

JUNE 1984 #2

THE [REDACTED]
CONCERT OF [REDACTED]
EUROPE [REDACTED]



Atilla the Bun

--LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-----

I'm willing to wager that a number of you didn't honestly expect to hear from me so soon. (Or ever again as far as that goes) It just goes to show you that some expectations go awry-- for it's issue number two and like a nagging chest cold or a disfiguring scar you just can't get rid of me.

This last month has been maniacal, at least in terms of Diplomacy business. I've received a tremendous amount of mail-- some good/ some bad but all of it well worth reading. I'll try to summarize the highlights.

The primary concern of most writers was my awful list of ill conceived house rules. Rod Walker called H.R.#4 "an invitation to disaster" that had only been tried once before by someone infamous-- I forgot who. Nick Chrones and Al Villanueva found them "confusing" and "in need of serious clarification". However, these grievances were nothing compared to John Caruso's lambasting remarks. In his curt east coast fashion John suggested that if I hold to H.R.#3 all my games will be "irregular". (An interesting choice of words--Quick someone!! Fetch the milk of magnesia!!) Needless to say a new set of house rules will appear in this issue. Thanks to all for the "friendly" advice.

Despite the house rule debacle I consider issue #1 to have been a mild success. The sub list has grown by about 300 %. Which sounds MARVELOUS! In real terms it means about twelve people wrote for subs, bringing the total to a manageable seventeen. I have to remember

it's the quality not the quantity of subscribers that makes a 'zine worth reading.

Well, I'm going to cut this letter short and get on with more important things, but to end the letter I have an announcement. In the spirit of pretention and heavy handedness, The Concert of Europe will no longer be refered to as a 'zine. From this point on it is a full fledged JOURNAL!

--GAME NEWS-----

DIPCON '85 WILL BE HELD IN SEATTLE OR I'LL KILL THIS HOUSE PLANT!!! Yes folks I mean business. And so does Terry Tallman who is hoping to make a successful bid to house the event at Seattle University in late August. I for one would love to attend a Dipcon in Seattle. Mr. Tallman would be glad to have as many PBM players as possible join him in extolling the virtues of Seattle. If you're willing to help, then by all means start writing to fellow publishers and players. If not for me, then do it for the large potted palm that is even now at my mercy.

Rod Walker called this the announcement of the century Conrad Von Metzke is reviving his vintage 'zine COSTA-GUANA. Sadly Mr. Metzke is planning to keep his 'zine off limits to riff raff like you and I and is charging a subscription rate of 97.50 Austrian schillings. I'm sure that Conrad is a fine fellow, however, in the spirit of upstart pretention that is a one month old tradition at TCOE it must be said that on the off chance (and I mean way off chance) that Herr von Metzke would

like to subscribe to the Concert of Europe it will cost him 98.50 Austrian schillings.

"Golly Wally, I sure hope Mr. Metzke never reads this."

"Me too Beaver."

--THE GAME(S)-----

At last a game is ready to begin. The inaugural game will feature:

- AUSTRIA-HUNGARY: Al Villanueva
2725 Jefferson st.
Eugene, OR 97405
- ENGLAND: Paul Gardner
1676 E. 24th st.
Eugene, OR 97403 (they've never met,
honest!)
- FRANCE: Joe Kott
315 Keys Ave
Springfield, Ill 62702
- GERMANY: Joan Extrom
Rt. 1 Box 26W
Philomath, OR 97370
- ITALY: Gary Coughlin
4614 Martha Cole Lane
Memphis, Tennessee 38118
- RUSSIA: Kevin Kozlowsky
N. Roosevelt Blvd. #106
Falls Church, VA 22044
- TURKEY: Terry Tallman
820 West Armour st.
Seattle, WA 98119 (Whew, I made it!)

The deadline for spring '01 orders is June 20th at 5 P.M. Sound fair? There's no limit to the amount of press. Long fake news articles will be most greatly appreciated. The game's commentator will be the Prophet of Europe. More on that in the section marked "an introduction".

