatic smell to them. They were everyday life; they were oil, and cogwheels, spanners and screwdrivers. They were fuse wire, and electronic circuits, they were *reality*. At least they were what materialists would *call* reality.

Power Sphere by Leo Brett p.107

Harry Salford's mind was usually a streamlined affair. It was streamlined over a broad front. It had many aspects, but it was nevertheless streamlined. Its streamlining was not a limiting factor.

Power Sphere by Leo Brett p.122

"I have a strange feeling," said Grafton. "A sensation which is not based on the logical consideration of data – I must confess that I am rather surprised at myself for entertaining such a feeling. I may well be, it may very well be, that the feeling is entirely fallacious. What I have to suggest is, of course, purely suppositious." He paused as though he was inordinately proud of the word.

Silgon was looking at him with all the bewilderment a reptilian face is capable of expressing.

"An unusual term, Professor Grafton," said the reptile.

"Yes, yes, the result of some research I have been doing into some ancient terrestrial vocabularies. There is apparently some dispute about the acceptability of the term, but I am on the side of the acceptors."

"What does it mean?" asked the android, running a hand through clean-cut curly locks.

"I means that which is supposed, it is a noun," announced Grafton with the air of an old time grammarian professor, pronouncing upon some moot point of grammar or syntax.

"Tell us the nature of this idea," said the reptile, carefully avoiding the word 'supposition,' following, as it would have done, so closely upon the heels of the longer supposititious.

"Did you say that it a *noun* was?" asked Otto Bekstein.

"Yes, noun, supposititious." The tadpolian little professor suddenly

blushed. “Oh, dear, I fear I have made an error.”

“An error you certainly made have,” said Otto Bekstein in that appalling music hall German.

“I suppose it’s an adjective,” said Grafton rather sheepishly.

“Working on sound and logical principles which are in German grammar contained, I would definitely state that it an adjective was!” said Otto with a look of Prussian triumph. Grafton gave a passable impersonation of a tadpole which had tried very hard to be a frog and, having failed miserably, is now waiting for some predator of the duck pond to end its little life.

Power Sphere by Leo Brett pp.127-128

“He’s either the most hopeless raving lunatic I’ve ever heard,” commented John, “or else he’s some incredible entity from beyond the hyperdrive lanes.”

Flame Mass by R.L. Fanthorpe

“Incredible as it may sound,” answered the professor, “I am very much inclined to believe that our friend is speaking the simple truth, as he knows it. He is a man to whom the impossible has happened. He is not mentally sick, he is very sane indeed. But somehow, whether by the power of a pagan goddess, or whether by some strange supernatural magic that we do not understand, perhaps by some weird metaphysical process which is beyond even the comprehension of 20th century science, it could be that something like that has happened.”

Legion of the Lost by Pel Torro

There were things here he didn’t like. Things he didn’t understand. Things that smacked of extra-dimensional interference.

Flame Mass by R.L. Fanthorpe p.97

“So,” said the I.P.F. commander, “this is what we’ve been afraid of for several years now. Extra-galactic interference. Extra-universal interference, if you like. There’s something out there, something that doesn’t belong, something that doesn’t add up, something that doesn’t obey the laws we’re used to. There’s something extra dimensional. Something that isn’t hide-bound by physics as we are. There’s a thing out there – perhaps a whole race of things, that are pure mind. I’ve been afraid of this for some time.”

Flame Mass by R.L. Fanthorpe p.132

Iksa describes an “unusual little planet, third outwards of the

system of a G. type sun”

The seventh colony have been surveying one of the uneven deposits covered by the green tract of stationary life-forms. The deposits consist of large quantities of finely-powdered mineral matter held in place by a procohesion emulsificant constructed of by-products of calcium and carbon.

“Discovery” from *Futuristic Science Stories*
#7 by Lionel Roberts pp.94-95

Iksa’s eye came out on a stalk, and glared brilliantly at his co-operate. “You ****!” he telepathed so violently that telecaster shook, then his wrath abated and he sank back on his cushions in helpless laughter.

