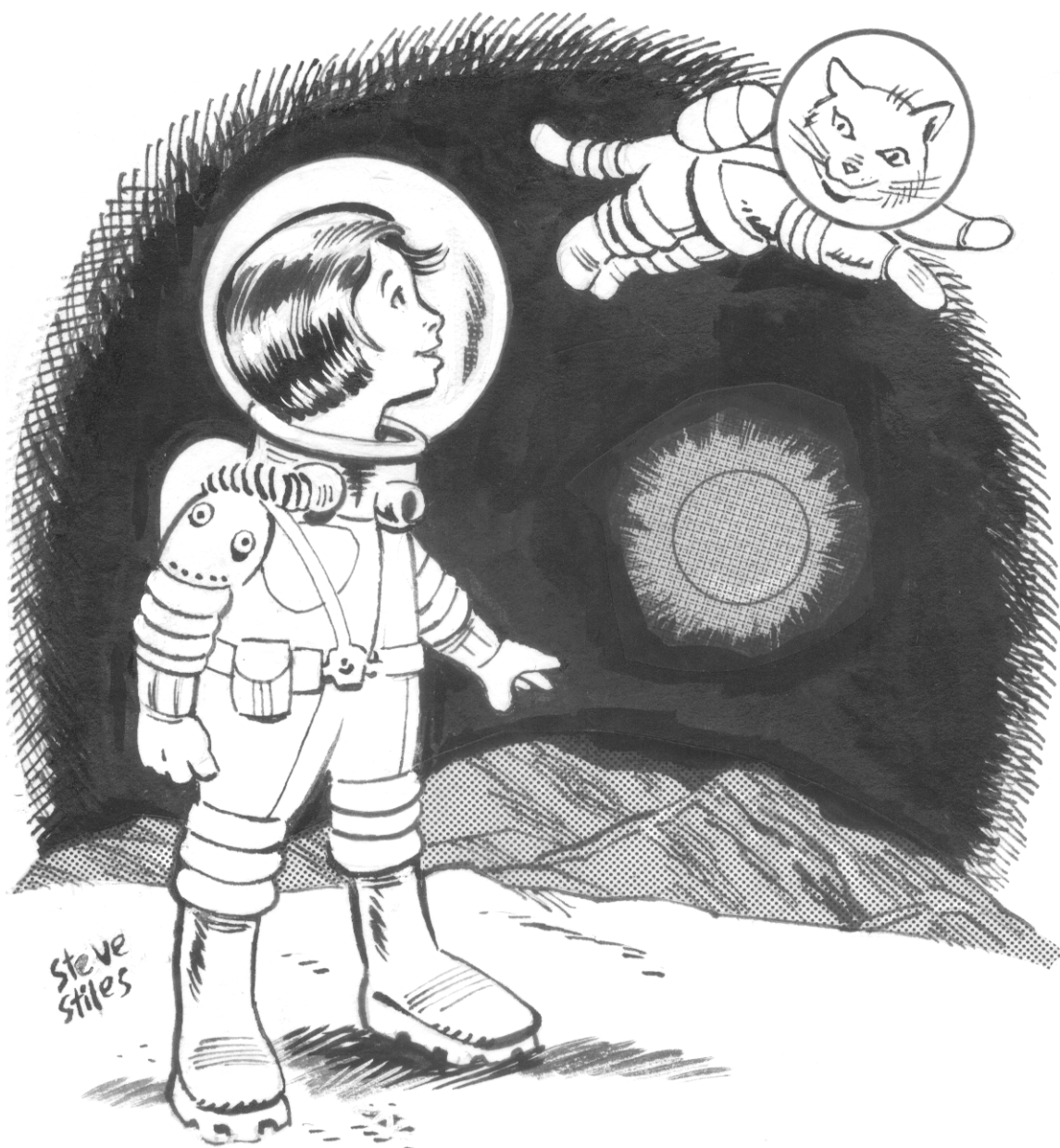


Visions of Paradise #144



Visions of Paradise #144

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Out of the Depths

My favorite author has betrayed me...