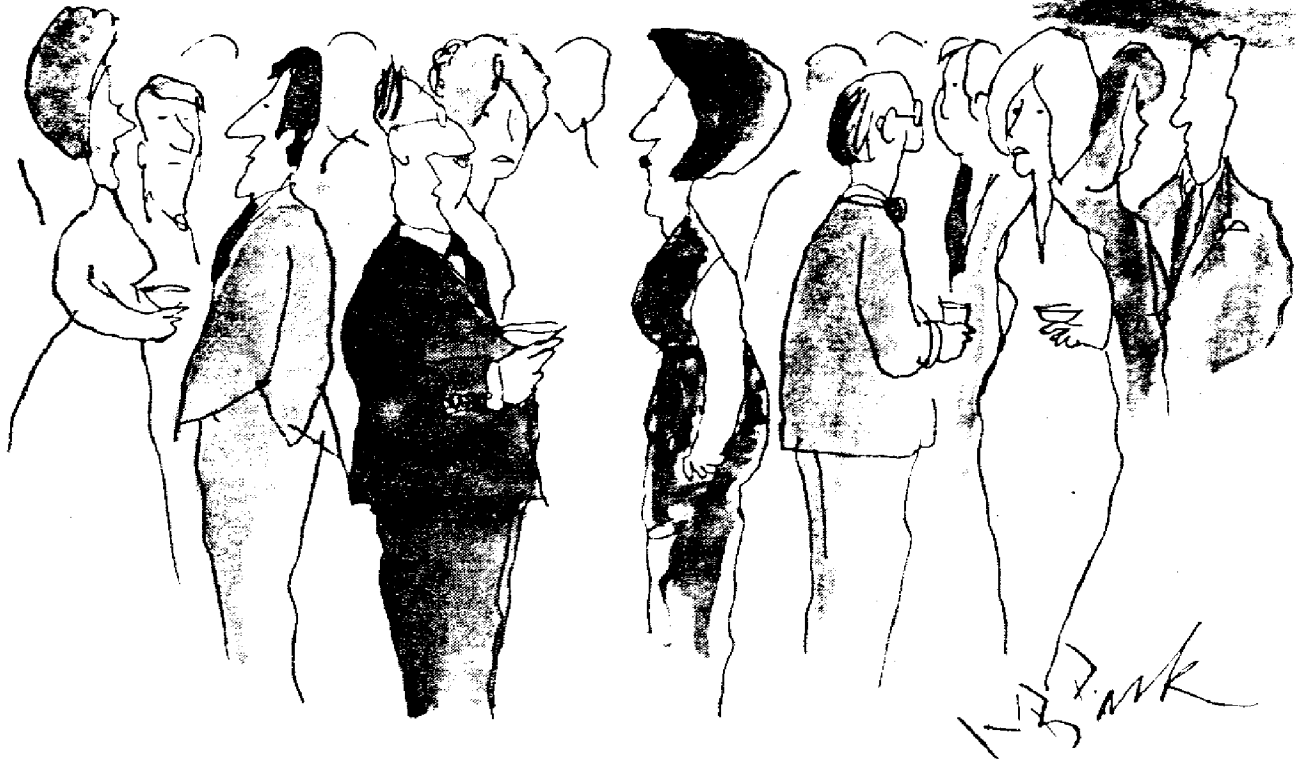
It is with no small amount of trepidation that I offer my new house rules. I'm sure you're all trembling more than I am however, because I'm copping out! That is to say that I'm going to use some tried and true rules--Rod Walker's. Uh, hope you don't mind Mr. Walker. It just seemed like--golly, here's a nice set of house rules. Why don't I save myself some grief and adopt them. If you are outraged by this, let me know and I'll write some of my own. Anyway, they are rather standard and very fair and I definitely hope that all will approve. Copies of these house rules can be obtained from Rod Walker directly for I believe 25 cents plus a SASE, or better yet I'll serve as middle man for nothing. Once again, I hope this doesn't defy all Diplomacy decorum, but I am sorry if it does and I'd be happy to remedy the problem next month.