“Discovery” from *Futuristic Science Stories*
#7 by Lionel Roberts p.99

“Unfortunately for the plant and animal life, living cells cannot be atomised and return so easily. Therefore every living thing apart from the strange grey-green fungus, which I believe produces spores of sub-molecular size would be wiped out.”

“Discovery” from *Futuristic Science Stories*
#7 by Lionel Roberts p.99

Apparently Kinard and Vastus expressed the spirit of them all; there were no dissenting voices and after an old fashioned formal vote had been taken by show of hands the resolution stood: “That we, the final survivors of homo sapiens shall inform the cephalopodae, known as Kandeas multus of the theory known as Kinardic inter planectic sensory projectionism.”

“Discovery” from *Futuristic Science Stories*
#7 by Lionel Roberts p.105



From the Annals of Thog

The “Thog’s Masterclass” department of the SF newsletter Ansible has long collected treasurable quotations, including selected Fanthorpeana. What follows is assembled from Ansible, from other Langford fanzines and from convention readings – supplemented by some tasty items from the pre-Thog treasury Ghastly Beyond Belief (1985) compiled by Neil Gaiman and Kim Newman, and from Brian J. Hunt’s highly recommended appreciation site at www.peltorro.com.

– David Langford

“You really go in for that teleportation stuff, don’t you, Chief?”

“It’s a field I’m interested in,” answered Tony. “That, and psycholithography.”

(Lightning World)

Vir’s strangely treated blood rose like the aroma of ancient Chinese culinary eggs and he uttered a wild curdling war cry...

(Nemesis)

Despite his Central European origins, Zakminsky was a brilliant linguist. He could not only speak impeccable English, he could put on a Scottish accent so effectively that it sounded plausible and natural to the English sailors on board the gunboat.

“Hoots! I thoct I was lost the noo!” exclaimed Zakminsky with a tight-lipped smile.

(Projection Infinity)

It began to grow markedly colder. There was a strange, almost terrifying, other-worldliness about the cold. It was not a purely physical cold, not a mere negation of heat, not solely a drop in temperature, but it was a cold that seemed to blow from some weird psychic region, a cold that froze the very soul of man. A cold that came as though from out some other bourne of Time and Space, a transcendental coldness, a fearful coldness. It gripped not only their bodies, but their brains and their minds; their hearts, their very souls. They were like men turned to ice. They were men turned to stone.

(“Forbidden Island”, SN 53)

“What is it these beatniks have been saying for about a thousand years, they do it for kicks? I can’t understand that generation at all.”

(The Last Astronaut)

“Because I have the vision of a god.” said the megalomaniac. “And you are the son of a god! I am Daedalus god of destruction, and you are Icarus my son. My son,” he repeated. “You are the son of destruction. You are the son of the Hammer of Minos. It is time for the hammer to strike. Have you ever seen –” his voice held a strange, frightening, faraway note, “Have you ever seen a great rock balanced on a tiny point? And have you ever thought, my boy, that you had but to give it one little push and it will overbalance and destroy all in its path. Given a prop that was strong enough, and a pole that was long enough, and the ability to travel out into the stars, with my own weight I could lift the world. It is all a matter of the science of mathematics, of knowing where to apply the pressure, of knowing where the weakness is, of knowing where the point of overbalance is, and one man can destroy a continent. But he must have a brain that is larger than a universe, he must have a brain like Daedalus the god of destruction!”

(The Last Valkyrie)

“I don’t think you’ve completely got over that grimly frightening and horrifying experience you had last week,” commented Ralston sympathetically.

(Projection Infinity)

Thick, black tactile darkness. He coughed and spluttered as though trying to spit the darkness out. The darkness didn’t seem to want to be spat out; it continued filling his nose and mouth and ears.

(Orbit One)

An Earthman is an Earthman the universe over. No other planet seems to produce men of quite the same type or of quite the same calibre.

(Power Sphere)

And what about the jolly bad show of trying to pass yourself off as a genuine Earth stock, then? Being of genuine Earth-stock, Salford found that pseudo-terrestrial accents really irritated him. It was like running into a man wearing a cheap impersonation of a school tie to which he was not entitled.

