



The Twentieth issue of a weekly, or thereabouts (job, life, love, etc., permitting), letter substitute from:

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"Oh it was old but it was not beautiful,

And it was covered in green slime..."

The Twelfth fortnight, a time of cultural celebration throughout all of Northern Ireland, song and dances, parades, music and getting dressed up and going out with your mates into the hot summer sun and letting your hair.

"And deputy Lord Mayor of Belfast councillor Jim Rodgers said: 'The IRA are determined to bring bloodshed to our streets. I expect further murder bids, not only on the security forces but on politicians and leading members of the community.' The two teenagers, aged 14 and 18, were shot at a bonfire shortly before midnight in Leper Street, near Duncairn Gardens. None of the injuries is believed to be life threatening."

(Belfast Telegraph, 10/7/97)

Of course if you are a Catholic and/or Nationalist it is time to pack your bags and head for the holiday cottage in the Republic of Ireland. Or, as the shepard said to his dog: 'Let's get the flock out of here...' The siege mentality of Ulster Protestant is transferred to the Catholics of the province for two weeks each year. It is pretty grim all round.

"The 14-year-old, named locally as Christopher Beggs, was injured in the arm and abdomen. The 18-year-old was hit in the left knee. They were watching the bonfire when shots were fired in the nationalist New Lodge Road area." (The Irish News, 11/7/97)

This is the first time in ages that I've haven't thought about leaving the country at this time of the year. Always before I couldn't afford the time off, couldn't financially afford the effort or the holiday home in Donegal was requisitioned by other members of the family. But I wanted to leave, I didn't want to be in Belfast, in the Ormeau road where I used to live (where Mark McCann, James McKee, Eugene Doherty, Nyree Campbell and a

whole bunch of my other friends still live.) What I did instead was sit inside for three or four days over the twelfth, catch up on the reading I'd missed, the videos that were still left in the store and all that drinking and avoiding distasteful conversations. I hid.

"In the attack on the security forces, a joint army and police patrol was attacked at 10.10pm at the junction of Hillview Road and Oldpark Road. A white passing Ford Sierra car sprayed them with at least 20 bullets and then hurled a blast bomb before fleeing. All the injured were taken to the Mater Hospital with leg injuries. Again none of the injuries were life threatening." (The Irish News, 10/7/97)

This year it is all different. I'm not facing up to the reality of life back home. I'm not hiding from neighbours and their sectarian taunts, flag waving and blatant racism. I'm not cowering behind a closed door, curtains closed and holding out with a fridgeful of cheap, but strong, alcohol. I'm not watching daily scenes of ravaging, pillaging and rioting on the television - I don't think Northern Ireland has 'Xena - Princess Warrior' yet, too much like real life. This year it is all different.

7/7/97 - An EMail from Mark McCann - "A balmy Sunday evening. I'm sitting in bed reading a book and listening to the calming sounds of blast bombs going off in downtown Belfast. Yes, once again the Orange marching season is upon us and once again we croppies must lie down before our superior masters. Drumcree 3 was yet another fiasco - the RUC again seen for what they were - the armed wing of the Orange Order; and any chance of peace talks before the next millennium well and truly scuppered.

Highlights of the weekend - Burning dumper truck on the Ormeau. A man armed with an AK-47 firing off shots at the RUC on Ormeau Bridge. David Trimble saying that now all that's over let's get down to finding an 'accomodation about Northern Ireland'. David, I wouldn't trust you with running the 100 metres never mind a country. Things to look forward to: An Orange march on the walls of Derry this weekend which is sure to end in the Mother of All Battles of the Bogside."

Mark, as we all know, is a rational man and this is not all made up, I can vouch for that. But not this year, this year it is different. I no longer hide behind platitudes and easy words of hope and courage. I don't get angry anymore, though the temptation is there. I don't worry anymore about being able to get to work in the morning, or whether my work, office and building, will be physically there in the morning. I don't worry about that anymore. More from Mark:

11/7/97 - "Looks like the crisis has passed here. The Orange Order have backed down and called off their marches in Lower Ormeau and Derry. (Of course we're all taking it as a magnanimous act on their part - fuck off you bowler headed nazis!) Things were a bit hairy last night - a HUGE gathering on nationalists at midnight on the bridge (of course I walked into it on my way home... drunk..I had to answer a few personality profile

questions if you get my meaning). If the parade had gone ahead every nationalist in Belfast would have been there tomorrow - I would definitely have gone too - I was just SO fucking angry for this past week- of course I would have stood discreetly near the back - wouldn't want my head stoved in by the SS.. sorry... RUC) The Orangemen have paid dearly for forcing their way down the Garvaghy Road and it's about time they learned that they can't have everything their own way.

Anyway now I can get back to reading my Pynchon and drinking beer - which is what weekends are supposed to be for..."

