March, 1950

BLUE BOOK

MAGAZINE

Vol. 90, No. 5

Three Short Novels

Up, Red Dragon! By Paul Johnstone 104
An adventure of Captain Artorius, who became King Arthur of Britain.

Kristian Nye and the Shell-Song By James Edwin Hewelce 118
He never forgot the call he heard in a sea shell as a boy.

Hot Cargo By Richard Howells Watkins 130
Caribbean freight with a wartime surplus vessel proved difficult.

Twelve Short Stories

The Pet Shop By Nelson Bond 2
A fantasy in the best vein of the man who wrote "The Mask of Medusa."

Gertie Grooms the Bride By Kenneth Cassens 13
An electronic calculating machine needed more data for sizing up a girl.

Madagascar Landing By Byrd Brooke 19
A story of the little-known British capture of Madagascar.

I Don't Want to Be a Hero By Robert Richards 30
The first colored policeman in Memphis had to set an example.

Leprechaun Magic By Wilbur S. Peacock 46
A tale of the Emerald Isle and the lure of America.

Professional Gentleman By Eustace Cockrell 60
A great race, a headstrong horse and a girl with a will of her own.

The Low-Down By Edward L. McKenna 65
The road to a murder trial is paved with good intentions.

Red Fingers By Beatrice Grimshaw 70
A poignant drama of love and jealousy in beautiful and poisonous Papua.

The Mule Mail By Stewart Toland 75
When the Indians attacked, the freighter weighed and saved lives.

The Valley of Blinded Men By Robinson MacLean 82
A small airline in the Near East carries plotting passengers.

The Day's Work By Verne Athanas 90
He learns to be a logger in the tall timber of the Northwest.

For an Eye By Owen Cameron 97
Thrown wounded into the snow to die, he is sustained by his anger.

Stories of Fact and Experience

A Slave Escapes from Atomgrad By Sergei Severov 8
A Russian condemned to hard labor in Siberia tells of his flight.

North Atlantic Weather Ship By D. N. Fairbairn 16
A transatlantic pilot tells of the ships which guard and guide them.

Five Years across the Arctic By Herbert C. Freeman 26
The epic story of the great reindeer drive from Alaska to Canada.

The Voyage of the Golden Hind By Francis Fletcher 36
Drake's chaplain concludes his story of the homecoming across the Pacific.

Count Rumford By Morrison Colladila 52
(Picturesque People—XVIII).

Report on Wake Island By Charles Barnard 55
The story of the Americans on Wake during the Japanese occupation.

Arms and the Woman— I By Fairfax Downey 63
Kady Brownell—color-bearer.

Special Features

Songs That Have Made History "Mabroukh Sen Va-t-en Guerre." By Fairfax Downey 74

Homer and Hector By Peter Wells 117
Who's Who in This Issue Inside Back Cover

Cover Design These United States—XXXVIII—Mississippi

Painted by Maurice Bower.

PHILLIPS WYMAN, Publisher

DONALD KENNICOT, Editor

BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE is published each month simultaneously in the United States and Canada by McCall Corporation, Marvin Pierce, President; Lowell Shumway, Vice-President and Circulation Director; Frances Hatter, Secretary; J. H. Hartman, Treasurer; Publishing Offices: McCall Street, Dayton 1, Ohio. Executive and Editorial Offices: 44 Madison Ave. New York 22, N. Y. MANUSCRIPTS AND ART MATERIALS will be carefully considered but the understanding that the publisher and editors shall not be responsible for loss or injury. SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: $5.00 for one year; 75 cents a month—Canada and Pan-American countries (add $1.00 per year for other countries); $1.00 for one year; $1.00 for two years; $4.00 for three years in Canada. Send all remittances and correspondence about subscriptions to our publication office, McCall Street, Dayton 1, Ohio. IF YOU PLAN TO MOVE SOON please notify us four weeks in advance because subscription lists are addressed in advance of publication date and extra postage is charged for change of address. Address change must be received 60 days before publication date. If the address change is not received, the publisher reserves the right to list the subscriber as an address from which to send mail. LETTERS AND ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION are solicited from the United States and other countries. No responsibility is assumed for unsolicited manuscripts or art material. BINDING and DISCLAIMER: All articles and material appearing in this magazine are copyrighted. All rights reserved throughout the world, except as noted below. Printed in U. S. A. Entered as second-class matter November 12, 1930, at the Post Office at Dayton, Ohio, under the Act of March 3, 1919.
THE faded sign read *John S. Beisvohn: Pets.* Keith Prentiss paused and stared at it and frowned. His lease said that he couldn’t keep a pet—which only served to make Keith the more determined. It was his fancy to own one, he had the means to buy one, and he was not the sort to submit meekly to dictation. And in a world where dogs are the most popular of pets, Prentiss meant to have one for his own.