(*Power Sphere*)

“I’m not getting at you. I’m glad to know a man who can take things with a smile. Take it on the chin with a grin. Stiff upper lip, and all that jazz.” Hal Delaney smiled too. A cynical smile, there were too many blisters on his face for it to be anything else. It was one of those wry, painful smiles that only a hero can produce, in moments of extremity.

(*Flame Mass*)

Dealing with alien natives requires special diplomatic skills.

“My name is Brant,” said Tony. “I’m the leader of this expedition. We come from the planet earth. It’s so far away I don’t suppose your half-wit chemists have ever heard of it!”

“That’s the stuff!” applauded Joe. “Put the fatheads in their place! Did you ever see such a crummy lot of ’em?”

(*Lightning World*)

Tony Brant, lean and tough as a whipcord [*sic*], with that sharp ageless cast of feature that personified the men of the 25th century. Neither physically, mentally nor biologically, Brant hadn’t aged a day since he was twenty.

(*Lightning World*)

There was something about his appearance that was almost scrofulous, he might almost have been the spurious founder of the celebrated Disumbrationist school!

(*Projection Infinity*)

The first thing he was aware of was a sensation of smooth, yielding grittiness.

(*No Way Back* – opening line)

“I’m an idiot,” he said. “I am the primaeval ancestor of all idiots. I am an arch-crud. I am the nig-nog of all the nig-nogs. I am the ultimate splurge!”

(*Dark Continuum*)

Lots of things are invisible, like air, gas, glass under water, but they exist right enough. Electricity is invisible, but it’s there right enough. You can’t see it, but you see what it does. And though we cannot see the fourth dimension, that’s how the hyperdrive principle works.

(*Lightning World*)

He read the note she had left him: “*Darling Alex, Something had to be done.*”

I have destroyed the thing in the engine room. Unfortunately there was rather a lot of radiation and I didn't fancy going that way, so I went through the lock instead. I expect it will be quite fun in hyper-space."

(The Last Astronaut)

What the devil could it be? he asked himself over and over again. Only the length of the torch beam separated him from his objective now. He drew closer, and closer still. Then he recognized the peculiar gleaming object for what it was – a door handle!

(Asteroid Man)

Orlande Price struggled with forces that were pulling her facial contours out of shape. Her struggles seemed to epitomise woman's life-long struggles to keep up with fashion and not to keep up with the passage of the years.

(The Last Astronaut)

Levine loved his bath. He wallowed in it with a sensual voluptuousness that would have won the approval of the most decadent of the later Roman emperors. He lubricated his soft pink skin with a tablet of soft pink soap, and smiled happily to himself as he contemplated his navel. There was a strange, psychiatric regression about Levine in his luxurious bathroom. With the doors securely locked he played with a small, red plastic boat. It sailed between soapsuds and came into harbour between his toes. He turned it deftly with his feet and flicked it back with a deft movement of his right ankle. The boat bobbed on the miniature waves of the purple bath.

(Spectre of Darkness)

"And that," said Salford, with grim irony, "is how Agent 1117 extincted a rather unpleasant race!"

(Power Sphere)

He had to keep moving, it was like groping your way through a thick fog. The beams of your headlights throwing the fog back at you. It was like that, yet it wasn't.

(Asteroid Man)

Something was coming up the cellar steps, he could hear it, clump. Clump. Clump. Clump. Clump. Clump.

(The Golden Chalice)

He stood trembling like a bladder of lard...

(“The Thing from Sheol”, SN 81)

The view from space, soon after launch ...

Eric Fenn glanced at the screen and thought of the Earth as a little, coloured, round pill, a pill from which somebody had sucked half the sugar coating and found the harsh-tasting chemical inside was not palatable [*sic*] and had therefore spat it out. It had been a good strong expectoration, thought Eric Fenn. The pill was still flying!

(*The Last Astronaut*)

Mullan himself used his little pocket atomic firearm... when the little mushroom cloud cleared away no-one was hurt at all.

