

A • FIELD • GUIDE • TO The Little People OF • NORTH • AMERICA

GENTLE READERS, WE TRESPASS UPON your valuable etc. to call to your attention a lavishly illustrated volume published at a recent date by Bantam Books, containing, as it does, a good deal of arcane, amusing, and useful lore concerning the existence, habits, and whereabouts of certain preternaturals native to these shores.

Its title is *The Secret*; its text was

written by your humble servants, Ted Mann and Sean Kelly, quondam editors of this publication; the soft sculptures of the diminutive "immortals" were executed by JoEllen Trilling and photographed *in situ* by Ben Asen.

Herewith an excerpt. (Do not fail to hasten out and purchase your personal copy of this publication, which could be greatly to your advantage).

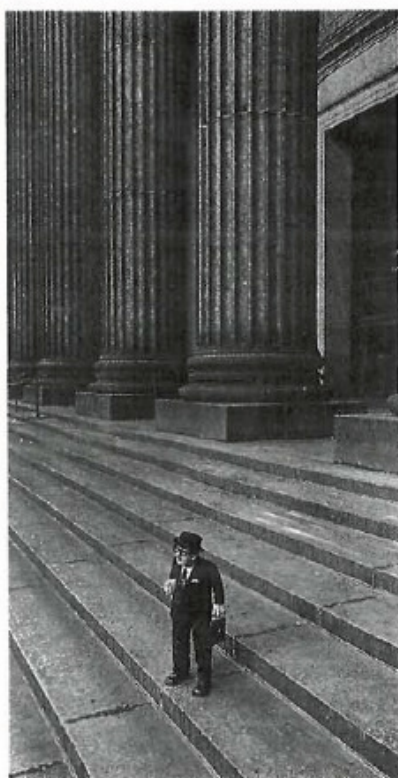
S SMALL • BUSINESSMEN *Eine kleine Nock Mückenstich*

Range: It is the custom of wealthy celebrities, when they are accepting awards and tributes, to thank "all the Little People behind the scenes." Behind the Little People, in turn, are Small Businessmen. The Little People work for them.

These clever wee creatures can be found the world over: haggling over sickly sweet coffee in Middle Eastern cafes, bargaining between puffs of noxious herbs in Oriental bazaars, and, here in America, slamming their tiny fists upon the desks in small (naturally) claims court.

Habits: These diminutive entrepreneurs have frequently been accused (by the small-minded) of petty larceny. But while he does, occasionally, sell short, the Small Businessman is much too concerned with his stature in the business community to short-change anyone! He often complains (and small wonder) that he is facing extinction as a result of encroachment upon his markets by Corporate Giants and the Tax Burden.

History: The American Small Businessman is probably a Red Inkleling of (low-



land) Scottish extraction, although he might also be descended from the French "*petits bourgeois*," those wizards of "*ledger de main*." In the Old Days, whenever a dragon's lair was discovered, some warrior elves would make so bold as to try to steal the dragon's gold hoard. The Small Businessman used to set up a ticket booth at the mouth of the cave.

In the sweatshops of Small Businessmen, the basic fabric of our economy was woven and our money laundered. Two examples of entrepreneurism which they recently inspired are "Rural Cottage Industries," a mammoth cartel producing prefab cottages, and "Mom and Pop Stores," in which wealthy urban orphans can purchase a nice new set of parents.

Spotter's Tips: The Small Businessman is seldom far from a telephone. By means of this instrument, he makes *small* talk into the *wee* hours—and a nice *little* profit. Traces of his handiwork can often be detected in *small* print. He is known to be *short* on cash at tax time and a *tiny bit* slow paying bills. His skill at maintaining a *low* overhead *dwarfs* that of a large corporation.

THE PHILHARMONIC ORC

Cacophonous gloriosus

Range: Enormous chandeliered mausoleums named after extinct robber barons are the customary haunts of these myopic Neanderthals, but they may also be seen—and heard—on Public Television, FM radio, wine-bar Muzak systems, BMW cassette decks,

and wherever gouty millionaires doze in red plush seats beside their buxom spouses.

Habits: The Philharmonic Orc highbrowbeats the citizenry into believing that he and *only* he has the right to

make loud noises—or, for that matter, any noise at all. To this end, he has created an inefficient dinosaur of a noise-making machine, the Symphony Orchestra, to which respect, homage, and bucks must be paid.

He hushes you with a lordly hiss, should you chance to cough during a pause in his machine's noisemaking. His victims leap to their feet shouting "bravo" (for men) and "brava" (for women) during other pauses. He reserves for himself the right to be first clap in and last clap out.

He is the moving spirit behind the granting of vast sums of public money to subsidize art forms which are patronized largely by persons with vast private wealth. If music be the food of love, the Philharmonic Orc is providing food stamps for the upper class.

He has insidiously hornswoggled us all into the certainty that only music composed before 1900, as interpreted by seven dozen of his monkey-suited thralls, is *serious*.

History: The Philharmonic Orc claims kinship with both the Phantom of the Opera and the emigré Sugar Plum Fairy. He also maintains an unholy marriage of convenience with the Culture Vulture.