Collingdale had always found mathematicians dull, methodical, and unimaginative. Why anybody would marry one, he could not understand. He'd wondered why evolutionary forces hadn't wiped the breed out.

– Jack McDevitt, **Omega**, page 282 (paperback edition)

*

This month is the 40th anniversary of the first worldcon I attended in full, St. Louiscon in 1969. I spent a single day at Nycon 3 in 1967, which was my first exposure to fandom and it convinced me it would be very good to participate further. I was a college student in 1969 when I flew to St. Louis for Labor Day weekend. While I don't have a lot of memories of that weekend, some of them still stick in the back of my head:

- the huckster's room (dealer's room) was the highlight of the entire weekend, row upon row of new and used science fiction books. In subsequent years, the percentage of books declined, replaced by more and more arts and crafts, but still there were always more books than I could possibly have wanted;
- the art show was absolutely spectacular, so I always spent a lot of time browsing the art at worldcons;
- some panel discussions were fascinating, while others were boring. It was not so much the topics which determined the quality of the panels as the panelists themselves;
- I saw many of my favorite sf writers for the first time. Alas, I was much too shy to speak to any of them;
- I enjoyed the Hugo Awards a lot, including all the speeches. The Best Novel went to John Brunner's **Stand on Zanzibar**, but I was most excited by Best Novella going to one of my very favorite stories, Robert Silverberg's "Nightwings";
- it was the 1960s, after all, so there was skinny-dipping in the hotel pool. I had not expected to see that, however, my hotel room looked right down on the pool and I was very surprised one night to look out my window and see dozens of nude people right below me. No, I did not join them;
- one clumsy fan tripped and tore the movie screen in the main auditorium of the convention. Harlan Ellison immediately took up a collection to repair the screen, but the money collected was far in excess of what was needed, so Harlan unilaterally decided to donate the excess to Clarion, the writing workshop for fledgling writers which was so new at the time that it was actually being held at Clarion State College. However, Clarion was viewed by some fans as a "New Wave" training ground, and they resented their money being given to an organization of which they disapproved, which caused a bit of a controversy at the convention. Ultimately the money was used for another cause.

*

The Hugo nominations list was released at the end of Anticipation, and several **VoP** readers did well:

Best Fan Writer (26 nominations needed to make the final ballot):

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Chris Garcia</i> 44 | <i>Steven H. Silver</i> 44 | <i>John Hertz</i> 26 |
| Lloyd Penney 25 | Guy H. Lillian III 25 | Mike Glycer 16 |
| Joseph T. Major 12 | Randy Byers 7 | Bruce Gillespie 6 |

Best Fanzine (30 nominations needed to make the final ballot):

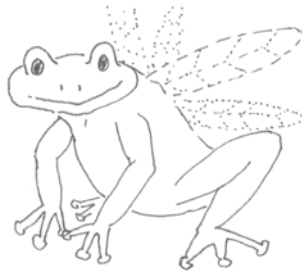
| | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Argentus</i> 47 | <i>Drink Tank</i> 47 | <i>Challenger</i> 45 |
| <i>File 770</i> 30 | Chunga 20 | SF / San Francisco 17 |
| Alexeid 16 | Steam Engine Time 11 | Vanamonde 9 |
| The Knarley Knew 5 | | |

Italicized names made the final ballot. Congratulations to all of you who made the list. Anybody who earned at least 5 nominations should be proud of their respect in fandom.

*

Last December in **VoP** #136 I discussed a **Worlds of IF** mystery which occurred when the December 1964 issue announced that the feature story for the January, 1965 issue would be the first installment of Jack Vance's second *Demon Princes* novel *The Killing Machine*. However, the serial never appeared in **Worlds of IF**, being replaced in the subsequent issue by the serial *Starchild*, by Frederik Pohl and Jack Williamson.

