

MYTHOPRINT

The Monthly Bulletin of The Mythopoeic Society

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See inside back cover for subscription rates and information about the Society.

Tolkien Conference Sales

The Tolkien Centenary Conference logo, designed by Marian Haas (see May p. 15, and throughout this issue for jewelry designs), represents the main theme for Conference sales items, and appears in this form on sweatshirts, tee-shirts, ties and pottery mugs. Variations on this theme of "the dragon which devours ... and brings itself to life again" appear in the form of exclusively commissioned items of hallmarked sterling silver jewelry designed by Rhiannon of Canolfan Aur Cymru (The Welsh Gold Centre), who specialise in producing "jewelry in the Celtic Medium".

The conference logo (without the words) approx. 1.5 inches diameter appears on a *pendant*, hung from a 20 inch trace chain necklace; a *brooch*, with a "modern pin", to attach to clothing; *drop earrings*, to hang from pierced ears, with hook-through attachment; and a *Celtic-ring brooch*, same design as the other brooch but in authentic Bronze Age style using thick, blunt pin, suitable only for knitted or loose woven fabrics.

A "dragon which devours" centerpiece approx. 3 inches long appears on a *necklace*, the dragon attached to a heavy curb chain (chain lengths in inches: S 14.5-16, M 16-17.5, L 17.5-19, XL 19-20.5); *bracelet/anklet*, using the same chain as above (chain lengths in inches: S 6-7, M 7-8, L 8-9, XL 9-10); *bangle*, for the wrist using a solid silver semi-circular clasp (6, 7, and 8 inch sizes).

A dragon which has devoured itself to the extent that this version is without legs or wings appears on a *ring*, a circular metal band (please check your ring size before ordering); and *creole hoop earrings*, available as a pair or in singles, for pierced ears, using stud attachment.

Sweatshirts and tee-shirts, using the Conference Logo, are in white on jade green. They are available in the following sizes, in inches (measurements should be made across the chest and doubled): child's sweatshirts XS (24), S (26-28), M (30), L (32); adult's sweatshirts or tee-shirts S (34-36), M (38-40), L (42-44), XL (46-48).

Ties using the dragon only (no words), are in a green design, positioned below knot of tie, on grey background with white micro-spots.

There are two mug designs. *Centenary Mugs* are black pottery with red Centenary dragon design by Pauline Baynes and "Tolkien Centenary 1892-1992" wording. *Conference Mugs* are cobalt blue pottery with two white Conference logos. They are available in sets of 1, 2, 4, or 8, in any combination of the designs (please specify how many of each).

Tolkien Centenary sweatshirts and tee-shirts, with an exclusive dragon design by Pauline Baynes, red on a black background, are cotton/polyester blend and machine washable. Due to different manufactureres the sizes are not the same as the conference logo shirts. Sizes in inches: child tee-shirts S 22, M 24-26, L 28-30, XL 32; adult tee-shirts S 34, M 36-38, L 40-42, XL 44, XXL 46-48; child sweatshirts S 22-24, M 26-28, L 30, XL 32; adult sweatshirts XS 34-36, S 38-40, M 42-44, L 46-48, XL 50. A *Farmer Giles Sweatshirt* with a beige design by Pauline Baynes on royal blue, is nearly sold out. S, M, and L only.

For delivery at Conference registration, and to take advantage of these special preconference prices, your order must be received with payment by 30 June 1992. Orders will be accepted after then, by may not be ready in time for the Conference. Items ordered at or after the conference will be charged at a higher rate, and will be delivered in late October or early November. Those not attending the Conference who order by 30 June will have theirs mailed by the end of August. Please make all cheques or postal orders payable to "The Tolkien Centenary Conference" and send, with an International Reply Coupon, to

Malcolm Lindley, [REDACTED],
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

CONFERENCE SALES — Cont. from Last Page

Prices are in U.S. dollars, and are listed as follows: to collect/surface mail/air mail.

Pendant (\$37.50/\$39/\$39.75), Brooch (same), Celtic Ring Brooch (\$46/\$47.50/\$48.50), Drop Earrings (\$56.30/\$57.80/\$58.60), Necklace (\$63.85/\$65.30/\$66), Bracelet/Anklet (\$50.65/\$52.20/\$55), Bangle (\$56.30/\$58.75/\$59.70), Ring (\$20.60/\$22/\$22.85), Creole Hoop Earring Pair (same as Pendant), Creole Hoop Earring Single (same as Ring)

Conference logo adult sweatshirt (\$25.85/\$30/\$34.40), child sweatshirt (\$20.25/\$24.50/\$28.75), adult tee-shirt (\$12.25/\$14.50/\$16). Conference logo tie (\$13.55/\$15/\$15.60).