Here's one additional H.R.. There will be an early deadline for retreats, builds, and removals. That deadline will fall seven days after I figure that you've received the results of the moves. After I receive your retreats, builds, and removals I'll send out a flyer to all players showing where all the pieces lie for the upcoming turn. This will hopefully allow

you to see what you are up against and eliminate complex provisional orders. Also qui tacet consentire will still be in effect to determine the out come of draw votes. I hope that settles that and I really hope Rod Walker acknowledges that the old maxim "immitation is the highest form of flattery second only to direct duplication," still holds true.

Game number two will hopefully start next issue. There are still a few openings left--so tell a friend.

Are you by any chance a fan of the great H.P. Lovecraft? If so you'll want to get in on what may well be the first game of CALL OF CTHULHU by mail. Here's how it works. Players do not need to be familiar with the game. All you do is submit an outline of a Lovecraftian protagonist. His or her life history to date, a list of interests for the character, et cetera. Then Bart Aikens (a Lovecraft scholar) will begin publishing a Lovecraft story in the next TCOE with your character as the protagonist. At pivotal moments the story will stop and the player will be asked several questions about what your character will do to escape danger, solve mysterious questions, et cetera. This experimental "game" could prove to be a complete flop--but humankind is at stake. We need one brave reader to dive in and pit your protagonist against creatures from beyond time and space. No game fee and, uh, no winners either. Just bizarre prose.



"I certainly am worried about the whales. It's just that I'm not worried about them right this minute."

The other day while I was climbing one of Eugene's more interesting landmarks, Spencer Butte (so named because Eugene Spencer was supposedly scalped there in 1860) I met an unusual man. Which leads me to this introduction. He was clad in flowing white robes and claimed to be THE PROPHET OF THE WEST. He looked ancient to say the least. Being a generally aimiable fellow I engaged him in conversation. It was in the course of this conversation that I learned that he is 3000 years old and is very learned indeed. I was even more astounded when I learned that he could predict future events. By a process of casting bones and studying their configurations he can gain knowledge about future events, naturally I asked him to make prophecies each month regarding on going PBM Diplomacy

games. He agreed with several stipulations. First he stated that I must never paraphrase his prophecies. They must appear in dialogue form. He has never made a wrong prediction in 3000 years and he doesn't want me misquoting him and bungling his perfect record. Second I must never reveal the secrets of his mysterious occidental arts. He doesn't want any non-believers running around doing silly things like predicting sudden fluctuations of certain stocks or gambling on sporting events. Lastly, he insists that in our dialogues I must address him with many honorifics. Anyway, here goes my first prediction session with THE PROPHET OF THE WEST! For clarity's sake my part of the conversation will appear in parenthesis and HIS in quotation marks.

(Oh, wise one! Learned are you, the mystic arts of the occident are truly at your disposal.)