Recently I read the January 1965 issue, and the solution to the mystery was revealed in the letter column. A correspondent named Martin Massoglia commented "*The Killing Machine* by Jack Vance has just been published by Berkeley Medallion—now you are planning to serialize it? WHY?" The editor (presumably Frederik Pohl, although at times an assistant editor handled the lettercol) replied "As re *The Killing Machine*: we agree with every word you say...and that's why the serial beginning this month is *Starchild*. When we bought *The Killing Machine* it was with the clear understanding that there would be no book publication for at least a year. Somewhere, somebody, somehow failed to get the message—and the book edition came out—and at the last possible moment we had to pull the story out and replace it (If you look closely at the cover you can see where the type was cut out and changed)."



The Passing Scene

We went on two camping trips this summer with our friends Alan and Denise. On **Saturday, July 18**, Jean and I drove to Oriskany, New York, bringing her aunt Ceil home after her two-week stay for the wedding. When we arrived, Ceil realized that she left her pocketbook in Subway where we ate lunch, 60 miles back in Norwich! She also had left her car keys in her pocketbook, so we needed to unhitch the camper so Jean and Ceil could drive all the way back to Norwich to get the pocketbook (Jean phoned first to make sure they actually had it).

When they returned, we went to dinner at a restaurant called 99, which is of the popular faux-diner ilk (such as Bennigans, Applebee's, TGIF). Afterwards, Jean and I fixed Ceil's toilet, although it was not much better than it had been previously. We also did a bit of re-arranging of her house, moving some of the clutter out of her downstairs living room such as putting the large coffee table into the almost-empty upstairs tv room.

On **Sunday, July 19**, Jean and I left in the morning for Lake George. We stopped first in the small Adirondack town Speculator where we ate lunch at a small restaurant where I ordered fried clams, french fries and cole slaw. Jean had fried fish with the same sides. Then we walked around the town a bit, enjoying the rustic scenery.

When we reached our campground outside Lake George, we set up our popup camper at a nice campsite beside the Shroon River, where families of ducks gathered during the day looking for us to feed them (which I always did!). There were also numerous mosquitoes around the river, so we spent the week spraying ourselves with bug spray and burning a candle which activated a mosquito repellent which was very effective. The bathrooms were not as good as we would have liked, but that was the only drawback to the campground. Most of the other campers stayed in the upper part of the campground, so we had relative privacy all week.

Sunday night we spent our first of many nights sitting by the campfire toasting marshmallows.

Monday, July 20, was a hot day, so we swam in the campground pool, then spent much of the day in Lake George, which is a bustling little tourist town at the lower end of the lake. It was very hot walking through the town, so I stopped and bought a cap to wear in the sun.

Soon after we returned to the campground, Alan and Denise arrived and set up at the next campsite. Jean and I cooked hot dogs over the campfire and baked beans on the popup's portable stove, a simple, traditional camping meal.

Tuesday, July 21, was the only rainy day of the week, so we spent most of it shopping at outlet malls in Lake George, which we had intended to do anyway. We ate lunch at a restaurant called *Old Grill Post*, another pseudo-diner which we all enjoyed. I had a sandwich of turkey, cheese, apple slices and tomato; Jean had a reuben; Alan had a Philly cheesesteak; and Denise had a pulled pork sandwich.

On our way back to the campsite, we stopped at Stewart's since Alan and Denise love the ice cream there. We all had sundaes, which were very tasty. Because it was still rainy all evening,

we sat in Gilberts' camper and chatted long into the night.

Wednesday, July 22 was another hot day. We drove to Saratoga Springs where we visited a Farmers' Market (I bought a horseradish cheese spread), then spent an hour in their casino. Jean and I were very thrifty, spending only \$5 and \$2 respectively on the slot machines. We ate dinner at a café where Alan and I had chicken parmigiana with penne; Jean had chicken, broccoli and penne; and Denise had chicken isabella (nice name []). Then we returned to the campsite for a fire and marshmallows.

Thursday, July 23 was a lazy day, sitting around the campground reading (I read about 700 pages of Stephen Lawhead's fascinating historical novel **Byzantium** during the week), doing crossword puzzles (which Alan and Denise love to do), and eating. While Jean swam in the pool, I took a long walk with Alan. For dinner Jean and I cooked a ham slice over the fire.

