

CLAW & FANG

Number 122
January 20, 1981

This is the eighth anniversary issue--only two issues left.

The winning nomination for Fang of the Year is:

FANG OF THE YEAR--NAY, THE CENTURY: MIKE MAZZER

by Robert Olsen

This article hardly needs to be written, for with the emergence of Mike Mazzer to the pinnacle of hobby prominence in the past year, no one would have the temerity to nominate anyone else. Indeed, in future times we may well be awarding not Fang of the Year awards, but Mazzer of the Year awards. In fact, it has recently been announced that in May of 1982 all current Diplomacy sets will be recalled by Avalon Hill, and a revised, vastly more amusing and sophisticated version of the game will be issued. It will be called not Diplomacy but--of course--Mazzer.

There are stabs, and there are stabs. There is the stab of some total stranger, a faceless scrawler who once every two months favors you with a brief letter. There is the stab of someone you know, or think you know, who suddenly turns into a Fang and rends you limb from limb. And then there is the stab of your sweet little grandmother, who suddenly whips out a Bowie knife and slices both your ears off. Such is the favored technique of Mazzer, this Emperor of diplomats. Mazzer knows that the stab must be conducted with both disarming (or disearring) charm and absolute cruelty. At times it may be difficult to find the correct type of mindless sycophant who can be led so willingly to his doom, but I, Earless Olsen, know at least one such.

As 1979KW, a C&F game in which he was playing France, dragged on, Mazzer became bored. After five years he had only stabbed England and Germany and Italy a total of about eight times, and only two of them had resigned from the game in hopeless despair. It had become boring to have the Austrian, Olsen, save his life with timely warnings and semi-sound advice so many times. Mazzer know that the time to shear the sheep had arrived; and when it came, he manipulated the Austrian in a manner truly beyond brilliance, successfully ripping one whole supply center all at once in an unheard-of bit of strategic insight. But--was this enough? Of course it was not enough. Olsen was used to being stabbed; he had already undergone this process some five times in the game. Mazzer, ever known for his sincerity, consoled his victim with the following honeyed words; "You cannot win, or even prevent me from winning. Would you like to puppet for me?" Thus Mazzer anesthetized the victim for the next incision, at the same time illustrating his sound grasp of strategic principles. And so it is, as the Austrian sinks into a well-deserved oblivion, and Mazzer, riding high (illegal in some states), prepared for his most well-deserved win. It

will be his first win; of course. For this was only his first game! We cannot, after all, ask even Mazzer to perform miracles; though those who have observed his play closely are not so sure.

All those who have had the privilege of playing in a game with Mazzer will acclaim him a true Fang; but this is not enough. I, his humble and unworthy pupil, have sworn to spread his fame from one end of the hobby to the other. This, gentlemen and ladies, is the greatest Diplomacy player alive! Let's recognize genius when it comes among us, and accord this paragon the fame he so richly deserves.

6 January, 1981
The Argyll and Sutherland Highland

Dear Mr. Horton,

Having instigated this noble effort of the Famous Writers Demonstration Game, 79CT, I feel a certain responsibility to personally bring the business to a proper conclusion. This final chapter will not turn out precisely as I had intended for two reasons: (1) I had hoped to tie up the loose ends, but, thanks to the fact that my colleagues are about as capable of producing a united effort as the Iranian Parliament, this chapter would have to reconcile a wounded wolf, a Gaelic sorcerer, a crazed barbarian, and a hot-rodding pachyderm, among others. Therefor, I shall have to ignore most of them. And (2) the final confrontation between Kruger and Terrazeni will have to be foregone thanks to the ghastly predilection of the players for killing off my most interesting characters. It appears, therefor, that it will be necessary to un-retire my most famous creation to tidy things up once again.

Sincerely,

/s/ John LeCarre

Analysis of Demonstration Game 79CT

Chapter the Last: Fangy's People by John LeCarre

George Smiley unobtrusively plodded up the three short steps to his modest house on Bywater St. His beautiful, beloved Ann was not home, but a glance around the room revealed to Smiley's keen eyes, with their years of experience in all areas of tradecraft, from scalphunting and lamplighting to stump jumping and snipe sniping, that she had had been here recently. And she had not been alone. A half-smoked cigar lay in the ashtray, and shaving materials littered the bathroom. A Neapolitan dirk had been used to slice the somewhat overripe Brie, a pair of red trousers hung on the bedroom door, and the jacket from a pin-striped suit lay folded neatly across a chair. Belts and chains of various odd shapes and sizes were scattered among various rubber novelties and unusual magazines on the floor. A large male Great Dane was tied to the bedpost. Smiley instinctively examined the doorjams for the presence of thin wooden wedges, and secretly hoped that Ann had not been indiscreet.

On his dressing table Smily found a note from Ann about his phone messages: "Dearest George, your tailor called and he has finished shortening the sleeves on your new shirt. Also, the laundry can not get the stains off the end of your tie. Your article on the 16th century German poetry has been rejected by 'Punch', and the Circus has recalled you from retirement to investigate Russian troop reductions. Please feed the dog. All my love, Ann."

Smiley sighed resignedly. In the 28 years since he had been cashiered by the Circus he had now been recalled 47 times.