This year I have run away. Very far away. I'm not sure if this makes me Proud or embarrassed; happy or sad.

Back to Mr. McCann for the last word: "8/7/97 Footage of the army running like fuck when the INLA opened fire on them on the Cliftonville Road. The crowd all started chanting 'Up the RA' which must have pissed the INLA off something terrible..."

Anyone remotely interested in what is going on in Northern Ireland (!) can check out what is going on there from these completely biased (you have been warned) sites. For why I love the place so much check out the Crown Bar's site.

<http://www.irishnews.com/current/frames.html> ((The Irish News daily Belfast paper))

<http://www1.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/cust-bin/auth.pl?loc=/tele/today/politics/index.html>

((The Belfast Telegraph - The 'Tele' - daily, evening paper))

<http://www.irlnet.com/aprn/current/news/index.html> ((Republican News))

<http://www.uup.org/index1.html> ((Ulster Unionist Party))

<http://www.dup.org.uk/> ((Democratic Unionist Party, check out the posters))

<http://www.sdlp.ie/sdlp/> ((Social Democratic and Labour Party))

<http://www.irlnet.com/sinnfein/index.html> ((Sinn Féin))

<http://www.ruc.police.uk/> ((Royal Ulster Constabulary))

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/crown/> ((The Crown Bar))

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Well I've been suffering from some nasty food poisoning over the weekend - some really gross stuff going on with my bodily functions - urrrgh! Not helped by high pollution counts in town bugging up my sinuses, temperatures as high as 34°C and humidity levels that makes Cuba look like a desert. And to think how much I complained during the winter of how cold it was. So I've been off work, finishing DFL 2 and getting Götter 10 together and well TW 20 as well. But you knew that because you all wrote last time. Next issue a bit from Jim Mallory on the reactions to his riddle - quite funny in parts. Also a bit on my first ever Star Trek convention - Toronto Trek 97. I kid you not!

And now, you:

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From: murray.moore@encode.com (Murray Moore) "Dear Tommy, Far too swift to rattle off a loc? Moi? Here I am, a Sunday evening, typing on my computer during a thunderstorm. Larry Hancock probably just finished watching 'Hearts and Minds' and now is watching 'Thieftakers'. But me, I'm doing my fanzine fan duty, nose to the disc drive, tip tapping the keys, feeding the TOMMYWORLD beast. ((- That stuff about Larry is probably not true - I'm sure he is working on the Toronto in 2003 Worldcon bid, and is taping those shows... -))

As to the answer to the question, Which Brahmin gets the girl, my early answer was the Brahmin who seems least likely. That was the case in the Perry Mason television series in the 1960s. Not that Brahmins were frequent characters in Perry Mason episodes. I mean, the murderer always was the person who seemed the least likely suspect. But since we puzzle solvers are asked to consider ethics -whoa, lightning beyond the west window- I say Ramu, the hut builder is most deserving, by dedicating his life to living on his beloved's grave. Tamu washed her bones in the river, a nice gesture, no doubt, but not as much of a commitment. Zamu went wandering, found the means to bring her back to life by chance, and stole the parchment. Stealing will not get you an A in ethics, methinks. Not that the revived woman would complain too much. .\murray" ((- Again, I'm waiting for a few more answers before revealing all. Anyone else like to comment? - ))

From: UAOBRIEN@uci.edu (Ulrika A. O'Brien) "Tommy - In the riddle about the three Brahmins and the resurrected girl, I have an answer, or two, but it is probably a side-step of whatever alleged ethical issue is presumed to be pivotal: "So I ask you to consider the tale as an ethical question and tell me which one of the three ('none of the above' will get you absolutely nowhere) should be declared the husband." The feminist answer: Whichever one she wishes to marry; being resurrected doesn't create an obligation to marry. The poly answer: All three, if she likes... --Ulrika" ((- More from Ulrika on the question of polyamorous relationships in he next issue. This one could run and run... -))

From: EvelynM@murraycoltness.demon.co.uk (Evelyn Murray) "I do think that love is more, and definitely different from sex. The hand-holding and communication between two people in love is much more than fucking (a term I hate to use because it does not describe the physical activity which takes place when two people care for each other). Love is much more than that, or at least I have always thought so. The pleasure I find in sex is only there after I am completely immersed in the other person. I live for that person and everything I do and feel is effected by how I regard them. Am I just being naive in this view of life? I have been told so before, but still I hope.

I do not ever want to become cynical to the extent that I cannot recognise love when it is there. I know from bitter experience that to love is to submit, and to submit means that you are vulnerable to being hurt by the person you love. It means that you have to show your weaknesses, something I personally find hard to do, but hopefully this just means a build up of trust. Ah, well, here again is a problem with love, without trust there is little hope of it surviving. Is the difference between being in-love and true love? Being in-love is that sense of euphoria, adrenaline-rushing feeling one gets at the beginning of any relationship; whereas true love is built up from trust and communication.