Friday, July 24 was another shopping day. We drove into nearby Warrensburg which had a very interesting used bookstore. All the paperbacks were stacked in boxes, which I had to pull off piles to examine. There was lots of science fiction though, so I went through them. I ended up buying volumes #4-6 in the *Thieves World* series. I still have the first 3 volumes in an SFBC collection, and I am certain I had the next three volumes several decades ago, which I read and enjoyed, yet for some reason I must have gotten rid of them in one of my culling-the-collection sprees. Now I am pleased to have them back again. I also bought **The Sands of Mars**, by Arthur C Clarke, since I have so few of his books in my collection.

Meanwhile, Jean, Alan and Denise went to antique shops in town, then we met and drove back to the outlets for more shopping there. Afterward we drove to *Old China Buffet*, which was surprisingly good for being in an area with so few Chinese residents. Their roast duck was worth the price of the meal. Afterwards we returned to the campsite where we sat around the campfire for the last time, finally dousing it about 11:30 pm.

We left the campground at noon on **Saturday, July 25**, and drove with Alan & Denise to Albany where we got gas for our cars and bought sandwiches at another Stewart's. Then we drove to a thruway rest area where we ate the sandwiches, before continuing to New Jersey. Meanwhile, Andy picked up Mark & Kate at Newark Airport since their plane from their honeymoon in Hawaii landed about 2:15 pm. They came to our house about 5:00 to pick up gifts which had arrived during their honeymoon, including a bread maker which Fei Fei had sent them. We were all exhausted, so they soon went home while Jean and I finished unpacking, had a quick fish sandwich for dinner, then began going through mail and email and doing laundry.

Sunday, July 26, was Andy's 26th birthday, so he, Jean and I went to IHOP for brunch. Although I was determined to return to my writing this week after not accomplishing much the first month of summer vacation, I still had a lot of chores to do after returning from camping, such as going to the YMCA, an appointment with the foot doctor to check my new orthotics, food shopping, finishing *Ride the Lightning* and *VoP*, and spending one of my two required days at school during this summer. I am beginning to understand why retirees always say that they get less accomplished than they hoped to do after they stop working.

*

We left with Alan & Denise on our second camping trip on **Tuesday, Aug 18** to a campground near the Jersey shore. This time our families joined us for various parts of the week. Their oldest daughter Rebecca arrived soon after we did in her popup camper with her 4 year old son Anthony and 3 year old son Dominic. It was nearly 100° when we were setting up our trailer, so we were all anxious to go to the nearby pool where we spent time nearly every morning and afternoon. It was much nicer than the pool at Lake George had been, as were the showers and bathrooms.

For supper the first night Jean and I ate chili which we had made in the crockpot Monday and eaten a portion of it that night. Then we made our nightly campfire and sat around it for three hours, chatting and toasting marshmallows (for s'mores, a sandwich of 2 graham crackers filled with a chunk of chocolate and a toasted marshmallow).

On **Wednesday, Aug 19**, Alan & Denise's other daughter Sarah arrived, staying until Saturday when she left for parties with her friends at the shore. We spent the day reading, swimming, and taking a drive through the nearby shore town and looking at the bay (while I also talked on the phone with my friend Adrienne who retired from teaching two years ago to raise her son Jack fulltime). For supper Jean and I cooked hamburgers over the fire, which we ate with corn niblets and a salad.

Thursday, Aug 20, we all drove to Long Beach Island. Alan & Denise and their family visited Denise's sister who has a home there, while Jean and I met my sister-in-law Doreen and my brother David and his wife Karen (who all have nearby condos) for lunch at a shore restaurant which typically featured seafood. I ate scallops and shrimp over linguine while Jean ate a broiled seafood platter with scallops, shrimp and a huge crab cake (which she gave me half to eat.).

Alan & Denise had their annual camping lobster dinner tradition. They asked if we wanted to join them, but eating lobster is too much work for too little reward. Rebecca also bought nearly two dozen husks of corn which Alan cooked on the grill, and Jean and I bought a carrot cake for Sarah's birthday.

