



CUSE S
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79

News and more news

Elections for officers of the Society were held Tuesday, April 10th. Following is a list of this year's officers and next year's.

	1978-1979	1979-1980
President	Phil Golden	Susan Kahn
Business Manager	Charles Seelig	Rachel Furer
Librarian	Dani Eder	Dani Eder
Sol III Editor	Jana Schulman	Bill Lancaster
Speakers	Barbara Brittan	-----
Films	Eliot Friedman	-----
TV	Bobbie Whitney	-----
Radio	Cam Nyhen	-----
Convention	Charles Seelig	Committee
	Activities	Vic McNeil
	CUSFuSSing	Charles Seelig

As you can see some drastic changes were made. Four posts, Speakers, Films, TV, Radio, have been combined under one head, Activities. The Convention has been handed to a committee of eight or more for the time being. One other new post was created, editor of CUSFuSSing. All posts changed hands except for the Librarian, and that post now has an assistant, Allen Klus.

For the first time in the Society's history, one of the top posts will be filled by a Barnard student. Of course since our President and Business Manager are Barnard students this is the first time that both of the top posts have been held by Barnard students. For this reason, and because we have enough Barnard members, and we need the money, the Columbia Science Fiction Society will be called in the future the Barnard-Columbia Science Fiction Society. This joint relationship will allow us to get money from both Barnard and Columbia student activity funds which are not joint. CUSFuSSing will continue to have its infamous name since the U stands for University and both Columbia and Barnard are part of the University.

Other matters discussed at the election meeting included the convention. Most people at the meeting seemed to be in favor of having a third convention. The questions beside that are should we try for a profit, when we should have it, and what type of con it should be? An announcement was made that SOL III would be out the following week. This is not a typo. The third issue will feature a cover by Merrick Lex Berman, stories by Gary Roth, Michael Rogan, Frank Tamarin, Margaret Purdy, Richard Schloss, Lee Mat, and a book review by Bill Lancaster. The editor for this issue will be Jana Schulman.

Mr. Geo. Leonard sent us a gift of \$165 for further acquisitions by the Society to fill holes in our magazine collection and to continue our subscriptions. We are deeply in debt to Mr. Leonard for the generosity he has shown over the past year.

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Quiz

Answers to quiz #3 on the Dragon novels of Anne McCaffrey

1. Menolly's ten fire lizards with their color are Beauty:Gold; Rocky, Diver, and Poll: Bronzes; Lazybones, Mimic, and Brownie: Browns; Auntie One, Auntie Two: Green; Uncle: Blue
Each correct name wins you one point and having all the colors correct gets you an additional five.

2. Name the seven Weyrs. Fort, Benden, High Reaches, Igen, Ista, Southern, Telgar. Each correct name was worth one point.

3. The ten masters of the arts are Andemon: Masterfarmer, Idarolan: Masterfisher, Robinton: Masterharper, Oldive: Masterhealer, Briaret: Masterherder, Nicat: Masterminer, Fandarel: Mastersmith, Belesdan: Mastertanner, Zurg: Masterweaver. There was no tenth, my mistake. Two points apiece plus two more for all nine.

4. Naming the Weyrleaders and Weyrwomen at the end of The White Dragon seems to be impossible. I am missing some, so if anyone out there has the right answer to this question, I would be very thankful if they sent it in.

Benden	F'lar	Lessa	Igen	G'narish	Nadira
Fort	N'ton	Prilla?	Southern	D'ram	There is none
High Reaches	Pilgra		Telgar	R'mart	Bedella
Ista	G'dened	Cosira	Each leader was worth 1, women worth 2		

5. Colors of Dragons each correct answer was worth one point.

Ramoth: Gold, Canth: Brown, Mirath: Gold, Ruth: White, Orth: Bronze, Path: Green, Tegath: Blue, Mnementh: Bronze, Wirenth: Gold, Golanth: Bronze, Larth: Brown, Lioth: Bronze, Beth: Green, Branth: Bronze

6. And their riders one point each

Ramoth-Lessa, Canth-F'nor, Ruth-Jaxom, Orth-T'bor, Fath-Mirrim, Tegath-C'gan, Mnementh-F'lar, Wirenth-Brekke, Golanth-F'lessan, Larth-L'tol, Lioth-N'ton, Beth-B'nag, Branth-R'mart

7. Menolly's father is Yanis, the planet is Pern, Jaxom's two adventures are Corana and Sharra, Menolly's love is Sebell, Robinton's place of recovery is Cove Hold or the Dawn Sister, and the three objects in the sky are called the Dawn Sisters. Each correct answer here was worth two points.