I am at the true love stage just now where I can talk about anything with my lover, from my feelings regarding our relationship - what we like and want and need physically and emotionally - to the scientific periodic table (private joke, don't worry if it seems strange!)" ((- I could mention a few private jokes as well, and boy would they seem strange! Regarding your comments on sex and love - I can only agree whole heartedly. I do believe that there is sex without love, just for the sheer hell of it, and that it is a good thing. But when there is more going on than just sex, a higher emotional connection, then the sexual act itself is transcended as well. a wonderful circle. True love does take time, and energy although I'm not too sure if submitting is the most appropriate term for sharing your life with someone. I think I see where you're going with his but accommodation and sharing is more what I would be thinking off. The being-in-love stage sounds like the idea of New Relationship Energy that Ulrika mentioned last time out. Again, more o all this next time as well. Keep those thoughts and ideas coming. -))

From: jdb@seanet.com (John D. Berry) "Song heard on the radio this afternoon: "Everybody talks, but when it comes to love, everybody's wrong!" It seemed appropriate. Apart from that, I have no Big Ideas on love to impart, except that the kind of single-minded fixation you describe sounds dangerous, and unrealistic on a number of levels. Good luck, though. John." ((- A lot of people have said the same thing. It all sounds horribly fixated and narrow and, well, be careful Tommy. Ever since I split up with Nyree I've been careful. It cost me a couple of wonderful relationships and no end of psycho and sexual hang-ups. In a sense the liberating move to Canada, the change in direction and doing what I want to do with my life has freed up some emotional space.

Which I fully intend to utilise and enjoy, once again. Friendship first and foremost, John, always friendship. If the love breaks down, there will always be friendship. That's how I fall in love. Easy, really. -))

From: d.farr@interserv.com (Daniel Farr) "Really now, 2 TW's in less than 1 week, after 3 or so weeks of silence? It must be egoboo withdrawal symptoms that caused this sudden flurry of activity? Well whatever, for me the last three or four weeks have been really busy - though more on the social end. Last night I stayed out with a friend and some of his friends drinking and drinking until I got it right. He's been visiting here for 3 weeks and only now I get to see him. Then he flew back home this morning -----such is everything including life." ((- I heard that! I been drinking and drinking now since I turned 18 - and I still haven't got it right. More practice, methinks... -))

Actually one thing kind of intrigued me in your recent comments in TW #18 - you'd received a lot of DNO's and wanted to use some portions in the "Love Reaction" issue. Why the bloody hell are people writing you DNO's! I mean anyone who is probably getting TW knows it comes out frequently - and you publish comments/loc's/letters/grocery lists et al. Do fans really have deep dark secrets that we need no ever know, nor have divulged to fandom at large? ((- I've found that a lot of the DNOs on this issue have to do with revealing details about partners that most people are simply not prepared to do publicly. I feel honoured that they can tell me such things at all and welcome the DNOs - it is an essential guideline when I write this thing each week as to what I can and cannot use. So I encourage people who have any reservations, whatsoever, to use the DNO practice. -))

From: mcwilson@interlog.com (Jo McBride) "Tommy, The thing I wanted from LOVE when I was a pre-teen was to be wanted. All my daydreams of David Cassidy or Ilya Kuriakin focused on how I would attract their attention and they would realise how special I was, how important it was for them to have me in their lives. Then, when I was a teenager and in my early twenties, it was all about sex. If I wanted to have sex with someone, it must mean I loved them. If someone wanted to have sex with me, it meant they loved me even if they didn't say it. Usually it was one sided, on my side or theirs, and if it was mutual - well, that was really true love. Then came complicated love. Love with the wrong person, the wrong time, the wrong circumstances. Sometimes distance played a part, sometimes third parties (or even fourth or fifth parties....) but whatever, it was complicated. Finally, for me, came the realisation that all those things were part of it, that time and experience had filtered out the ones that didn't make the cut, and now I've got - romance and silly grins, great sex, someone to play scrabble with, someone with whom I enjoy the daily acts of living and surviving, someone who wants me and thinks I'm special, someone that will be always on my side and on whose side I will always be. Not every one finds it, but I think you will. Jo." ((- That is the kinda shit I want to hear each and every day, from each and every person on my mailing list! I also wanted Batman & Robin to be a good movie. If I don't get everything I wish for, at least I get some of it. Alicia Silverstone, in the movie; Jo in real life... -))

From: dychymig@ccc.wa.com (Heather Wright) "Thank you for the 'zine! And and a giant cyber-bottle of CHAMPAGNE gets poured over <<<CANADA>>> today for being the FIRST place to UNIONISE STARBUCKS WORKERS! Woo hoo! Caw caw caw .Heather"