Farmer Giles sweatshirt (\$22.55/\$28.20/\$32). Centenary adult sweatshirt (\$26.35/\$31/\$35.35), child sweatshirt (\$20.25/\$24.50/\$28.75), adult tee-shirt (\$11.25/\$14.50/\$16), child teeshirt (\$8.50/\$11.65/\$13.20).

Single mugs (\$5.65/\$9.50/\$12.25), pair (\$10.85/\$17/\$23.50), set of 4 (\$21.65/\$33.85/\$47), set of 8 (\$43.25/\$67.70/\$94).

Add \$3.60 postal insurance if ordering jewelry, and if not paying in US\$ add \$8 conversion charge.



Last month's issue of *Mythprint*, the Society's Annual Report, was printed and collated commercially because of its unusually large print run (copies went to all Society members, not just those who normally receive *Mythprint*). Thus we were not able to perform our normal quality check, and a number of defective copies with blank pages undoubtedly went out.

If you received a defective copy of the May issue, drop us a line at the editorial address () and we'll send you a replacement by first-class mail. Please do this whenever you receive a defective copy of a new issue; we're mentioning it this month because on other occasions it's less likely to happen.

Mythopoeic Awards

The nominees for this year's Mythopoeic Awards have been announced.

The nominees for the Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature are *A Woman of the Iron People* by Eleanor Arnason, *Tam Lin* by Pamela Dean, *Moonwise* by Greer Ilene Gilman, *The Sorceress and the Cygnet* by Patricia A. McKillip, and *Beauty* by Sheri S. Tepper.

For the new Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children's Literature, the nominees are *Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher* by Bruce Coville, *Castle in the Air* by Diana Wynne Jones, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* by Salman Rushdie, *Elsewhere* by Will Shetterly, and *Song of the Gargoyles* by Zilpha Keatley Snyder.

The nominees for the Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for Inklings Studies are *Owen Barfield on C.S. Lewis* by Owen Barfield, *The Pattern in the Web: The Mythical Poetry of Charles Williams* by Roma A. King, *A Purgatorial Flame: Seven British Writers in the Second World War* by Sebastian Knowles, *Word and Story in C.S. Lewis* edited by Peter J. Schakel and Charles A. Huttar, and *C.S. Lewis, A Biography* by A.N. Wilson.

For the new Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for general Myth and Fantasy Studies, the nominees are *Witches of the Mind: A Critical Study of Fritz Leiber* by Bruce Byfield, *The Victorian Fantasists* edited by Kath Filmer, *Mervyn Peake, the Evolution of a Dark Romantic* by Tanya Gardiner-Scott, *The Weird Tale* by S.T. Joshi, *Pathways to Elfland: The Writings of Lord Dunsany* by Darrell Schweitzer, and *Welsh Celtic Myth in Modern Fantasy* by C.W. Sullivan III.

The winners of the awards will be announced at the Tolkien Centenary Conference banquet on Thursday, August 20, 1992.

Letters to the Editor

Philip W. Helms, Editor, *Minas Tirith Evening Star*, American Tolkien Society, [redacted]
[redacted]

Thanks for your kind notes on our Centenary issue (and the Autumn issue as well) appearing in *Mythprint* for March, 1992.

I chanced to speak with Dave Alter by phone a few days ago, and he offered two comments in response to your notes on his painting. I take the liberty of passing these along, as Dave has been in poor health, to say the least, and both correspondence and conversation have been comparatively burdensome for him.

First, he points out that Tolkien referred to a cellar at Bag-End (Bilbo wished to hide behind the barrels there until the dwarves left); from this, he inferred two levels, since a cellar is normally placed below the main floor. He admits, however, he stretched the point by placing living quarters (a bedroom) on the cellar level.