A crimson sun shone brightly on the gray and dingy door as Prentiss turned and with abrupt decision stepped into the pet shop...

As ancient and weathered as the shop itself was its proprietor. From the enshrouded well of the narrow but surprisingly deep shop he shuffled forward as a tiny, invisible bell tinkled announcement of a customer. He was a small man, shabby and unkempt, but in the eyes with which he questioned Prentiss’ purpose there glinted a shrewd acumen, a curiously intent and keen appraisal of the man who stood before him.

“’Yes?’ he asked softly. ‘There is something I can do for you?’”

“A dog,” said Keith. “I want to buy a dog.”
Since we published his "Exiles of Time" in 1940, this singularly gifted writer has given us "The Magic Staircase," "The Song," "The Mask of Medusa" and many other well-remembered stories. The weird tale which follows deserves to stand near the head of that fine company.

by NELSON BOND

"Yes, sir. Had you any particular breed in mind? I have a very fine selection here. Scotties, cockers, bulldogs; or perhaps a Kerry Blue?"

"I hardly know." Keith glanced about him almost helplessly. His eyes, gradually accustoming themselves to the dusty gloom of the shop, identified shapes that had been vague outlines heretofore as cages, kennels, pens. From these emitted, with no great clamor but as a dim, incessant undercurrent of sound, the muted mouthings of the inmate beasts: the fretful chirps of birds, the plaintive mews of cats, the mingled whines and nervous barks of dogs, all voicing impotent protest at this confinement uncomprehended and unlike.


The semblance of a smile touched fleetingly the old man's lips.

"I see," he nodded. "But, then, what seems unusual to one may be another's commonplace. The purchaser: the purchase. The line between is but a passageway."

"I beg your pardon?" said Prentiss. "Nothing. I am an old man, and I fear I talk too much. Now, let me see. An uncommon breed, you said? If you will follow me—"

He led Keith past twin rows of screened enclosures, making no effort to influence his customer's decision, simply displaying his wares that Keith might make a choice. Which was no easy matter. Prentiss liked dogs. All kinds of dogs. Each type and size had some appeal for him. He smiled in warm amusement at the antics of a kennel of spaniel puppies, nodded his
approbation of a clean-limbed Dalmation which, as he paused to look at it, returned his gaze with a grave deliberation that matched his own. He muttered sounds of soothing to a quick, excited dachshund scrabbling futilely at the barrier between them. Then he shook his head in whimsical confusion at the proprietor.

"So many dogs," he sighed. "Where do they all come from? I've often wondered."

"From everywhere,"—the old man shrugged—"and nowhere. Who can say? You don't see one you like, then?"

"Many," acknowledged Keith. "But not the one. Do you know what I mean? I'd be happy with almost any one of them, but it's hard to decide."

"Something unusual, you said," mused the proprietor. "Well—let us look farther on."

He continued to lead the way toward the back of the shop. Keith followed, his dim surprise at the store's unsuspected depth lost in his greater wonder at the dealer's vast variety of offerings. Other than at important shows, he had never seen gathered in one spot so many different kinds of dogs. Here were displayed breeds so uncommon that some of them Keith had only heard of, and never before seen. Afghans and elk-hounds, Bruxellois and Samoyedes, schipperkes, Lhasa terriers, griffons; these were but a few of the rare breeds here represented.

"Your stock," said Prentiss, "is truly amazing. Do you actually have a demand for all of these?"

The owner smiled again. It was an oddly disturbing flexion of the lips, that shallow mirthlessness which was his smile. It was at once secretive and taunting, obsequious and derisive. "A two-faced devil," thought Keith with a touch of pique. "Well, damn him! If he's looking at me—"

But there was irreproachable respect in the owner's reply.

