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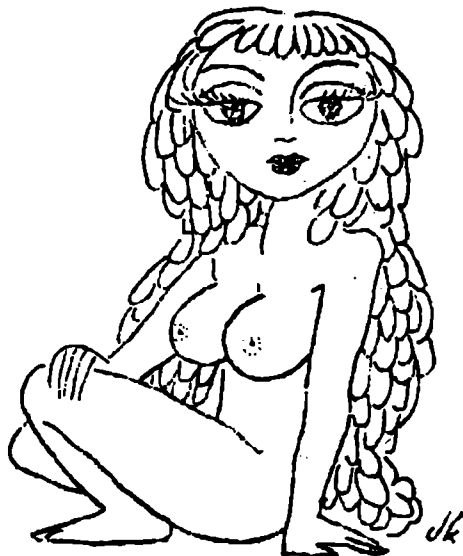
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THOUGHTS ON THE WORLDSTATE

The hideous Mr. Kuttner returns with an equally hideous tale. We absolutely guarantee this story will induce nausea and slight regurgitation. Lead on, McKuttner!

by henry kuttner

I have, as usual, been brooding over the intricacies of modern civilization. It seems to me that life is a peculiarly futile business. This mood of mine may, perhaps, be attributed to my recent tragic encounter with a horse at the corner of 42nd and Broadway.

I shall not dwell upon that incident, save to mention briefly that horses should, at least, be careful of what they eat. One never knows the result of the most innocent action, and that, by imperceptible degrees, brings me to the subject of this article, PLAYING FAIR WITH FANS, or, FANTASTIC DECENCY.

It has been said (and very loudly, too) that fans fight a lot. Well, I do not care to refute that; I happen to know that a Californian fan, a Mr. Ackerman, is in the habit of knocking down visitors and kicking them in strategic places. The question naturally arises, does fantasy lead to sadism?

I am reminded of the remarkable case of Scarlett O'God, an ardent fan whose tininess led to her being occasionally called by the diminutive, or fanny. This may seem somewhat confusing at first glance. Let us, therefore, go hastily on to the next paragraph.

I should, perhaps, mention a mysterious white-bearded gentleman called Tarboth the damned, or Toby, since he played a significant role in the incident. It was he who listened, toying at his beard idly, while Scarlett feverishly upheld her position against the onslaughts of her foes. Just what caused the argument I cannot recall at the moment. Nor does it matter especially. I believe it had something to do with Scarlett's being locked out of the Sanctuary, or Washroom, by previous arrivals.

Mocked, scorned, and jeered at, Scarlett at first said nothing. Ultimately, however, she lost her temper and cursed her enemies roundly. "I would," she observed with feeling, "sell my soul to the devil in order to obtain vengeance!"

At this moment the white-bearded gentleman smiled unpleasently and vanished. Simultaneously lightning struck the Sanctuary and demolished it, to the natural discomfiture of the occupants. Laughing in a triumphant manner, Scarlett departed.

But the seeds of doom were already sown within her soul. Not until she was soaked to the skin did she realize the ghastly and hideous truth. Then, looking up, she saw that above her hovered a small black cloud, from which rain was steadily descending. As she realized the terror of her position, black horror flooded the girl. SHE HAD BECOME ALLEGIC TO WEATHER!

Well, after that, of course, matters got steadily worse. She was driven from home, after blasting the bathtub and spoiling a valuable Angora kitten. (It was later made into a muff, but moths got into it. That, however, is another story, and not an especially good one.)

Poor Scarlett was excluded from all fan gatherings. Sun stroke and eclipse were her constant companions. She came with the deluge and was gone with the wind.

The girl was utterly friendless. She roamed wildly here and there, haggard, careworn and miserable, in a tattered gown made from the covers of AMAZING STORIES. At night people could hear her moaning under their windows, and they huddled closer to the fire, whispering, "Fetch aft the rum, Darby! Evil walks abroad tonight and I feel my soul shudder in me. No soda, thanks!"

Hopeless and forlorn, Scarlett stowed away on a schooner out for Hong Kong. But she was discovered, cursed for a Jonah, and set ashore on a cannibal isle in the South Seas.

It was a blessing in disguise. The natives mistook her for a goddess. They were used to bad weather, and did not attribute the altered climate to Scarlett.

So they garlanded her with leis and made her their queen.

And she rained happily ever after.