Next we have a quiz from Ben Fulves, publisher of the Looking Glass, P.O. Box 392, Teaneck, N.J., 07666, 75¢ per issue.

RIP-OFF QUIZ

I often wonder when I visit the huckster rooms at sf conventions, just how badly I am getting ripped-off. Recently, I acquired a very helpful book called OFFICIAL GUIDE TO THE FANTASTICS by Michael Resnick, that serves as a price guide of hero and sf pulps, Edgar Rice Burroughs material, specialty publishers, hardcovers, paperbacks, fanzines, art, and lots of other stuff. The book has come in very handy many a time, and it might pay for you to pick up a copy so that you can mouth off to a dealer and prove that what you're saying is true. As to the quiz, just guess at how much each of the 11 items listed is worth.

- 1) The first issue of Amazing Stories in mint condition.
- 2) The first issue of Astounding Stories in mint condition.
- 3) The first issue of The Thrill Book in mint condition.
- 4) The first issue of Unknown in mint condition.
- 5) The first issue of Weird Tales in mint condition.
- 6) Any of the four issues of Future Fantasia (Ray Bradbury's fanzine)
- 7) A Princess of Mars by Burroughs.

Z Quiz continued

- 8) The Outsider and Others by Lovecraft (published by Arkham)
- 9) The Ship That Sailed to Mars by Timlin.
- 10) Original color artwork by Frank Frazetta.
- 11) Buck Rogers Maps of the Universe.

Each question is worth 10 points and the last is worth an extra 10. The answers to these questions will be in CUSFuSsing #11.

Book Reviews

Somerset Dreams and Other Fictions by Kate Wilhelm, Harper & Row, pp174

This collection of short stories by Kate Wilhelm is a good example of the kind of excellence that can be achieved in science fiction. Or, more accurately in Wilhelm's case, speculative fiction. Damon Knight said of his wife's writing (in Orbit 15), "Her stories are sometimes prophetic, but with such a short lag that by the time they are published, they look as if they had been inspired by last month's headlines." These stories are alive, vital. They are happening now, to people we know. Some of them are happening to us. She can be a frightening writer, she can be a humorous writer. She is always an excellent writer. Her stories are fequently about people going insane, and the myriad of ways she finds for them to do so is...disturbing. Here is a writer in direct contact with her unconscious, who is able to pluck stories from it that consistently amaze. I cannot say it loud enough or long enough: Kate Wilhelm is one of our best writers.

There are no bug-eyed-monsters here, and only a couple of space ships. Many of the stories take place in the present or, by now, the recent past. This is psychological fiction, about real people coming to grips with some aspect of themselves or their environment. Wilhelm shows a number of people haunted by their nightmares, some of which take on tangible form, none of which are easily forgotten.

I could go on and on, but Ms. Wilhelm does not need me to blow her horn. Her story collections and novels aren't too hard to find. Any interested reader should seek them out and judge for himself. And excellence is so nice to see.

Fighting Madness by P. J. Plauger (in the Analog Annual, 1976, Ben Bova editor)

Fighting Madness is P. J. Plauger's first and--so far--only novel. Plauger was given the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer in 1975 before this novel appeared. The question is: does the novel fulfill the promise of his earlier work.

Plauger is a writer of "hard" science fiction. He is a physicist and a computer programmer, so naturally his stories will be technically oriented. Fighting Madness is a sequel to a story that appeared in the Feb. 1974 issue of Analog, "Wet Blanket." That story was about a physicist, Fred Hahnemann, who discovers and uses a way of making all radioactive elements stable so that nuclear power and--much more importantly--nuclear weaponry become impossible. In the end of the story, Hahnemann realizes that it is possible to reverse the process and to keep this information secret he causes himself to go into a catatonic stupor. "Wet Blanket," while it didn't cry out for a sequel or continuation, does raise some very interesting points that are not answered. What intrigued me most was the Rheims Institute where Hahnemann was trained.