"Indeed yes, sir. There is a demand for every kind of pet if one has the proper—outlets." Beifrohns hesitated briefly on the word. Then he repeated, nodding thoughtfully, "For every kind."

"No doubt," agreed Keith absently. "I must confess the unusual ones appeal to me most strongly." Then, a trifle defiantly, "I suppose you think it's a sort of conceit that makes a man want to own an unusual pet? A form of exhibitionism?"

"Not at all, sir. A very common trait. Altogether human," They had reached that section Keith had earlier conceived to be the back of the shop. Now the owner pushed back a curtain,
There are such things as werewolves.

revealing a doorway to a passageway beyond. "Now, if you would like to see some really unusual pets," he said, "just come with me, sir—"

The fexor in the rearward shop was strongly animal. Indeed the whole effect, thought Prentiss, was rather that of a zoo than of a pet shop. The scents back here were sharper, the sounds more ominous, the larger cages wrought of sturdier bars.

In a pen to his right a creature snarled, lifting its head from a grisly, half-gnawed bone to glare at him with red and angry eyes. Keith stared at it, a grimace of sudden revulsion wrinkling his nostrils. He glanced swiftly at his guide.

"A husky?" he suggested. "A wild dog?"

"Neither," replied the old man quietly. "A wolf."

"A wolf? But why? Surely no one would want a wolf for a pet?"

Beifrohns shrugged. "Perhaps not for a pet. But perhaps for other reasons?" Again there was that cryptic hesitation in his words. "Men have made more than comrades of wolfkind in the past. A mighty nation boasted that its founders suckled at the dugs of one like this. Another race once defied its kind."

Prentiss frowned. "Surely you're not serious? The wolf that murdered Romulus was a legend, the Fenris wolf a monster out of myth."

"Perhaps," replied the old man. "And then—again—perhaps not. Would you insist that he is but a myth?"

He nodded toward a creature in the next enclosure. Keith turned and looked. Then he gasped. The thing at which he stared in raw astonishment was no member of the family of dogs. It was equine in form, smooth-limbed and graceful as a gazelle. Its color, too, was that of the desert beast. But there the similarity ended. For from this creature's forehead incredibly projected a long, slim, delicately convolute spike. The animal was—a unicorn!

Keith cried, "But this—" Then he stopped, because the protest leaping to his lips did not make sense. Meaningless to say the thing was impossible, for it was there before him. He said instead, "Where—where did it come from?"

The old man's answer was a variation on his former words.

"There is a source for every kind of pet if one has the proper outlets. And I have those, you know. This way and that: hither and yon."

There was a disquieting significance to the way he bobbed his head alternately toward the front and back of the shop. A thin prickle of unease tingled Prentiss' spine. The man, he thought, was obviously mad. And yet—the creature in this cage?

He stretched a hand tentatively toward the unicorn. It shied violently, withdrawing to the other end of its pen, where it stood nervously atremble, watching Keith warily with its great, soft, curiously colorless eyes. The proprietor smiled thinly., "I fear you cannot touch it," he murmured. "Only a virgin clad in cloth of gold—" He shrugged. "But of course you know the rites. Shall we go on?"

Keith wet his lips in brief uncertainty. An impulse deeper than his thinking mind warned him that he had seen more already than it was wise to see. But Prentiss had the questing type of mind, and now his curiosity was strongly aroused. He nodded.

"Yes," he said. "By all means, yes."

"It is only fair to tell you," said the proprietor, "that this is the turning-point. Beyond here is but one direction—forward. You may go back now, or go on."

And then, as Keith made no reply, "Very well. It is yours to decide."

He moved forward, and as in a dream Keith Prentiss followed him. And well it was that in a dream he walked, else what he saw might well have turned his mind.

The cage beyond the unicorn contained a scaly thing twice the length of a man. It was, thought Keith at first, a giant lizard. But as they moved, it raised the milky veil of its saurian eyes: its thin, cruel mouth split in an angry hiss. And perhaps it was only a long red tongue that for an instant showed between those rows of fangs—but Keith thought otherwise. Fire alone has heat. And flame, too, has a long and crimson tongue.
Still farther down the passage stood a tank. Keith could not see into its noisome depths, but a ceaseless churning roiled its greasy surface, and to Keith it seemed that they were squamous coils which undulated through the bubbling slime in some slow, horror-pregnant movement.