The rest of our families arrived on **Friday, Aug 21** since they all had to work. Mark, Kate and Andy all stayed in our popup camper, while Alan & Denise's son David stayed with his parents in their larger camper, and Rebecca's husband Mike joined them in their popup. It was thundering at dinnertime, and Mike saw on his I-Phone that a bad storm was approaching on the radar, so we went to a diner for supper. Diners have seemingly never been as popular outside New Jersey as they have always been in our state. At their peak there was seemingly a diner on every corner. Now they are slowly vanishing because of chains such as Applebee's, Chili's and TGIF, which have the advantage of serving alcohol. Too bad since diners are one of two places in NJ where you can get a lot of good food for a very good price. The other place is pizzerias.

The storm cleared up, so we had another fire tended by Jean and Alan, the two most-experienced campers. Talk was dominated by a few people, as usual. I said very little since the things I most enjoy discussing—SF and writing—rarely interest anybody else I know. We all ate

s'mores, which were tasty.

Saturday, Aug 22 started with homemade pancakes for breakfast, which were good, after which we all spent time in the pool. After lunch, Andy, Mark and Kate went to Atlantic City while the rest of us sat and read and spent more time in the pool. When the boys and Kate returned, we ate hot dogs and baked beans for dinner, then we all sat around the campfire again.

We all spent time in the pool in the morning of **Sunday, Aug 23**, after which David, Rebecca, Mike and their kids all left. The rest of us played *Apples to Apples* through much of the afternoon, then Andy, Mark, and Kate also left, leaving Alan, Denise, Jean and I alone. We drove 30 minutes to Atlantic City where Denise gambled for several hours while Jean, Alan and I walked the boardwalk. While it is not the best boardwalk in the state (last summer's Wildwood has that honor, in my opinion), it is still fun walking on it. One of the highlights is all the wild cats which sit serenely in the sand beneath the boardwalk, waiting for the local senior citizens to feed them.

On this trip I finished reading Tim Power's **Three Days To Never** and started reading James H. Schmitz' collection **Eternal Frontier**. Schmitz was a good journeyman writer—comparable in my mind to Murray Leinster, Gordon R. Dickson, James Blish, A. Bertram Chandler, Richard Cowper, Edgar Pangborn, Frederik Pohl and Bob Shaw—whose stories I enjoyed in issues of **Analog** from the late 1960s and early 1970s. I am enjoying this book and hope to get more of his collected fiction from Baen Books.

After spending one last morning in the pool, we left the campground at mid-day on **Monday, Aug 24**, stopping first for gas on Route 72. However, Gilberts' car would not start again. It would have been unusual to go through two camping trips with them this summer without their having any car difficulties. Jean and I went home alone while they waited for a tow truck. They phoned us that night and told us that one tow truck took their car to a garage while another took their camper to a nearby campground where they spent the night.

Waiting in the mail for me was a box of **Worlds of If** from the 1950s which I had ordered from Robert Madle. They were slightly different than the issues he had told me he would send me, including one issue which I already have. So I mailed that one back to him. I also mailed a book of mine which somebody had claimed on *Paperback Swap*, so I am deciding what book to order in return. I might select either another James H. Schmitz collection or the third volume in Philip José Farmer's *Riverworld* series, since I am currently re-reading **The Fabulous Riverboat**.

*

Immediately after we returned home from our first camping trip, Fei Fei and Silvio returned from a month in China where they had attended two academic meetings followed by a week of giving talks at various universities. Their flight landed at 2am in the morning due to airport delays and ended up being a 24 hour flight from Chengdu to Newark. Jean, Mark, Kate and I visited Fei Fei and her family the day they returned, since they were only staying one day before their flight to Stanford and her new job. Since she and Silvio were both too exhausted to cook, we went to a really nice dinner at Penang Restaurant, a Thai-Malaysian restaurant whose food actually tasted more Chinese than Thai.