“Even acid, high-explosive, atomic hand-guns, didn’t touch these people?”

(*Lightning World*)

Our author shows his mastery of rustic dialect:

“That b’ain’t no joke, bless my heart and sould, zur, that b’ain’t no joke!” retorted the old station master. “There’s some things a man do joke about, and there’s some things a man don’t joke about – and Long Barrow ’All ain’t got nothin’ to do with a sense of humour! Nothin’ to do with a sense of humour at all. You couldn’t find two things farther apart. Poles apart, they are, poles apart! Ha, there’s been dark doin’s up there! Dark and dreadful doin’s. Anyway we can’t stand a-jawin’ here in the cold, come you into my office. There won’t be no more trains through here for a time, zur. Come you into my office and have a cup o’ tea. When we’ve had a yarn I dare say you’ll change your mind about goin’ up the ’All, arter I’ve told you some o’ the things what happen up there!”

[...]

“You get a cup o’ that inside you, and you feel a different man altogether! Altogether different you feel! You can feel it goin’ round your veins like fire! That’ll get you back on the deck, that’ll put the feelin’ back in your fingers and toes. That’ll get the salt out o’ your beard, boy. Old salt won’t mix along o’ that, that’s too strong for him! Well, railwayman’s tea ain’t so strong as what that is, but it’s very near! There’s three kinds o’ tea worth drinking, trawlerman’s tea, sergeant major’s tea, and railwayman’s tea, and we’re havin’ railwayman’s tea tonight.”

(*The Golden Chalice*)

He felt as one tiny iron-filing would feel if it was in the grip of a huge electro-magnet, provided, of course, that one iron filing was capable of feeling anything!

But now, to use Brendan's analogy, the magnet had been switched off. He, the sentient iron filing, was free to move as he would, and he was no longer compelled to obey the metaphorical magnetic lines of force.

(*"Forgotten Country"*, SN 81)

"I'll introduce myself. Name's Lt John MacGregor, as a matter of fact, in the I.P.F."

"Interplanetary Force," goggled Fred.

"Precisely," said MacGregor with an exaggerated bow.

"My man, you are now in the presence of the John MacGregor who has shot down seventeen of the Martian invasion fleet."

(*Flame Mass*)

"Go on, old man of mystery, shoot the works. Make with the facts. And all that jazz... as they used to say in the old days."

(*Flame Mass*)

And his ears – there was something very odd about the lobes of his ears. They lay close to his head, and they were very, very long – unnatural lobes, appended to unusual ears. Wherever you went it seemed that great-uncle Roderick's ears were following you.

(*The Golden Chalice*)

Under that nose his teeth... they were the two things you noticed about his face first – there was a third thing, but I'll come to that in a minute – but his nose and his brown teeth, all colours, horrible colours like a mouthful of evil growing out of his gums when he parts his lips in a snarl.

(*The Golden Chalice*)

"Don't threaten me with that thing," said the dreadful bacteriologist, "I can fire mine as quickly as you can fire that!"

(*Micro Infinity*)

Kramer was as hard as the rocks that were his main interest. He had a jaw like granite, eyes like flints, hair like asbestos fibres, and a voice that sounded like water running through subterranean tunnels and passages.

(*The Intruders*)

Cray turned away from the unyielding door of the cabin with a feeling that his guts had dissolved, his legs had turned into viable liquid, and where his nerves had once been, icy rivulets of pure fear now surrounded, enmeshed and threatened his entire being.

(Barrier 346)

They rounded the corner, and saw, in the flickering firelight, a sight which chilled the very blood in their veins. It seemed to coagulate the very corpuscles in their arteries.

(Beyond Time)

Dan was the kind of man to whom panic and fear were as alien and foreign as green spotted pseudopods.