For reasons difficult to fathom, the Germans, Italians, Russians, and French all proudly claim him as their own. Like the Vampire, a similarly attired, decadent, and aristocratic monster, the Philharmonic Orc came comparatively recently to the New World—but he wasted no time inspiring the *nouveaux riches* of the Main Line, wild frontier, and Barbary Coast to erect (by public subscription) Operty Houses, those gauche and gilded temples sacred to his cult.

These days he is more likely to cause the construction (by tax deductible donation) of a square-mile-sized, prestressed concrete neo-fascist-styled, totally unnecessary acoustical joke called The (fill in the politician's name here) Center for the Performing Arts.

Spotter's Tips: An overture (*con brio*) of clinking crystal and silver cigarette cases snapping; a pizzicato of popping collar buttons; an arpeggio of uncultured pearls; a scherzo of stomach noises; a continuo of muted flatulence; a crescendo of self-satisfied sighs; a diminuendo of sucked dentures; and a coda of sonorous snores.



M AÎTRE • D'EAMON

Taboo d'hôte

Range: From the wine racks to the coat-check room, from the sanitary hand-drying machine in the restroom to the basin of melting mints by the cash register, from the "have it our way" rough-age window to the garbage-gobbling clown can in the parking lot, the Maître D'eamon calls America's many elegant eateries his home away from home.

Habits: The Maître D'eamon sees to it that when you arrive at a restaurant, the parking lot is full, but a smiling young man is there to take your car. When you escape the restaurant some hours later, the smiling young man is not there. Neither is your car. That is the work of the Maître D'eamon, whose highest calling is to give his victims an evening they will never forget.

When you enter a restaurant to celebrate your anniversary (after planning the occasion for weeks), it is the Maître D'eamon who concocts a mix-up in the reservations. It is he who arranges for you to wait at the bar for an hour with three intoxicated salesmen until the captain says, "Oh, have you been waiting long? We should have a table for you any minute."

Forty minutes later, you are seated. The mysterious stains left on the tablecloth by the Maître D'eamon give you something to talk about until your waiter gets back from the dentist. The Maître has kindly seen to it that you are seated right by the kitchen door, so you have a chance to see how real dishwashers smoke marijuana. (Look at the cook. Did you know they worked with their shirts off?)

At last your dinner arrives. You do not recognize it, thanks to the Maître D'eamon. It was under his influence that you ordered what looks like a briquet from the bowels of Mordor's Mount Doom, and a frozen *something* from icy Lapland.

Dessert? Coffee? A liqueur? *Just the bill?* Very well.

The Maître D'eamon has seen to it that the restaurant does not take credit cards. A check? The restaurant does not take checks. Cash? It does not take cash. Krugerrands. The restaurant takes Krugerrands.

As you are leaving, the D'eamon inspires your waiter to tell you how much the staff enjoyed watching you eat with all the wrong cutlery. You exit the restaurant to the gales of the busboys' laughter and the sight of the captain's palm, patiently waiting for his tip.



No inconvenience is too great for the Maître D'eamon, so long as it is *more* inconvenient for you.

History: The Maître is un-American. He is unspeakable, uncivilized, inhuman: the Maître D'eamon is French. Arriving in America with Lafayette, he first conveyed his lack of manners to Jefferson's butlers in Monticello. From there, he moved north to the capital, where he currently inflicts a four-star

array of annoyances on devotees of Michelin and McDonald's alike.

Spotter's Tips: You will find this creature wherever you find hammered copper coats-of-arms on the walls, tufted Naugahyde dining nooks, unlimited salad bars, the piano stylings of Hugh LaGoon, sink-sized brandy snifters, a wine list as big as a family Bible, and a waiter whose hair has been painted on...by the Maître D'eamon himself.

GEODESIC GNOME

Mustus aqueductus

Range: The Geodesic Gnome's range is functionally determined. Depending upon his needs, abilities, and the ground and climate conditions, he can be virtually anywhere. Design, the prime concern of the Geodesic Gnomes, is not simply what *isn't*, nor what is *wished for*. Design is what *should be*. Thus, they glimmer and tower from Manhattan's skyscrapers, all in a (van der) Rohe, to downtown Houston, the best little Bauhaus in Texas.

Habits: Geodesic Gnomes are the sources of most architectural inspiration, though they have been known to addle the pate of the odd contractor as well.

They are small and love to sleep on architects' scale models, which they demand be executed precisely and completely. Thus, the scale model of anything from a redesigned library to a suburb always looks terrific, however uninhabitable the creation is when rendered in reality.

The Gnomes urge bold experimentation and flights of fancy. They inspire dreams, visions—castles in the air, if you will. And castles in the air they get, with very drafty basements.

Gossamer-roofed arenas in the snow belt, skywalks that sway in time to music, and mile-high towers that shed their windows like autumn leaves are among their accomplishments.

Nor do they neglect interiors—anyone who has hurtled headfirst into a conversation pit or walked smack-dab into a plate-glass room divider has met the Geodesic Gnome.