Wondrous Stories

Regular readers of **VoP** know I am a big fan of Jack McDevitt, especially his *Alex Benedict* future historical mysteries. I am slightly less a fan of his *Academy* novels which tend to be problem-solving adventures about a superluminal pilot Priscilla Hutchins whose adventures involve either exploring worlds whose civilizations have been destroyed by large interstellar “omega” clouds which travel slowly through the galaxy destroying any civilizations they encounter in their path, or trying to rescue civilizations from the approach of other omega clouds. Besides the adventures, the books in the *Academy* series are also concerned with the underlying mystery of the origin of the omega clouds: are they natural phenomena or artificial? Why do they target civilized worlds? Most importantly, is there any way they can be stopped since one of them is on a direct path towards Earth although, fortunately, it will not reach it for nearly one thousand years?

When the series concentrates on the clouds (as in the initial story **The Engines of God** and the one being discussed here **Omega**), the books are better than when they devolve into routine adventure fiction (**Chindi** and **Deepsix**). The premise of **Omega** is that humans discover a fourth alien race besides themselves, a race of cartoonish-looking beings affectionately called *goompahs* after children’s tv characters. Their world is in the path of an omega cloud, but unlike Earth which has nearly a millennium to worry about it, they have less than a year.

Immediately the Academy dispatches available superluminal ships to the goompahs’ world to help them. This involves two major problems. First is that, according to “protocol,” humans are forbidden from revealing themselves to less-advanced cultures (as the goompahs are, having a sophisticated but pre-Industrial Revolution society) for fear of drastically-inhibiting their development. Second is that scientists have absolutely no idea how to either stop or alter the path of the omega clouds.

Omega mostly concerns two groups. One is a small group trying to find some way of convincing the goompahs to abandon their cities and flee to the mountains since the clouds only destroy outward signs of civilization, specifically any structures built with right angles, thus they would be safe from the assault in the mountains. At first these efforts involve secrecy from the goompahs for the sake of the protocol, but as the cloud gets nearer, the protocol is abandoned, which involves another problem: the goompahs are immediately terrified at any sight of humans, so convincing them of their danger from the omega clouds is akin to devils appearing in New York City and trying to convince the average person they encounter that they appeared there to save their lives. Nor is there any worldwide mass media on the goompahs’ world, which makes it even more difficult to influence all goompahs.

The second group is bringing technology which they hope will distract the cloud, such as giant structures in space built entirely of right angles which they hope will attract the omega cloud away from the planet.

There is a lot to like in **Omega**. The race to save goompah civilization is a gripping one, and the difficulties encountered by the participants are believable. The last hundred pages of the book are particularly exciting as the humans race to save the goompahs during the assault by the

omega cloud. But I most enjoyed how the humans explored goompah society trying to find ways to convince them of their danger without violating the protocol. Along with the humans, we learn about goompah history and religion and the structure of their civilization. It is a fascinating bit of culture-building, even if goompah society is a bit too human-like to be totally convincing. While certainly not on the level of a C.J. Cherryh or an Ursula K Le Guin, the culture-building combined with the efforts to save the goompahs, all wrapped around the overriding mystery of the omega clouds, is fun reading which I recommend highly.

*

There is also a lot to like about Peter Beagle's novel **The Innkeeper's Song**, but it has some flaws which temper my recommendation a bit. As the title indicates, the story takes place at an inn set in a typical medieval-type fantasy world. Several people converge on the inn one summer, initiating a series of events which climax in the virtual destruction of the inn. The characters in the novel include:

- Nyatenari, a female escapee from a convent who is sought by three assassins since nobody is permitted to ever leave the convent;
- Lal, a female warrior who has a very close, if slightly mysterious, relationship with Nyatenari;
- Lukassa, a young woman who drowned in the novel's opening sequence but was somehow returned to life by Lal;
- Tunzi, Lukassa's lover who saw her drown and immediately left home to follow her and Lal;
- a changeling who is often a fox, but at times becomes a human;
- Karsh, the fat, disagreeable owner of the inn who distrusts Nyatenari and Lal the instant they arrive at his inn, but he is too weak to refuse them lodging;
- Rosseth, an orphan boy who has worked at the inn his entire life;
- an aging wizard who was the teacher of Nyatenari and Lal, and whose death is sought by a younger, more powerful wizard.