* * * *

Rats scurried in all directions as Smiley picked his way deeper into the rubbish tip. Perhaps "scurried" is the wrong word for the way the rodents languidly wandered off with casual glances over their hairy little shoulders at the unimpressive, stubby little figure who failed to command a respectful dash to safety even from Rattus norvegicus.

Between the mounds of shattered bedroom furnishings and discarded kitchen appliances, the detritus of middle class life which the modern day Englishman casts off as easily as his nation's nostalgic dreams of grandeur, Smiley came

(continued overleaf)

across an A-frame leanto made of wooden doors haphazardly nailed together. "And after all she's done for the Service, this is the best they can do for her," thought Smiley disgustedly. Inside the shed a gnarled grey head protruded from an iron lung, and an agonized wheezing filled the tiny room. Her arthritis had progressed to the point where she could only move the last digit of the index finger on her left hand, with which she tapped out messages in Morse code.

"Con, it's George," he said softly and apologetically.

Connie forced a tiny smile and tapped out S-C-O-T-C-H. Smiley obediently drew up three fingers of scotch in a syringe, the only hypodermic he'd ever seen calibrated in that manner, and added it to her IV.

"Connie, you always were our expert on Moscow Centre. I must know about the troop withdrawals. Who can help me?"

Connie pursed her lips in a caricature of a kiss for "her Georgie" and tapped out S-C-H-L-I-C-K O-N-E.

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It is a traditional, and not entirely facetious maxim of Circus folklore that one of the most important skills an agent learns is that of dodging flying crockery. Indeed, as the plates and dishes smashed against the wall on either side of his head, Smiley reflected that this was how he had been greeted by almost everyone he had gone to visit in the past fifteen years.

"Get out!" she screamed. "Go away, George. He doesn't need you, he doesn't want to see you. Go, get out!"

"Patty...Patty," intoned Smiley soothingly, "I must speak to Schlick. He is the only one who can help us."

"No, George. His name is Bruce now, and he won't speak to you," she said quietly, opening a box of fire ants and unleashing several savage dobermans in a futile attempt to drive him off. "He doesn't game anymore, except for an occasional game of 'Rack-O' with the children and a rare visit to the mall for some Space Invaders." She obviously considered the discussion closed, and reinforced that opinion by pouring a line of gasoline across the room and lighting it into a raging blaze that effectively sealed off Smiley's progress.

"It's all right, Patty; he can't hurt us now," spoke Bruce quietly from the top of the stairs. Smiley's keen eyes noticed that even though the jacket of the book Schlick carried read Exploring the Chtulhu Myths it was a simple subterfuge to disguise the fact that he was reading Scruples.

"It's simple, really. After Otrar, the original chief of Russian intelligence vanished in the Canadian wilderness, and the ridiculous rumors that he had been eaten by a moose were obviously spread by someone unaware that they have no upper teeth; anyway, after his disappearance he was replaced by a certain Pyotr, a common soldier. Unfortunately, this Pyotr had had his mouth and both his index fingers amputated due to frostbite incurred in the Norwegian Campaign--something to do with having been issued substandard equipment. He did his best to negotiate, but under the circumstances..."

"Of course," replied Smiley quietly, with a sympathetic nod.

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Back in Bywater St. at last, Smiley had come to the conclusion that the world would simply have to carry on in the future, without his humble assistance, as best it could. He put Ann's things in a cardboard box, fed Francis I (which he had learned was the dog's name), smashed the phone with his shoe, and toddled off to bed.

THE END

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1979 CT Claw & Fang Demo Invitational

Spring 1907 So Much for Franco-Italian Amity...

England (Palter): F Swe-Fin, F Bot S F Swe-Fin, A Nwy S F Swe-Fin,
F Ska S A Nwy
France (Reese): F Lpl-Cly, F Nat S F Lpl-Cly, F Nth S ENGLISH
A Nwy, F Bre-Eng, A Bel-Hol, A Par-Bur, A Mun H, A Pru-Ber,
A War-Mos, A Lvn S A War-Mos, F Por H, A Den H
Italy (Ditter): A Ven-Fie, F Ion-Tyn, A Vie-Tyo, A Bud-Vie,
A Gal-Sil, A Rum-Gal, A Bul-Rum, A Alb-Tri, F Bas-Ion,
F GreH, F Aeg H
Russia (Baker): A Fin-StP, F Bar S A Fin-StP, F Nwg-Nwy,
A Mos-war, A Ukr S A Mos-war, A Sev-Los

Fall 1907 orders are due on 15 February 1981. Phone calls should
be made before noon, PST.

* * *
1979 CV (Spring 1907 revisited: Austrian A Ukr-Gal succeeded.)

Autumn 1907: Austria A Bud R Vie.

Winter 1907: Austria removes A Tri. England removes F Lvp, F Hel.
France builds A Mar. Turkey builds A Con, A Ank, A Smy.

1980 AC Autumn 1904: France A Spa R Gas.

Winter 1904: England builds A Lon. France removes A Pie, A Par.
Germany builds A Ber, F Kie. Italy removes F MAO.
Turkey builds F Smy, F Con. Next orders due Feb 20.

1978 W (MENSA 9) ends in a two-way draw between England (Len Johnson) and
France (H. D. Bassett). Congratulations.

Here is another ever diminishing issue of
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