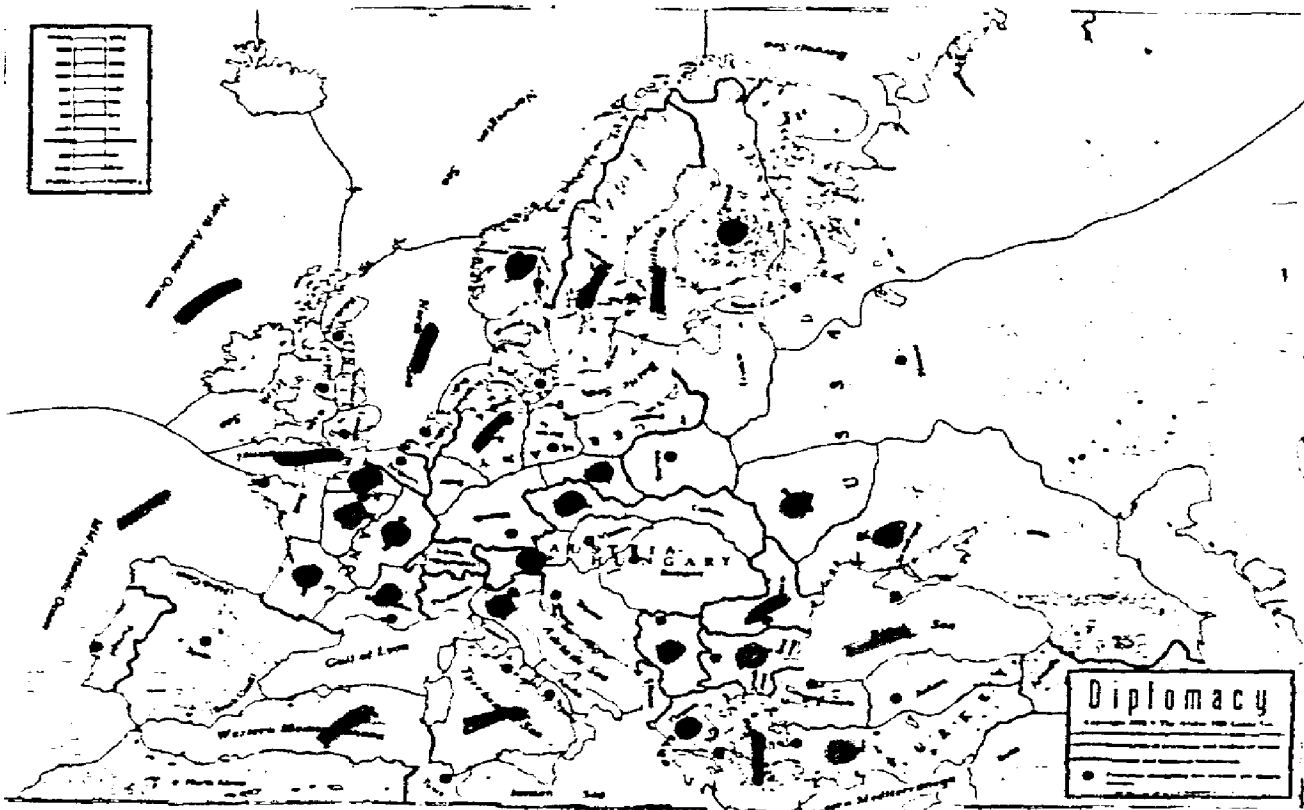
"I prophesy.....VICTORY!!!"

(Oh, scholarly one, grace us with your wisdom.)

"My prophecy deals with 1983 HV. As found in Life of Monty. The future is hazy, but one truth is clear. Mike Ehli will emerge victorious as Turkey."

(But wise one, I do not wish to question your brilliance however this prophecy is difficult to believe. Mike, friend though he is failed to conquer Bulgaria in 1901. His nation is ear marked for ruin.)

"Question not my wisdom. The bones speak clearly enough. For behold, since my prophecy he has already taken Bulgaria. Gaze upon the new configuration of pieces,



(That's all well and good, however the fact remains that Mike has never faired well in Diplomacy. Oh, mystical one there is still time to reconsider your prophecy.)