Several storylines intertwine in **The Innkeeper's Song**: the three assassins show up at the inn intending to kill Nyatenari; Lal and Nyatenari seek the young wizard in an attempt to save the life of their mentor; Tunzi is so love-smitten he continually tries to regain Lukassa's love even though the formerly-dead woman does not recognize him at all; the young wizard shows up at the inn planning to kill the old wizard.

The book is told in the form of dozens of short chapters, each from the point of view of a different character, so we get multiple colorings on what is taking place. The characters are mostly interesting, with the exception of the fox, and the storylines move along nicely.

What slows the book down is long passages where Beagle seems so enamored with the writing itself that nothing happens for several pages at a time, neither plot nor character development. These are primarily in the chapters narrated by the fox and Lukassa. I found my eyes glazing over those passages, but fortunately they were a small portion of what otherwise was a very interesting book. The climactic scene includes considerable hand-waving, but that is almost expected in a book about wizards and it did not detract from the book overall.

Several decades ago I read the collection **Giant Bones**, which were novelettes set in the world of **The Innkeeper's Song**. I enjoyed the novel enough that I plan to go back and reread the collection again.

*

I seldom read contemporary fiction, preferring either the past (historical fiction) or the future (sf). Occasionally a contemporary fantasy will intrigue me, usually written either by Charles de Lint or Tim Powers. Powers' latest novel **Three Days to Never** is actually a contemporary science fiction novel (set in the late 20th century) with aspects of fantasy, a bit of a departure for Powers.

The premise is that Albert Einstein, in addition to his "famous" discoveries, also invented a time machine which consisted of some rather convoluted elements. After testing the time machine himself, Einstein decided it was too dangerous and tried to destroy all its scattered parts. The novel concerns two shadowy groups which are trying to track down and obtain the various parts of the time machine for their own purposes.

While the novel has multiple viewpoints, most of it concerns a single father and his daughter whose recently-deceased grandmother apparently had parts of the time machine and understood their purposes very well. The novel is primarily a thriller as the father and daughter, once they learn of the existence of the time machine, try to elude their shadowy pursuers while also seeking to obtain the rest of it themselves.

It does not pay to think too deeply while reading **Three Days to Never**, but all the historical connections between Einstein, Charlie Chaplin, the three-Day Arab-Israeli War and other historical elements are fascinating, and Powers successfully pulls it all together at the end. Overall it is much more interesting in my mind than the Dan Brown-type of pseudo-historical thriller, even though Powers' premise is not any more logical than Browns' on any scale of believability. Powers is just a much better writer than Brown.



Baby Boomer Quiz

There are 30 questions total. Some are easy; some are not. Answers will appear next issue

| |
|---|
| What is the claim to fame of Ned Morgan of Cincinnati, Ohio, and Judith Owens of Schenectady, New York? |
| What was the name of Joe Namath's bar in NYC which Pete Rozelle forced him to sell his interest in? |
| Who played the Joker, Penguin and Riddler on the original <i>Batman</i> series? |
| Who was the original host of <i>Jeopardy</i> ? |
| In the original <i>Hollywood Squares</i> , who was the most common celebrity in the center square? Who mostly sat in the lower left square? What was his real name? |
| Who were Dick Van Dyke's fellow staff writers on <i>The Dick Van Dyke Show</i> ? What was the name of the star of the show they wrote for? Who played him? |
| In one famous episode of <i>The Dick Van Dyke Show</i> , Dick dreamed that Earth was invaded by aliens who had eyes in the back of their head. What famous comedian played the alien? |
| Who had a sore throat when the Beatles first appeared on <i>The Ed Sullivan Show</i> ? |
| What was the name of the two-part episode of <i>Star Trek</i> which was the series' original pilot? |
| How do you <i>really</i> pronounce Joe Theisman's name? Why did he change it? |
| Who was George McGovern's original running mate in 1972? Why was he removed from the ticket? Who replaced him? |
| Paul Hewson is to David Evans as Gordon Sumner is to whom? |
| What famous rock star originally titled one of his albums <i>Ol' Pink Eyes is Back</i> ? |
| There are two famous rock stars named David Jones. One was a Monkee. Who is the other? |
| What iconic movie role was originally played by Buddy Ebsen? Why did he quit the role? Who replaced him? |
| Several decades later Buddy Ebsen played the sidekick of a legendary American in a tv series. Who was that legend? Who played him? |
| What Beatle song did Chicago regularly play as one of their encores in the 1970s? (Think about it; it's a very logical choice) |