(Formula 29X)

There was nothing but pure, unadulterated darkness, a darkness that grew blacker and more stygian with every passing second, a blackness in which nothing mattered; a blackness in which there was no pain or strain or stress; a blackness as deep and dark as the very darkness of death itself; a darkness as of the tomb, and a darkness of the grave. Then gradually the darkness began to lift, pressure departed. It was like coming up after being submerged in a thousand feet of water. It was like rising from the ocean bed, the blackness became less velvety, less thick, less dense, and now as they struggled back toward the realms of consciousness, the blackness was broken up and relieved by stabs of red fire; red fire that was the pain in their eyes as they once more grew accustomed to the light; red fire that gave place to orange fire, and finally to great streaks of dazzling white. Then they were awake and conscious again.

(Satellite)

Could God and the hydrogen bomb both exist, and if so, was it the kind of God that he had always been taught to believe in?

(The Golden Chalice)

When Joe Maginty woke up he had the grandfather and grandmother, the primaeval ancestor and ancestress of every hangover from which every man has ever suffered in the course of human history, or is ever destined to suffer from as long as time and humanity shall walk together through the universe.

(Dark Continuum)

“I’ve never seen anything like them before,” said Jerry.

“No, they’re a new species,” said Ursula. “I’ve just made them.”

“Fantastic!” said Jerry.

(The Last Astronaut)

The space in which they found themselves at present was a large open-looking chamber with a very high ceiling. It gave an impression of tragic grandeur which would have reminded Vir of old Vienna, except for the fact that he had never been there.

(Nemesis)

Sometimes it’s easy to recognize a bad guy.

On a green crystal throne, on a huge raised dais, surrounded by silk and satin, surrounded by all the fabrics that go to make up voluptuous luxury, sat a green humanoid figure. Flesh hung in rolls on its evil face. Little piggy eyes gleamed and glared at them... The little eyes in the fleshy face turned into two ice-cold diamonds; bitter, savage, hard... burning with a fire of hatred and an evil sense of power.

(Lightning World)

The Irishman’s bullet-hard head crashed straight into the soft jowls of the pudding-like jelly that called itself Blenkinsopp.

[...]

There was a satisfying crack as his mighty right exploded like a tornado on the point of Blenkinsopp’s jaw – if such a fat-shrouded protuberance could be said to have a “point”. Whatever the anatomical mystery beneath that layer of fat, the result was equally satisfactory, and spectacular. Blenkinsopp’s eyes glazed and then closed about a fifth of a second before that bloated body crashed to the floor and lay very, very still.

(The Golden Chalice)

Grafton felt as though the colossal brain inside his cranium was trying to jump out.

(Power Sphere)

When our heroes impersonate medics by donning white coats and writing on important-looking note boards, no detail is omitted.

Sheldon was actually writing one verse of “Ten Little Indian Boys” each time they stopped. Ken Andrews with his rather bizarre kind of scientific humor,

was writing “If E equals MC squared, how much skimmed milk would it take to knit a pair of tennis trousers for King Kong?” and “The square on the hypotenuse is equal to the number of black puddings which, placed end to end, would equal exactly three times the distance from Land’s End to John o’ Groats, all divided by the square root of minus one.”

(Radar Alert)

Armande was an old, wrinkled, French art expert. He was as wizened as the raisins that hang in deserted corners of the champagne vineyards.

(Spectre of Darkness)

...Brighter and more deadly still grew the yellow light, until it seemed that the whole universe had resolved into a wilderness of inhuman yellowness... The ochre tint was reminiscent of the foulest regions of Dante’s Inferno. It was a temple of hell, in an island of hell, in world of hell, in a universe of hell.

(The Last Valkyrie)

“There are sinister, dark powers at work, dark powers that are older than time itself, and unless we can get there with the minimum of delay I have the nasty feeling that things are going to turn out very badly indeed for our client. I feel that she is surrounded by an awful power older than times, a very sinister dark power, sinister because of its darkness, and sinister because of its age; unless we can get to her pretty rapidly and break that power, and dispel the clouds of darkness that surround her, then not only her mortal future, but her very immortal future itself may be in the gravest jeopardy. I don’t like the sound of this dark stranger that she described to us. He sounds formidable, and incredibly evil. The very thought of him conjures up dark images in my mind.”

(Gods of Darkness)

Sinister images too, no doubt.