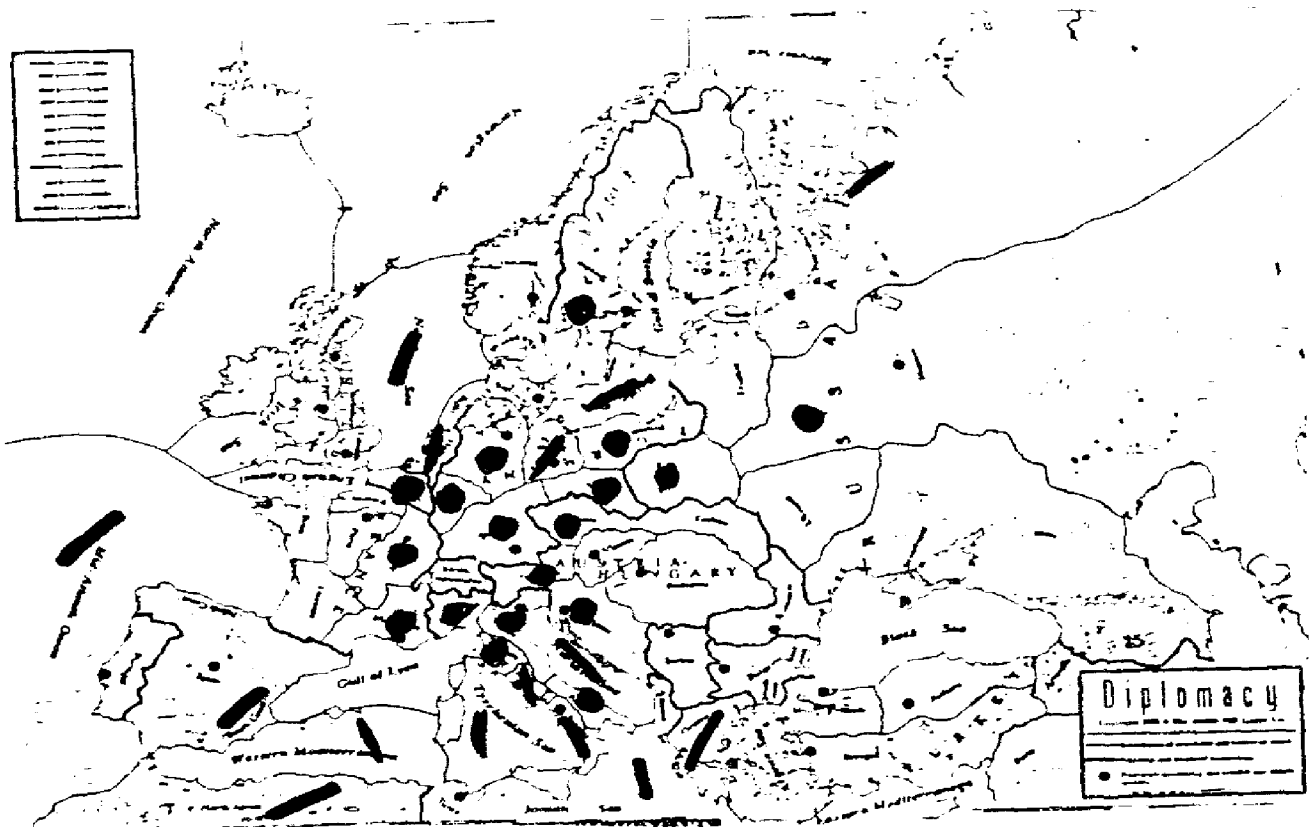
"No way! All good things, even Mike's loosing streak, must come to an end."

(Well, you heard it here first. Send your end game statements to Don Del Grande everyone in 1983HV.)

"I prophecy.....VICTORY!!!

(Oh my wise one. Two prophecies in a month. How can we thank you in a properly mystic fashion.)

"My vision deels with "WINDSOR" 1981AN. Always in motion is the future, however one truth is clear. Kerry Blant as Austria-Hungary will emerge with at least a draw. Behold the array of battle.



(Truly, your majestic powers were taxed by this most daring and bold of predictions.)

"Not really."

(Well, thank you PROPHET OF THE WEST. 1981 AN players may as well submit end game statements to Gary at Europa Express, for the prophet has spoken.)

--REVIEWS, PREVIEWS, REBUTTALS-----

Our first review comes from Al Villanueva, famed tenor and game retailer.

TRIVIAL PERSIFLAGE

Trivial Pursuit: Master Game, Genus Edition, Silver Screen Edition, All Star Sports Edition, the Baby Boomer Edition and the yet to be released Questions for Juniors are a collection of trivia questions that are the hottest thing in game history. In the USA, there are currently eighteen thousand questions that people are repeatedly asking each other, and I have

one that isn't being asked--Why?

I have played Trivial Pursuit several times and the questions are fun and the board and other components are attractive, but this really isn't much of a game folks. Has anyone out there not played or even heard of "tee pee"? If so good for you!

Object: To be the first one lucky enough to be asked six questions that you know the answer to when lucky enough to have landed on the six different headquarters question spots at which point you are asked one final question to win the game (usual length: 3 hours). NOTE: The questions range in difficulty quite widely, but appropriate rewards are not given--all have the same value.