On the Lighter Side

Joke from John Purcell

A wealthy man was having an affair with an Italian woman for several years. One night, during one of their rendezvous, she confided in him that she was pregnant. Not wanting to ruin his reputation or his marriage, the man paid a large sum of money if she would go to Italy to secretly have the child. If she stayed in Italy to raise the child, he would also provide child support until the child turned 18.

She agreed, but asked how he would know when the baby was born. To keep it discreet, he told her to simply mail him a postcard, and write "Spaghetti" on the back. He would then arrange for child support payments to begin.

About 9 months later, he came home to his confused wife. "Honey," she said, "you received a very strange post card today." "Oh, just give it to me and I'll explain it," he said. The wife obeyed, and watched as her husband read the card, turned white, and fainted.

On the card was written: "Spaghetti, Spaghetti, Spaghetti, two with meatballs, one without."

*

Jokes from Will Sabella

An Irish woman of advanced age visited her physician to seek his help in reviving her husband's libido.

'What about trying Viagra? Asks the doctor.

'Not a chance,' she said. 'He won't even take an aspirin.'

'Not a problem,' replied the doctor. 'Give him an Irish Soluble Viagra. Drop it into his coffee. He won't even taste it. Give it a try and call me in a week to let me know how things went.'

It wasn't a week later that she called the doctor, who directly inquired as to progress. The poor dear exclaimed, 'Oh, faith, bejaysus and begorrah! 'Twas horrid. Just terrible doctor!.'

'Really? What happened?' asked the doctor?

'Well, I did as you advised and slipped it in his coffee and the effect was almost immediate. He jumped his self straight up, with a twinkle in his eye, and with his pants a-bulgin' fiercely! With one swoop of his arm, he sent the cups and tablecloth flyin', ripped me clothes to tatters and took me then and there, making wild, mad, passionate love to me on the table-top! It was a nightmare, I tell you, an absolute feckin' nightmare!'

'Why so terrible?' asked the doctor, 'Do you mean the sex your husband provided wasn't good'?

'Oh, no, no, no, doctor, the sex was fine indeed! 'Twas the best sex I've had in 50 years of marriage! But sure as I'm sittin' here, I'll niver be able to show me face in Starbucks again.'

*

An elderly couple, Margaret and Bert, were vacationing in California . Bert always wanted a pair of authentic cowboy boots. So seeing some on sale one day, he buys them, wears them home, walking proudly. He walks into the house and says to his wife: "Notice anything different about me?"

Margaret looks him over, "Nope."

Frustrated Bert storms off into the bathroom, undresses, and walks back into the room completely naked except for the boots. Again, he asks, a little louder this time, "Notice anything different NOW?"

Margaret looks up and says, "Bert, what's different? It's hanging down today, it was hanging down yesterday, and it'll be hanging down again tomorrow."

Furious, Bert yells, "AND DO YOU KNOW WHY IT'S HANGING DOWN, MARGARET?"

"Nope," she replies.

"IT'S HANGING DOWN BECAUSE IT'S LOOKING AT MY NEW BOOTS!!!!!"

Margaret replies, "Shoulda bought a hat, Bert. Shoulda bought a hat."

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On their 50th anniversary, a wife found the negligee she wore on her wedding night and put it on. She went to her husband, a retired marine, and asked, "Honey, do you remember this?"

He looked up from his newspaper and said; "Yes dear, I do. You wore that same negligee the night we were married."

She said, "Yes, that's right. Do you remember what you said to me that night?"

He nodded and said "Yes dear, I said, Oh baby, I'm going to suck the life out of those boobs and screw your brains out!"

She giggled and said, "That's exactly what you said. So now it's fifty years later, and I'm in the same negligee. What do you have to say tonight?"

He looked her up and down and said, " Mission accomplished."