He was still wondering if it were a kraken or some sea beast he had glimpsed when Beiroohns spoke again.

“A moment ago I think we spoke of wolves? Here is a type that you may find—amusing.”

His choice of words was something less than apt. It was hardly an “amusing” shape which hunkered in the next cage. It sat and watched them shily as they passed, gray canine form with scarlet mouth left in bestial simulacro of a smile. It made no sound, but when they had moved on from abreast its enclosure, Keith heard a furtive scraping from that grizzled pen.

He turned, and in the vague light thought he saw standing the pale form of a slim and naked girl, hands gripping the bars.

He turned to retrace his steps. But the old man’s staying hand was on his shoulder.

“No, my friend. There is no turning back,” he said.

“But—a woman!” cried Prentiss.

“There was a girl in that cage where first I saw a wolf.”

Beiroohns nodded. “Even so,” he said gently. “But surely you are not again surprised?”

Keith whispered dazedly, “Then that, too, is true? There are such things as werewolves?”

“Mankind has less imagination than it dreams,” said the pet-shop owner. “The marvel is not that so many men have told of these creatures, but that other men have doubted their descriptions. There are all types of beings. All are real. And none are wholly fabled.”

“But—” protested Prentiss.

“There is an ancient saying, ‘No smoke without fire.’ So is it with your folk tales and your legends. Not a one is without its underlying truth.

“Like this one—” said the old man. “And yet there are those who will contend his likes has never been.”

And he nodded toward a triple-headed dog that rose, stiff-kneed, to simultaneously growl and bark and snap at them as they approached its kennel.

I t was then, at last, that Prentiss began to understand and fear. What had sustained him until now he could not say. A dread-bumbling mixture of inquisitiveness and doubt, perhaps; the anesthetics of surprise and incredulity. But now, abruptly if belated, he began to comprehend what he had blundered into. The cold careess of terror touched his heart; he halted in his tracks and set his jaw.

“See here,” he said, “I’ve changed my mind. I think I’ve seen enough. I’m not sure I understand what I’ve seen, and I’m even less sure I want to. But I’ll be going now.”


“No, thanks. I said I’ve seen enough. I—”

“Forward,” repeated old Beiroohns. “You will recall my warning that in this passageway there is no turning back.”

Keith Prentiss glared at his guide defiantly.

“Oh, no? Your mistake, my friend. I’m going back the way I came—right now.”

“It is you who are mistaken,” sighed the proprietor. “But if you must, then you may make the trial.”

And he stepped quietly aside as Prentiss whirled and took three strides to—

—To nowhere. For there was no passageway. Where but a moment before had stood twin rows of cages, now Prentiss found but a blank, impassive wall. The kennels and their contents were no more: the door through which he had entered the corridor had disappeared.

“You see,” said the man Beiroohns.

“There is but one way— and that is forward.”

“Ridiculous!” snapped Prentiss. “This is a trick of some kind. An optical illusion. If you think I can’t find my way out of this damned mirror maze of yours—”

B ut the walls against which at first he pressed, then ultimately beat with frightened fists, were as solid and unyielding as his host’s unchanging smile. And as he beat upon the impossible barrier with increasing panic, the ancient guide repeated, “I’m sorry, my friend. But you were warned. From this passageway there is no turning back.”

“Passageway?” cried Prentiss. “What passageway is this? What devil’s trap or den?”

“Then still you have not guessed.”

There was that in the old one’s eyes which was at once sympathetic and without human understanding. “This is the way between: the meeting-place. The single passageway that links the worlds.”

“That links—the worlds?”

“Surely, my friend, you do not share that blindness of mankind which leads men to believe their little world to be the only plane on which life may exist?” Beiroohns shook his head sadly. “Has it not yet dawned on you that these pots of mine, so strange and new to you, are denizens of yet another world?”

“Look here. And here—” The old man led him on. “Have you before seen beasts like of these?”