I work in a game store. Since December we have sold five hundred copies and we get about 20 queries about T.P. daily. (That's right DAILY!) Obviously we make quite a bit of money on the game, but as devoted fans of good games the mania surrounding this truly mediocre one is astounding.

After a very few games, it becomes boring. Questions repeat, the supplements are too hard and expensive. Someone can go off on a tear and answer 15 questions in a row and not get anywhere closer to winning. In short T.P. is largely hype. The best hope for the contribution of this game is that when we gamers finish whipping non-gamers at trivial pursuit we can lead them to such great games as Empire Builder, Acquire, and of course Diplomacy.

Al Villanueva

(Yikes I'm running short on space from here on in I'm going to single space it.) -10-

Next we hear from Bart Aikens with his review of The Natural.

Americana sells movie tickets--witness the box office success of Robert Redford's comeback vehicle The Natural, a fablelike baseball drama set during those mythically wholesome late depression years immediately prior to the Second World War. Indulging an all too obvious penchant for sentimentality, director Barry Levinson delivers to the screen a nonetheless inspiring adaptation of Bernard Malamud's novel.

Redford holds a curious distinction among film performers. In an industry where most practitioners are either actors or stars, he is both. A number of critics have called his role in The Natural his best. But Redford as aging southpaw rookie Roy Hobbs isn't so much required to act as simply exude his commanding presence in the manner of Clint Eastwood. Hobbs, a strong, silent type in the Eastwood mold, possesses the additional credentials to make him a classic American hero: a sense of honor and justice, love of sports, and a weakness for beautiful women who can only do him harm. All this plus a mysterious past.

The film is chock full of cliches, many of which elicit groans and laughter or at least smirks of toleration from the audience. Other familiar devices are poignantly utilized. From a cinematically symbolic standpoint the finest of these is the figure of Hobb's childhood sweetheart Iris (Glen Close) as she stands up in the midst of a drab throng of baseball fans to offer unspoken encouragement to a down-on-his-luck Hobbs who is up to bat--the sunlight from behind stunningly illuminates her wide-brimmed white hat. This allusion to a halo is not lost to even the least perceptive audience member; Iris is Hobbs' savior and the only "good girl" in the movie.



The Natural is slightly marred by Levinson's stylistically inconsistent approach to his material. Essentially a modern fantasy, the film's overall positive feel is periodically dampened by dark, brooding passages replete with Caleb Deschanel's murky, gritty cinematography, a marked contrast to the cameraman's soft, nostalgic look. Also, the ambient noises seem to muffle much of the dialogue, although this sound engineering problem may be due more to the faulty sound system in the theatre where I saw the picture.

Bart Aikens

(Bart, I'm sorry for having to edit the final paragraph of your review. It was out of an unfortunate miscalculation in terms of space.)

--LITERARY CONTEST WINNER-----

Before presenting the winning script, we have a runner up. This runner up was disqualified on the grounds that his work did not take the form of a script but rather a novel. The runner up is Count Leo Tolstoy. Here is an excerpt from his Gilligan's Island novel entitled War and Peace and Ted and Alice. We pick up the action in mid-paragraph. Gilligan is skulking along having just been rejected as a member of Mr. Howell's free-mason sect.

...the sound of the insurmountable sea went unheard by Gilligan on this particular evening. He was lost in a desolation of hopelessness. For the first time, this bungling youth had been dealt so crushing a blow by fate that inner thought had been awakened in him. Why? Why had he been rejected as a free-mason? What? What was he going to do about it?

"I know," he thought, "I'll go live in a cave on the otherside of the island. Just like I did when I turned invisible. Then the others will feel sorry for me."

Gilligan's cheeks flushed red as he perceived the shame of using so childish a trick of his past in order to earn membership in a lofty free-mason organization. He was wracked with shame for having even considered such folly! Such ruin! Such pettiness! "Oo Lord and savior, I am so unworthy of your kingdom," he mused, "I am petty. But judge me not harshly, for is not all

mankind petty?"

Gilligan took solace in this grand paradoxical truth. His mind was again at rest until all of the sudden a faky monkey dropped a coconut on his head.