Neuron World

Our heroine Melinda discovers what hyperspace looks like.

Never, not even in the deepest natural darkness that she had ever experienced, had she encountered an absence of light as total as this. It was unutterably dark, this was the Stygian darkness of which poets wrote. This was the pit of Acheron of which the creators of classic prose made mention. This was a kind of darkness that made thick, black velvet seem like chiffon by contrast. This was the kind of darkness that turned pitch into translucent polythene, when the two were placed side by side. This was the kind of darkness that made the wings of the raven resemble the pinions of the dove....

Three philosophical paragraphs later:

It was a moment of truth as far as Melinda Tracey was concerned. In the darkness it was possible to be alone with your thoughts. In the thick, Stygian darkness it was possible to be aware of self on one hand and Infinity on the other, to see the one in terms of the other, to understand the relationship of the two – the microcosm of the individual human mind and the macrocosm of the Universe itself.

Melinda was so deep in thought, so close to those infinite truths which lie beyond the furthest star, and yet within the human mind, that she didn't notice for several seconds the blackness was ending. It became a sort of canescent greyness, a kind of opalescent, pearly dawn. It was like living in mountain fog, yet there was no dampness to this greyness; it was more like smoke in that respect, but it had no smell. It did not owe its origin to acrid, carcinogenic combustion particles.

Melinda felt like one of the insects which have been inadvertently preserved in amber, and yet, she told herself, this grey amber which seemed to have hardened all around her, did not restrict her physical movements, it only seemed to restrict her thought processes.

The greyness was so blank that it appeared to try to defy and negate creative thought. A moment ago she had been alone with infinity, now it seemed that the very negation of existence was confronting her.

Further fantastic phenomena follow, with alliteration's artful aid ...

Melinda tried to fight mentally against the enveloping, thought-destroying greyness. At last she seemed to met with some modicum of success. Then she realised the victory was not really hers. The greyness was going. It had lost its cinerary colour, it had become fringed and speckled with other shades, hues and tints. Roguish reds and ornate oranges flashed before her eyes, bringing colour and reality back to the ship.

It was like watching a number of coloured lights being switched on at a great seaside resort. It was like seeing a jig-saw puzzle being put together on neon tubes, on an advertising hoarding. Outlandish yellows and garish greens, which seemed brighter than life, came on, and then faded a little back to normality as she continued to watch. Brilliant blues and iridescent *[sic]* indigos vied with volatile violet shades for possession of the available surfaces of the ship. The colours settled down into their accustomed gestalts, and Althosa got up with a smile.

“That was hyperspace,” she said softly.

