

PEON

NUMBER THIRTY-FIVE

VOLUME EIGHT NUMBER TWO

M A Y 1 9 5 5

Published on an irregular schedule--with at least four issues per year--time, money, the Navy, and wife willing by

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108 Dunham Street
Norwich Connecticut

Exchanges with other fanzines welcomed and are solicited.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: 20¢ per issue; six issues for one dollar. Outside of the dollar area, subscriptions at the rate of 1/-6d for each single issue; or 6/- for 6 issues should be sent to K.F.Slater, 22, Broad St., Syston, Leics., England.

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COVER BY EMSH

CREDO FOR FANTASY WRITERS

ROBERT BLOCH

(The following oath is recommended to be administered to all professional writers of weird or science fiction by the editor who purchases their first story. It is suggested that the writer be forced to place his left hand upon a copy of The Necronomicon and raise his right hand in the general direction of the editor's check book, while repeating this pledge:)

I, John Doe, being of unsound mind and body and otherwise qualified as a potential writer of fantastic fiction, do hereby resolve to adhere to the following restrictions in the practise of my profession, viz, namely, and also, to wit:

1. Never to write a story about a mad doctor, a mad scientist, or a mad professor.
2. Or even a sane one, if that can be avoided.
3. Or if it can't, never to give one of the above characters a beautiful daughter.
4. Never to write a story about a so-called "giant brain."
5. At least, no more than 6 feet in diameter.
6. Never to write a story about a comical leprechaun.
7. Or a serious leprechaun.
8. Or any lousy leprechaun.
9. Never to write a story about a beautiful native girl named Moola, who turns into a leopard, a black panther, a cobra, a tigress, a vampire bat, a cat, or an aardvark.
10. Never to write a story about a timid, weak, poor little clerk who is suddenly gifted with supernatural powers and gets mixed up with a "hardboiled city editor" when he tries to convince him that he can foretell the winner of the Kentucky Derby or the Girls' Intercity Basketball Tournament.
11. I further resolve not to write stories about dinosaur eggs that hatch.
12. Or brontasaurus, pterodactyl, allosaurus, diplocodus, triceratops, stegatherus, or tyrannosaurus eggs that hatch.
13. Or don't hatch, for that matter.

14. I will not write stories about gallant wipers, oilmen, engineers, pilots, navigators, astrologers, or just plain stowaways on space-ships who manage to improvise some last-minute solution to keep the space-ship from crashing, and then pay for their gallantly heroic effort with their lives as a result of being exposed, during this ordeal, to the deadly fumes or rays of the Sterno which propels the vessel around.
15. I will also try to avoid writing sentences like the above, particularly in the front parts of stories.
16. I will not write stories about Martians who come to Earth and cannot get anyone to believe they are from Mars.
17. I will not write stories about Earthmen who go to Mars and cannot get anyone to believe they are from Earth.
18. I will not write stories about automobiles, airplanes, tractors, or automatic-milking machines that come to life.
19. I shall try to avoid tales wherein people are drawn into or out of mirrors, oil paintings, photographs, and drawings on privy walls.
20. I will do my best not to write about kingdoms under the sea or kingdoms inside volcanoes or kingdoms inside clouds or kingdoms on the dark side of the moon, etc.; and if I must use such themes, I will try to change the kingdoms into republics, democracies, or Consumer Cooperatives, just in the interest of variety.
21. I shall endeavor to avoid High Priests whenever possible, including the ecclesiastical dignitaries of Atlantis, Mu, Lemuria, and all points west. Ditto for priestesses.
22. I leave the problem of "uranium piles" to my physician.
23. I will not write stories about mankind's struggle to rebuild civilization after the destruction of total atomic warfare, nor about mankind's struggle to oust alien conquerors after interplanetary warfare, nor about mankind's struggle to repel giant insects, giant reptiles, giant plants, giant robots, or giant midgets.
24. While I'm at it, I'll avoid all insect, reptile, plant and robot menaces, including the inverted device of making 1 of the insects, reptiles, plants or robots a friendly character. Anybody who wants to make friends with a giant-reptile has my permission to do so, but not for me, thanks; at least not while sober.

25. I shall avoid heroes who will do anything on any planet to anybody for any length of time in order to get enough money to buy drinks.
26. I will not write stories about young men who fall in love with vampires and drive stakes through their hearts to give them "peace."
27. Or about young men who fall in love with ghosts and then commit suicide in order to "join them forever."
28. Or about small boys who can see spirits; werewolves, Elementals, fairies, or Martians while their parents scoff.
29. I will eschew the tale of the two lovers who are re-incarnated throughout History and get together somehow during World War II in order to die heroically and "be together now till the end of time."
30. I refuse to write the story about the transplanted brains, hands, eyes, or small intestines.
31. Or large intestines.
32. I will not write the story about the civilization where everybody thinks on at least three levels and insists on talking about it.
33. Or not talking about it.

It is understood, however, that I will be allowed to disregard any or all of the above restrictions if I get a chance to write one of the above stories for money. After all, a fantasy-writer has to eat. Although, in view of some of the above plots, and published stories, one wonders.....