Hurriedly Gilligan rushed toward Ginger and Mary-Ann's hut, from which an alluring warm light was glowing.

Gilligan peered in the window and saw Mary-Ann sitting' alone. He did not speak. Instead he watched the moonlight dance on Mary-Ann's bare shoulders. Gilligan's cheeks flushed red with adolescent desire. Gilligan was mesmerized as he gazed at Mary-Ann's youthful breasts rise and fall as she drew air into her powerful lungs. The healthy lungs of a girl raised in close proximity with the soil. For dear readers is it not true that an agrarian life is inherently superior to the impure life of the city?

Gilligan, caught with a sudden love for all living things, ran off into the jungle.

Suddenly Skipper came rushing through the lush jungle foliage. "Little buddy," He howled. "I'm glad I found you little buddy. The head hunters have invaded the island! That means we're at war!"

Gilligan said nothing and began staring at a gnarled palm.

"Come on Gilligan we've got to defend our mother-island's holy virginity against the cruel invaders!" Skipper proclaimed.

"No!" Gilligan answered solemmly but with conviction, "On this night I am seized by a love for all living things. I will not take part in violent deeds."

Skipper mugged absurdly at the camera and after slapping Gilligan with his cap bellowed, "Good God Gilligan, are you mad? Kill and be killed that's the way of men. Don't tell me..."

(We'll cut the count off there. He ranted on for fully another 800 pages. On to the winner. Bart Aikens imagines this episode as rendered by Ingmar Bergman.) --In 1965 renowned Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman submitted a script to the producers of Gilligan's Island which was promptly rejected. It is not known if the mental collapse he suffered that year was brought on by his fruitless foray into American television. What follows is a fragment of his teleplay.

AS the sun sets Gilligan finds the Professor on the beach looking heavenward.

G: (running) Professor! Boy, am I glad I found you, Professor! You missed dinner--Mary Ann made a delicious coconut cream pie!

P: (vaguely) I hunger for other things, Gilligan.

G: (questioningly) Huh? Like what, Professor?

P: (factually) Knowledge.

G: (displaying several successive emotions) Knowledge? Oh yeah, now I remember! That's what the Skipper sent me for! Have you been able to think of a way to get the radioactive meteor off of the island?

P: (honestly) I don't have an answer. Not this time.

G: (desparately) Oh no! If your brilliant mind can't get us out of this one, what can?

P: (firmly) Death, Gilligan.

G: (questioningly) Death? How, Professor?

P: (pedantically) Death can end the cycle of misfortunes that like a serpent have plagued us in this paradise. In death we can find liberation from the pain of existance and--behold God.

G: (thunderstruck) Behold God? Professor, I thought you were a man of reason and science not faith and superstition.

P: (explaining) Science has shown me the limits of reason.

G: (protesting) But--

P: (movingly) I have no purpose in life, Gilligan! I'm 37 years old, with no wife and no children--I have no investment in the future! (long pause) My father was a bishop. He used to beat me, and I used to cry, and he'd lock me in the closet until I behaved. It wasn't until I was much older that I got away from him. I guess I've NEVER been able to get away from him, and never will. I must die. I must behold God and be at rest with my soul.

G: (distressed) All of us have cause to live. Ginger lives to enjoy men, the Howell's live to enjoy wealth...

P: (grimly) Even with their wealth the Howell's cannot bribe death.

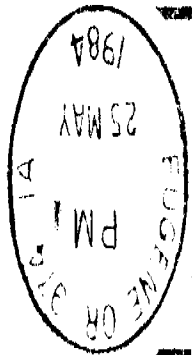
G: Only you are smart enough to save our lives!

P: Only I can play chess well.

(The Professor leaves a somber Gilligan to walk farther down the beach toward the cloaked figure of Death, who sits waiting at a small table on which a game of chess has been set up.)

NO ROOM LEFT! WELL DONE MR. AIKENS! SEE YOU ALL NEXT MONTH FOR ANOTHER THRILLING ISSUE OF THE CONCERT OF EUROPE!

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