While reading through Fighting Madness, one begins to wonder just a bit whether or not a sequel was justified. That is, the story is a good one and deserves to be told, but is it really necessary that Fred Hahnemann be once again the hero. In the novel, Hahnemann has recently recovered from his 18 month bout with catatonia, cured by the Rheims Institute. However, he is no longer capable of doing theoretical work in physics and has forgotten why it was that he went insane. He would seem, then, to be a new character for the novel; an astronaut now. Science fiction is populated with enough super-intelligent scientist types that one more would hardly be noticeable.

One reason for the continuation is this: Plauger postulates that when the government can spend no more money developing nuclear weapons, rather than cut back on government spending, the money is siphoned into the space program. A world without weaponry, then, is needed here. But even so, why should Hahnemann be used to create a sort of continuity between the two stories? I felt personally that if Plauger was going to give us another story in this world that he ought to clear up some of the mystery surrounding the Rheims Institute--something impossible to accomplish in "Wet Blanket" because of space limitations. Curiously, Rheims is pretty much left alone here for much of the book, with only occasional tantalizing references made to the fact that they helped cure Hahnemann. Slowly, though, we begin to find out more, to the point where Rheims himself is instrumental in the ending. There is a lot unanswered, but the reader is satisfied. The story is finished, but there's enough ambiguity at the end to leave room for more, should Plauger ever choose to continue.

Hahnemann's presence in the novel has not yet been explained. He is largely the same person as before, but thus far any Rheims graduate would do. The reason for Hahnemann's selection--by Plauger if not by Rheims--is two-fold. The first is seen as the reader discovers that the reason the space program has been so beefed-up is that the U.S. is building a space catapult on the moon to be used for dropping rocks on unfriendly countries a la The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress. It is only fitting that the man who disarmed the world's nuclear warheads should be the man who knocks out the warheads' replacement. The second reason is more practical. The reader knows from "Wet Blanket" (which really should be read before tackling Fighting Madness) that Hahnemann is capable of putting himself into a catatonic state. When the chips are down and the odds are insurmountable, Hahnemann is able as a last resort to drive himself crazy once more: this time into a catatonic frenzy. He rambles like a wild animal, killing men left and right, and is finally able to save himself--and to recover his sanity when it is all over. With any other character--even another Rheims graduate--this would seem like the most absurd deus ex machina solution. However, as Hahnemann has done this once before, it is not unreasonable for him to do it again.

So the story hangs together nicely as a sequel. The science is laid on rather heavily, but it is quite painless and certainly seems plausible enough--that is, it is internally coherent (which is what's important, isn't it?). And amidst all the technical information (It's not hard to see that Plauger's main interest is in computers.), the characterization is very good. When Hahnemann makes a mistake or oversight, it's a believable one and one that makes him more believable.

The story is interesting, nicely-complex--at least it manages to keep the reader's attention from wandering as he reads. Plauger is a good writer, certainly readable and mostly enjoyable. And, as we've seen here, he know what he is doing. He says he's started writing science fiction again, and I look forward to seeing it. Until his new work appears, one can read and enjoy Fighting Madness.

Knave In Hand by Laurence M. Janifer, Ace Books, March 1979, pp.216
\$1.75

By most any standards, Laurence M. Janifer's new novel, Knave In Hand, is mediocre. It is what might be called a fastpaced adventure story or a science fiction mystery story. Trouble is, it promises more than it is willing to deliver. The reader is led to expect high intrigue, twist endings, and excitement. However, the ending is really quite boring; its only function seems to be to end the book. The reader follows page after page largely because the solution to the whole problem promises to be, well, something requiring a leap of imagination. Instead, what we find is that the people who were presented unfavorably from the first are indeed the bad guys, and that their motive was a direct takeover of a planet that would seem to hold little interest for anybody except a native (the natives are snake-like creatures called Tocks): the human colony is very small, and why anyone would desire so fervently to command it is beyond me.

I don't want to give the impression that this is a bad book, or even a dull one. The ending is a disappointment, but it was fun getting there. Janifer tells the story in a sort of self-consciously humorous style that is often delightful. An example (picked at random--any page contains similar examples) from p. 42:

"Thank you," she said, offensively. It's easy to say offensively: try it. It will amke enemies for you, but go ahead and try it. Be the first kid on your block to be done in by an enraged group of your peers.