Simply, dazedly, Keith Prentiss stared at the cages stretched before him, beholding creatures of which before he had heard only in wildest fantasy. A winged horse—and a horse with human head. A bird with serpent’s tail; a cockatrice. Another creature with a lion’s head, the body of a goat—and dragon’s tail: from its maneled withers grew a second head, capric in semblance.

There was a silver stallion in one stall, another held a browsing yeanling bull. It had a jet-black coat, did this young bull, but on its forehead was a white triangular spot, on its right side a spot like a half moon. And with a dreadful awe Keith Prentiss knew that could he see beneath its hidden tongue he would find a knot the shape and size of a beetle.

Keith turned, perplexed, to face his aged host. “Is it—” he began, then chose another pronoun, “Is he too for sale?”

Beiroohns shook his head. “No. Osiris waits for his appointed time. But when his hour strikes, he will appear, as was foretold.”

Despite his horror, Keith moved slowly on. There was a dreadful fascination to this place. He knew he must turn back, the least try. He was younger than his guide, and stronger: when the time came, he could force the old man to show him the way out. But intrigued by the wonders he beheld, mutely he followed forward.

Pet shop or madhouse, Keith could not say which, but that which he saw here was like a catalogue of myth. Sirens and cerceps, aegipanes and sphinx—their half-forgotten names sprang to his mind as each revealed itself within some cage. The chimera was there, and hydra, too: harpy and satyr, nect and nereid. Increasingly the humanoid in form became the beasts as strangely brighter grew the passageway. From somewhere up ahead spilled shafts of light, a gleaming in the shadowed corridor that was not the warm, golden glow of sunlight, but an odd and luminous blue.

As if in answer to his unspoken query, his guide—or warden—spoke.

“See, it grows light. We approach the end,” he said.

“The other end of the passageway?”

Beiroohns nodded. Prentiss stared at him, his eyes narrowing and thoughtful.

“And when we reach there—”

“You will see the other world,” said Beiroohns. And almost gently, “It is a sight not granted to many.”

Despite his lurking doubts and grave suspicions, a resurgence of curiosity suffused Keith Prentiss. The
chance to view another world? Madness, of course. But, then, all this was madness. There was—there must be—some reasonable and logical explanation for all this. At worst it was a hoax; undoubtedly the greatest and most meaningless hoax ever perpetrated upon an innocent victim, but a hoax, nevertheless. At the end there would be explanations. And laughter. Laughter to wash away all foolish fears. Meanwhile, . . .

Brighter and brighter grew the light about him. And now the passageway, it seemed to Keith, began again to widen. He pressed forward eagerly, feasting his eyes on each new wonder to be viewed, outdistancing his slower-moving guide.

Then, suddenly, he reached a barrier. With abrupt surprise he discovered that there bars which he had mistaken for the uprights of a cage before him were in reality a barrier halting his progress. He turned to the right: the way was blocked with bars. And to the left. Again the way was barred. He turned to Beifrohns.

"I say," he called, "there's something odd here—"

And then he stopped, shocked into silence. Because behind him his aged guide was quietly fastening the metal gate through which he had entered this last enclosure. There came the grate of steel on steel as a key turned in a lock. Then slowly, deliberately, and with a curious sort of kindliness, the old man bent and placed two earthen bowls within the cage wherein Keith Prentiss stood. One of the bowls held water, and one food.

With a scream that was less fear than rage, Keith hurled himself on the unyielding bars. He roared, he howled, he swore—to no avail. The old man walked away, forward toward the strangely unearthly blue light.

Keith's fury was a dreadful spectacle. His cries, his threats, roused all his fellow beasts. Within the shop, for quite some little while, there was that din which frequently occurs when some newcomer takes poorly to confinement.

But at the end, Keith's screams of protest died in plaintive, sullen whimper. And later still, he laughed.

The faded sign read *Jamu Bisrons: Pets*. Gryll Kyrkind paused and stared at it and frowned. His lease said that he couldn't keep a pet—which only served to make Gryll the more determined. It was his fancy to own one, he had the means to buy one, and he was not the sort to submit meekly to dictation. And in a world where men are the most popular of pets, Kyrkind meant to have one for his own.

A cobalt sun beamed brightly on the gray and dingy door as Kyrkind turned and with abrupt decision trotted into the pet shop...