No American architect has gone entirely uninfluenced by them. The genius who first designed Murphy closets for his clients' homes (as well as self-dumping drawers) was in the thrall of the Gnome. Legal considerations require that we withhold that architect's name, but we can tell you he later went on to design the first rotating insurance company headquarters. Buckminster Fuller, perhaps the Gnome's best known victim, showed this influence clearly in his early design for an underground aviary for tropical fowl, which was built in the late 1950s near Hojo, New Mexico. This subterranean bird house intended to use the heat of adjacent mud springs to cut heating costs; however, the poisonous fumes and solvent properties of the mud first killed all the birds, then caused the entire structure to collapse upon itself. To this day, geysers spewing



feathers and steam serve as an example to young architects of the creative influence of the Geodesic Gnomes.

History: There is no doubting this creature's Nordic origins. They are as Scandinavian as a shin-ripping coffee table, and Germanic as a looming, trembling cantilever. They were banished from the Teutonic Old World when the Rainbow Bridge to Asgard, an early construction of theirs, collapsed under a party of returning Valkyries.

None of the useful and attractive native dwellings in the North and East of the New World—igloos, longhouses, teepees, etc.—appealed to them. But they were truly excited by the sight of the pueblos of the Southwest, which inspired the Gnomes' great City Planning Breakthrough Idea—the vertical slum.

Any Urban Renewal Program which

takes a sprawling community of working-class people, bulldozes it, and builds in its place a mile-high cabinet in which the middle class can be filed away is the work of the Geodesic Gnome.

Spotter's Tips: By the presence of any of the following structures and artifacts, one may know that the Geodesic Gnome has been up to his tricks: hexagonal, tinfoil toilet seats; an apartment gutted to resemble a loft; a loft baffled to resemble an apartment; square coffee cups; cutting boards of stainless steel and sinks of butcher block; industrial compounds planted on the rich Midwestern loam; polyester-pipeline-sprinklered, air-conditioned, domed, and doomed farms in the Southwestern desert; the paving over of forest, field, and stream for a thruway to the Nature World Park.

LEFT WING SYMP/RIGHT WING TROG

Pox populi, Sinister dexterque

Range: These two highly political, argumentative, and totally symbiotic creatures prefer to stalk such public forums as the podia of awards ceremonies and the sidewalks in front of embassies, but they may also be found in humbler settings, such as state chambers, barber-shops, and the corridors of detox centers in depressed urban areas.

Habits: By means yet unknown, these inseparable creatures shape the opinions of the opinion shapers. It has been suggested that through water fluoridation, the Symp lures young folk to the Left, while the Trog summons their elders to the Right with a stern clarion call, in a deep, daddy-like voice.

It was once believed that the Trog-Symp was a two-headed creature, its twin (and empty) skulls joined at the nose, the better to exchange glares. In fact, they share a heart (half-hard, half-bleeding) and not one mortal protégé of either is uninfluenced by the other.

Thus, the radical Liberal, protesting one governmental agency's invasion of his files and telephone, has much in common with the extreme Conservative, objecting to another governmental agency's attempt to register his rifle and audit his tax returns—for both are moved to lodge their principled complaints with the same (and yet another) governmental agency!

There is nothing more pleasing to the Symp-Trog than the sight of two mortals defending to one another's death each other's right to disagree.

History: Resembling as they do the traditional "Winged Victories" of France and the radical "Red Cap" *Foletti* of Italy, these contrary conjoined creatures were clearly born of mixed French and Italian parentage in the Old World. Before emigrating to the New, they divided their time between homelands, laying the groundwork for the astonishing number of strongly opposed and universally despised political parties which to this day succeed each other in their respective European capitals.

Arriving late to the New World by the standards of the first fairy emigrants (there was so much to do in the homelands), these politics-loving creatures reached America on the Mayflower. Upon landing at Plymouth, the once-persecuted Puritans, erstwhile disciples of the Left Winged Symp, were confronted by prospects of vast power and real estate, and instantly converted to

the side of the Right Winged Trog.

At the Constitutional Convention, the Trog inspired John Adams while the Symp supported Thomas Paine. When Adams eventually assumed the presidency, the Trog cheered; the Symp convinced Citizen Tom to split for France.

Since then, the Trog-Symp has inspired Americans to take belligerent and opposing sides in civil wars, their own and other people's (Spain, Vietnam, Ireland, El Salvador...).

A consensus is commonly supposed to emerge from the colliding and often paradoxical opinions advocated by the LWS/RWT. Who can quarrel with a two-party system? And if, instead of a consensus, a pork-barrelling stalemate results, who can deny that a two-

headed, bipartisan beast is yet superior to the four-headed fairy of this kind which haunts Canada or the one with the thirteen-way split personality that is the scourge of Mexico?

Spotter's Tips: Both the Trog and Symp hibernate between elections, living off their store of little-known facts. Periodically, they emerge to view the issues, but return to their hole immediately if they see even the shadow of doubt. At election time, they emerge and lend candidates not just the courage to confront the issues but the stamina to recite them endlessly. Look for signs of them wherever slogans such as "Who needs a slogan when you can have a promise?" are heard. ■