Perhaps if the story, and particularly the ending, had been as funny as the writing itself, the book would have been a success. As it stands, I don't think it does.

A final note: Someone at Ace stuck a cover on this book that has absolutely no connection whatsoever with the interioe content. None. At least the cover to Survivor (to which this is a sequel) showed a heroic type being persued by nasties, even though the background shown was nothing like the setting of the novel. The cover to Knave In Hand is better-drawn, but its purpose here is a mystery.

And

Science Fiction and Fantasy on the Screen

"Buck Rogers in the 25th Century" or "4.50 down the Drain"
with Barbera Brittian

For 50 years, science fiction has been plagued with the epithet, "That Buck Rogers Stuff." More recently, we've been stricken with "That Star Wars Stuff." Now both labels come together with disastrous effect.

Glen Larson and Leslie Stevens' new production of Buck Rogers is trash. Or, to elaborate, it is sexist, racist, poorly-plotted, poorly-written, predictable, and overall shoddily done. And it is boring. Star Wars, which had most of these same defects, was able to entertain, to divert, so that its shortcomings weren't so readily apparent.

Perhaps the greatest single fault of the movie is its sexism. By that I don't mean the type stuff that subtly pervades mosy of our culture. The sexism here is of the most blatant, overt, and offensive type imaginable/ It seems impossible that anyone could not be struck by it. In the opening credits, we see the sleeping form of Captain William "Buck" Rogers approached by an endless array of beautiful women (some of whom actually appear in the movie) clad in low-cut silver jump-suits. I was taken aback by this display of tastelessness, but decided to keep an open mind towards the rest of the movie. Unhappily, this opening sequence (which seems to be an accurate portrayl of what goes through our "hero's" mind) is indicative of what goes on in the movie as a whole. There are, by my count, exactly four women in the whole movie, two of whom have very minor roles. The other two spend the better part of the movie throwing themselves at Rogers.

Princess Ardala, who is usually seem wearing sequinned bikinis, seems completely overwhelmed with Rogers' masculinity--something, I suppose, that Larson and Stevens would have us believe will disappear in the next few hundred years. Ardala tries to Convince Rogers to come over to her side so that she can set him up in her father's place as emperor of the galaxy. Foolish woman: she should have known that supremely masculine heroes from thr 20th century can't be corrupted. Ardala's romantic attachment to Rogers is inexplicable--did Larson and Stevens really believe that the slow-witted clod they created was that irresistible?

The sexism in this movie is absolutely unforgivable. It is not naive that one sees here, but rather a conscious effort to portray women as mindless sex objects. Larson and Stevens knew full well what they were doing, and they must have assumed that it would make them more money. I can only hope that word of this abomination spreads quickly so that more people don't waste their money.

Now should I happen to be addressing an audience of dyed-in-the-wool male chauvinist pigs, let me assure you that there are many more reasons for not going to see Buck Rogers.

The dialogue is almost as embarrassing as the sexism. In the first part, Rogers is drugged, so his stupidity is understandable, and sometimes even amusing. But he never seems to recover from his stupor. Most of his lines are actually painful, particularly the scene in which he urges Princess Ardala to "get down and boogie."

The movie might have been better titled "Buck Rogers Meet the Cylons," as the storyline is very close to the first episode of "Battlestar Galactica": the evil types hope to take Earth by surprise because they are ostensibly coming to sign a peace treaty. Killer Kane is nothing but a re-done Count Baltar, but without John Collicos' charm.

And should you be planning to go see another neat special effects movie, be assured that you will be disappointed. The special effects are competent, but not any better than can be seen every Sunday evening. The scenes in which Rogers takes on the vicious space pirates are a great cure insomnia. We've all heard the stories about the painstaking effort the Star Wars crew went through to put together the dogfight scenes for that movie. Nobody who did anything on Buck Rogers seems to have cared about anything.

When leaving the theatre, I tried to think of a worse movie than the new Buck Rogers--I'm sure there must be one. I just can't think of it now.

Later that same night, I had the good fortune to see a rerun of one of my favorite science ficiton movies, Gene Roddenberry's The Questor Tapes, starring Mike Farrell ("B.J." on M*A*S*H) and Robert Foxworth. Roddenberry, along with Star Trek veteran D.C. Fontana, recaptured here what was perhaps Star Trek's primary virtue: the

accent is on characters and interpersonal relationships rather than special effects and "sci-fi" type gimmicks.