R. L. FANTHORPE

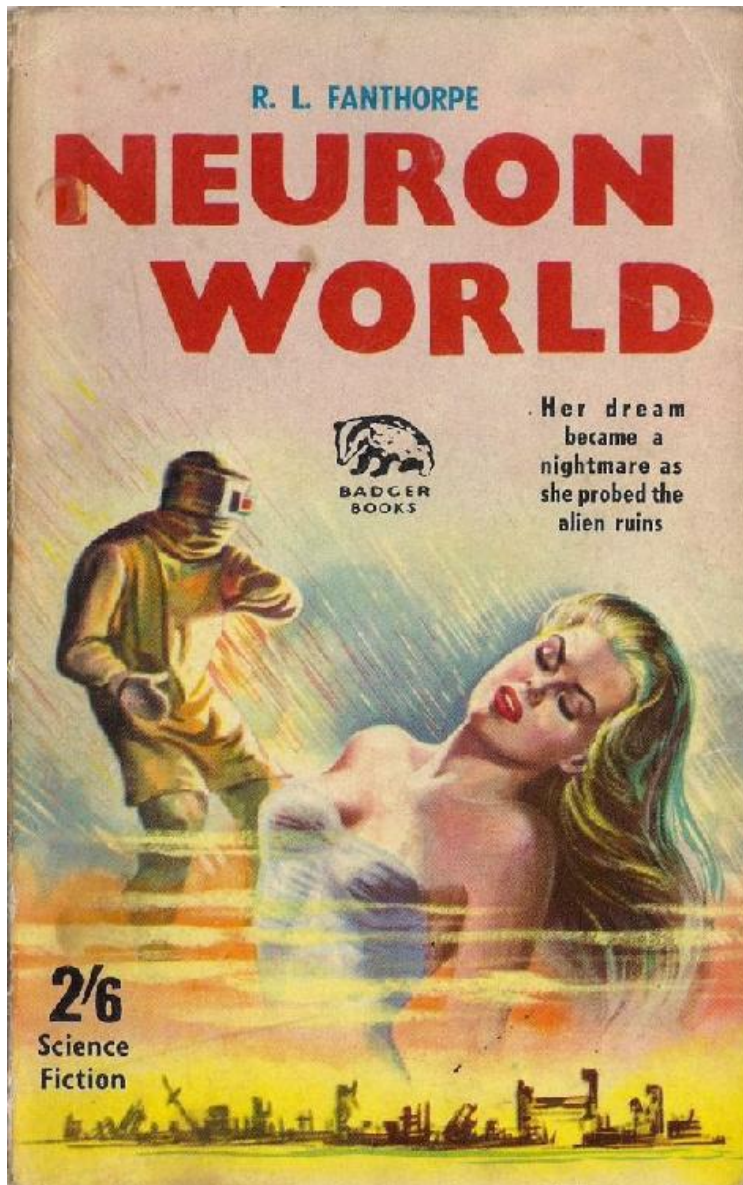
NEURON WORLD



Her dream
became a
nightmare as
she probed the
alien ruins

2/6

Science
Fiction



Space-Borne

This further gem of padding deserves a short section of its own.

The crowd had to be seen to be believed. There are crowds and crowds, but this was the crowd to end all crowds. Never, perhaps, ever before in the whole of human history had there been such a massive congregation. Such a teeming of humanity, as there was gathered round a wide expanse of concrete and there in the centre, like some strange steel deity, the object of their semi-idolatrous adulation, stood the ship. It centred their thoughts, as the small sphere of wind and leather, centres the thoughts of the teeming masses at Wembley Cup Finals. As far as the eye could see in every direction, were men, women, and children. Their faces eager, upturned. Full of hope, expectancy.

To cut a longish chapter short, the spaceship presently takes off:

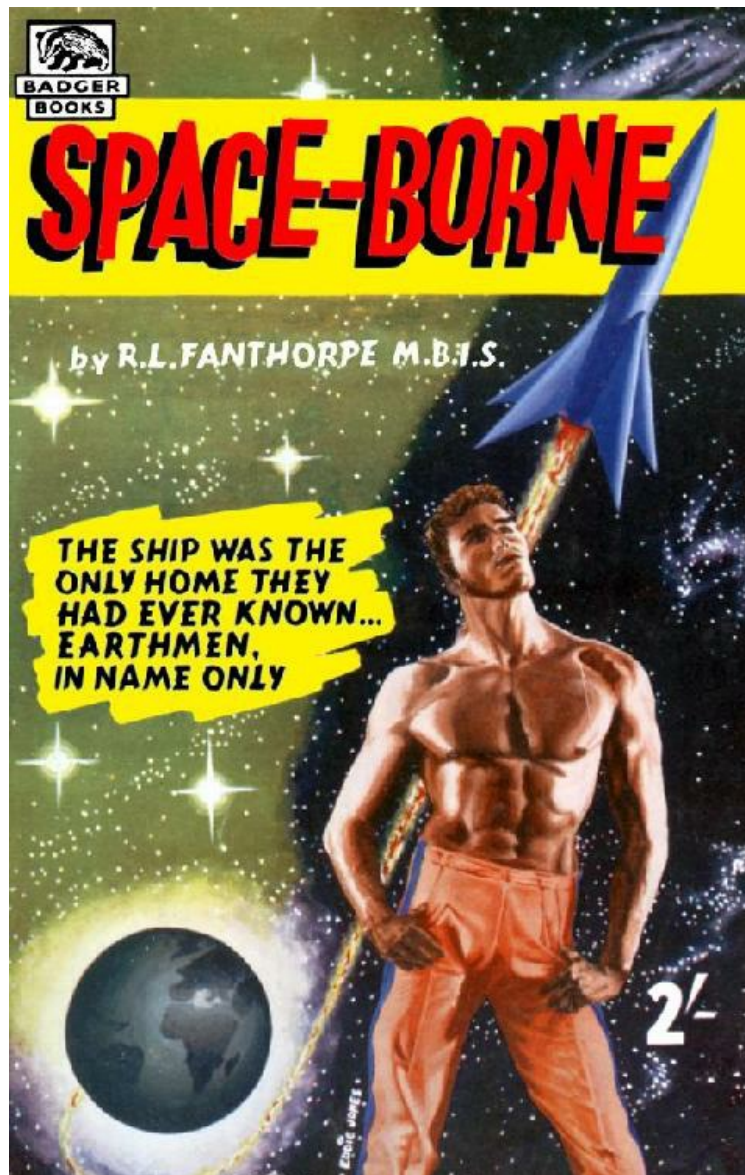
And then it was over, the electric silence, the dynamic tension ended, in a cataclysmic eruption of power, which seemed all the greater for its majestic and solitary loneliness; the huge silver dart leapt up, probing with its rapier tip; against the blue vaulted curtain of the heavens, and then it was up. Like Wordsworth's "Skylark" it rose and rose, till it became an invisible sound, receding over the heads of watching humanity. The send-off was over. The adventurers were on their way. The Argosy had sailed: Ulysses and his band were setting off from Troy. There was no turning back. It was a moment of no return. The decision had been made. The button had been pressed. The gun had been fired. The arrow had left the bow, it could not be recalled. It was further from man's power to bring it back than it was possible to live again, even one second of yesterday.

Chapter 3 begins with a relentlessly detailed description of the starry sky through which the ship is now travelling: this continues for a page and a half, and names some 44 stars, constellations, zodiacal signs, and so forth. The great Fanthorpean coup comes when, having exhausted the northern heavens, the author treats us to details of how things would have looked if only the ship were travelling the other way.

By Chapter 6, alas, Earth has been accidentally destroyed and the astronauts begin to worry.

“Any slight mechanical defalcation, if I may put it that way, and we’re dead. We become twenty-four bloated corpses, sailing forever in a big steel coffin, a communal tomb, a jet propelled mass grave.”

Happily, some friendly aliens intervene. They rescue two survivors – one male, one female – and deposit them on a planet closely resembling Eden. The End.



Links and Thanks

More about Lionel Fanthorpe online:

- Lionel Fanthorpe (archived site)
<https://web.archive.org/web/20160304070112/http://www.lionel-fanthorpe.com/>
- *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*
http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/fanthorpe_r_l
- *Fancyclopedia 3*
<http://fancyclopedia.org/r-lionel-fanthorpe>
- Internet Speculative Fiction Database
<http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/ea.cgi?2161>
- Internet Movie Database
<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1782210/>
- A Prose by Any Other Pseudonym: Celebrating the Works of Lionel Fanthorpe
<http://www.peltorro.com/>

Additional links:

- Wrigley-Cross Books
<http://www.wrigleycrossbooks.com>
- Thog's Masterclass
<http://thog.org>

Publisher's Note

Thanks above all to Debbie Cross and to Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe for kindly allowing this ebook reissue. Additional thanks to Debbie Cross for supplying the original word-processor documents for both *Down the Badger Hole* and the 1999 *Bibliographic Supplement* – plus the cover scan. It should be mentioned at this point that the print edition and the supplement are still available from Wrigley-Cross Books as above. Further thanks to Brian J. Hunt for his share of the supplement, for proofreading support and for

providing several excellent scans; and to Brian Ameringen for checking quotes in his vast Badger Books collection.

– *David Langford*

The End



This free ebook is exclusive to the unofficial TAFF website at taff.org.uk. If you enjoy reading it, a donation to TAFF is a fine way to express your appreciation.

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