The story is simple: Scientist Jerry Robinson completes the work on an android, dubbed "Questor," that had been begun three years earlier by vanished genius Vaslovik. The android, after not responding during the day, comes to "life" at night, fashions itself a fully-human appearing face and body (body hair, skin tone, fingerprints) and leaves. Its main problem is that the tape programmed by Vaslovik has been tampered with and Questor doesn't know what his purpose is. He drags Robinson off with him to help him find Vaslovik so that his programming can be completed. In the course of this search, Questor learns from Robinson how to be human, not just how to act human. Before very long, the two become friends.

The show was intended as a pilot--in the end, Robinson and Questor set off together, Questor on his mission to help mankind out a bit, Robinson to make sure Questor keeps his goals in mind and keeps in close emotional contact with the beings he is to help. But these were the days of the 6-Million Dollar Man, and Questor obviously showed enough similarities to the other show that the network wanted to play up those resemblances at the cost of overall quality. As Rodeenberry has said, they wanted to turn it into the 600-million dollar robot.

So Questor remains only an infrequently-seen and fondly-remembered oddity. It could have been a cheap rip-off (see above). I feel rather lucky to have seen it twice now, and I'll always wonder what it could have been.

And now we come to the Children's Television Workshop's production of C.S. Lewis' classic The Lion, The Wit'h, and The Wardrobe. I don't pretend to be objective about this show: I first encountered the Narnia Chronicles when I was around 8--not long before I first read The Hobbit--and they remain my favorite piece of fantasy. Naturally, I'm going to be judging the movie (seen on two consecutive nights for an hour each) by how closely it follows the book and whether or not it does the book justice.

While the plot is actually very faithful to the original, the spirit is not. The cartoon contains none of the book's subtlety or, more importantly, its charm. The White Witch, looking like a badly-drawn copy of the evil queen in Sleeping Beauty, yells the whole time. Except for when she screams. Her troll-slave looks like a midget blue-menaie. The artwork is bad, even for cartoons. The figures are flat and unbelievable, and therefore incapable of arousing any sympathy in the viewer. Or fear. Or awe. Or just about anything else except amusement at their crudeness. The landscapes were particularly bad: Narnia certainly didn't seem like any place I'd ever want to visit (although it was my most fervent wish through much of my childhood). Through it all, I couldn't help but think, "Hanna-Barbara could have done it better."

All of the above reviews were done by William Lancaster

More book reviews

Murder and Magic by Randall Garrett, Ace, January 1979, pp.266, \$1.95

Randall Garrett has over the years created a series of stories in a parallel universe, which has the basic principle that Richard the Lion-Hearted did not die at the Battle of Chaluz. Instead he started and his nephew Arthur continues a tradition of wise rule over England. There is one other premise that magic has been developed as fully as science has in our world.

This universe is the same as ours in the fact that crime is still committed. The two sleuths that Garrett has created, Lord Darcy and Master Sean O Lochlainn are investigators for the authorities in this world. And what they mostly investigate are murders.

Four stories are collected here, "The Eyes Have It", "A Case Of Identity", "The Muddle of the Wood", and "A Stretch of the Imagination", all of which have been published in Analog. They are not stories of deep morality, or of socio-economic conditions, but are of the other sort, read for pure enjoyment. And they are enjoyable. Two people from the Society have already borrowed my copy and it now looks older than books I bought last summer. The mysteries in the book are solvable, however you do have to do some work.

The cover by Bob Adragna covers the concept of the book well. Lots of color. I would have liked to see the original. So if you are a Lord Darcy fan, or haven't ever read any of these stories, here is a good chance to enjoy or discover.

Dragondrums by Anne McCaffrey, Atheneum, 1979, pp.240, \$8.95

Anne McCaffrey's juvenile counterpart of her main series about Pern continues into this third volume focusing on Piemur, who we met in the first two volumes, Dragonsong and Dragonsinger, and the third volume of her adult series The White Dragon.

Piemur's voice is changing, and he no longer can be the boy soprano at Harper Hall. Instead he is sent up to the drum heights for two purposes, one to learn the craft of communication by drums, and second to carry out missions of investigation, or to carry messages for Robinton, the Masterharper. He runs into the same troubles with the folk on the heights as Menolly did with the girls at the cottage, though the conflict is much more bitter and violent.

He himself is changing emotionally. What he undergoes in the book and the change from singer to messenger extracts a price from him. He is rewarded however, since he is able to obtain a queen fire lizard egg and impresses the queen. In this action and others in the book the Piemur of the first two books is seen.

Other events occur in the book, which explain some of the things happening in The White Dragon. We meet some of the characters from that book for the first time chronologically. Probably the only fault of the book is that it does parallel Menolly's saga in some ways, but it is different enough so that it is not boring. The cover is done by Fred Marcellino, and really doesn't depict any event in the book, and the drums weren't really the biggest thing in the book.

Convergent Series by Larry Niven, Del Rey, March 1979, pp.227, \$1.95

The Shape of Space has not been in print for a number of years now and there is other material by Larry Niven that hasn't seen print in book form yet. These two categories are combined to form this short story collection.

There are no Known Space series stories here, so the topics are varied, including everything from magic to witchcraft to the tales of Draco's Tavern. There is quite a lot of good stuff in here including the title story, "Night Spent On Mispec Moor", "Singularities Make Me Nervous", and "The Meddler".

There really isn't much else I can say about this book, except if you're a Niven fan, buy it. Oh yes, the cover by Ladd is very good, I saw the original at Boskone, and it was lovely. I just wish he had been credited on the copyright page.

Nightmares and Geezenstacks by Fredric Brown, Bantam, March 1979,
pp. 183, \$1.75

There are 47 stories in this book. If you check the number of pages, each story averages under four pages per length. There are a few stories that are 10 pages but they are outnumbered. If there is a problem with the book this is it.

The good thing is that most of the stories in here are fine short-shorts. Brown is known for Martians Go Home, and The Best of Fredric Brown and some of the same style runs through these stories, especially the odd twists of humor. Don't try to compare these tales to his other longer works like those above and What Mad Universe. The idea here is totally different. When you have a story of only two pages what can you do with it. The background has to be easily recognizable, the character easily describe in a few sentences, and the plot can have no twists or turns to it. So what can you do? An example. Say that you have a cartoonist on Earth that isn't doing well. He manages to draw a good cartoon with aliens in it. Who do you think likes the cartoon the most, Earth or the aliens? Or the things that can happen to you if you have powers far beyond those of mortal man, and don't think.

One suggestion don't read this all at once, instead read a few a day. The book will last longer and you won't get tired of short-shorts too quickly.

Children of the Atom by Wilmar H. Shiras, Pennyfarthing Press, 1978
pp. 221, \$4.95

This is a collection of five stories, three from the pages of Astounding in the early 50's and two more added, which form a novel. Leading off is "In Hiding" which was published in the Science Fiction Hall of Fame a few years ago. The premise here is that there has been an atomic accident, which caused mutations in the children born of those people who received radiation. The parents died within a few years, but the change in the children was more subtle, they now have the genes of geniuses, and by genius I mean much more than your usual child prodigy.

Of course the problem these prodigies face is that of coping with their environment. One, Timothy Paul, assumes the guise of a normal boy. In hiding however, he conducts experiments in genetics, learns by mail from several area colleges and writes stories and articles for magazines. Another is put in a asylum, while others not trying to hide their intelligence run into trouble with their peers and foster parents.

The stories in the book tell the tales of some of the children and their effort to band together to form a community. These efforts are helped by a few adults who know or find out what the children are all about. The real problem here is that these children have no real adversary. There are problems, but they seem rather insubstantial compared to the basic premise. The real problem, that of their environment is not really solved by the end of the book.

The artwork draws mixed reviews. The drawings in the earlier part of the book seem more symbolic and better done than those near the end. Especially well done is the front piece. The artist is Lela Dowling. There is also an afterword by Marion Zimmer Bradley.

The above reviews were done by Charles Seelig

Editor's notes: As you can see several things happened between last issue and this one. This one has 8 out of the 11 pages done on stencils while the previous one had only one. Things will continue to change over the next few issues, as I learn about stencils and as

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CUSFuSsing



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other things occur, sorry about all the typos.

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Cover is done by
Merrick Lex Berman

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Handwritten notes and signatures:
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