Second, he reminds us that orcs are not discussed in *The Hobbit* (aside from a passing reference to the word); rather, the creatures at hand are goblins, and consistently so termed during the Misty Mountains sequence. Since *orcs* are presented as a warrior class of goblin (as *uruks* are a warrior class of orcs in *Lord of the Rings*), Dave suggests it is not entirely inappropriate for his goblins to be slightly cute (for myself, if people found E.T. cute, the term has been applied rather loosely), since in any case they are armed and should seem rather formidable to a poor lost hobbit in the darkness.

Regarding this poster: additional discussions have produced a revised agreement on its use by the American Tolkien Society, and it is now available for sale, contrary to original announcements. The poster alone is \$5.00; the Centenary issue with both posters is \$6.50; and the packet with both issues (*MTES* 20/3, 20/4) and both posters [*the other being Mr. Helms' line drawing of Tolkien* — ed.] is \$7.50. All prices are postpaid.

Although I might still disagree with the artist's judgments, I am satisfied that he did not make them out of ignorance, and in any case these are minor points. So I'll repeat my comment that this is "a finely detailed color xerox of a quite imaginative illustration ... [that] captures the entire story [of The Hobbit] in one picture with wit and economy" — ed.

Wayne Hammond, [redacted]
[redacted]

I may take back my judgement about the relative complexity of the textual histories of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. [See *Letters*, February — ed.] *The Hobbit*, I've now found after many hours of comparing copies, is more complicated than anyone knew. I was tracing errors and corrections through different printings, and was surprised by a *complete resetting*. in the midst of the Allen & Unwin hardcover Third Edition — which went on without a break in impression numbering or any notice of a change. The page for page resetting occurred in the seventh or eighth impression, probably the eighth (I saw the sixth and ninth impressions), and introduced many misprints. I would be glad to hear from any reader of *Mythprint* who has an Allen & Unwin hardcover Third Edition *Hobbit*, seventh (1972) or eighth (1974) impression, so that I may pin down when the resetting occurred. The new setting may be most easily detected by the incorrect reading on p. 82, line 18: "He was a Gollum".

In order to check other bibliographical points for Tolkien, I would also appreciate hearing from owners of: the first impression of the Allen & Unwin hardcover Third Edition (labelled "fifteenth impression", 1966); the twenty-fourth impression (1967) of the Houghton Mifflin edition of *The Hobbit*; the third or fourth impression of the Allen & Unwin first edition *Fellowship of the Ring*; the ninth impression (1974) of the Allen & Unwin second edition *Fellowship of the Ring*; the third

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Activity Calendar

Deadline for the Activity Calendar is the tenth of the month preceeding the month of publication: i.e. July information is due the tenth of June; August information is due the tenth of July. All calendar information should be sent directly to *Mythprint*. Thank you.

Secretary for Discussion Groups

(Please write to him about forming groups, or if you have any questions):

David Lenander

Send meeting information directly to *Mythprint*.

Prospective Groups

CALIFORNIA: South

TOLKIEN CENTENARY READING

Glen GoodKnight,

PH:

* Continuing through Aug. 1 (Sundays) 2:30 PM
Reading and discussion of chapters, in sequence, from *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien. Contact secretary for location.

Chartered Groups

Note: Only groups which sent in current meeting information are listed this month. See last month's issue for a complete list of groups.

CALIFORNIA: North

KHAZAD-DÛM

Ellie Farrell,

PH:

* June 7, 1992 (Sunday) 1 PM

The Stress of Her Regard by Tim Powers. At Pat Witham's,

PH:

Call for

directions!

* July 12, 1992 (Sunday) 1 PM

The Second Irregular Tolkien Paraphernalia and Weird Stuff Meeting. At Edith Crowe and Amy Wisniewski's,

PH:

* August 2, 1992 (Sunday) 1 PM

Beauty by Sherri Tepper and *Nothing Sacred* by Elizabeth Scarborough. At Ellie's.

CALIFORNIA: South

MYDGARD

Dolores Speth,

PH:

* June 21, 1992 (Sunday) 2:30 PM

C.S. Lewis, a biography by A.N. Wilson. Place not set.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

KNOSSOS

John M. Epperson,

PH:

* June 19, 1992 (Friday)

Replay by Ken Grimwood. At Ellen Vartanoff's,

PH:

* July 17, 1992 (Friday)

Hugo Short Story Nominees. At Mary & Brick Barrientos',

PH:

HAWAII

SAMMATH NAUR

Ken Burtress,

PH:

or Steve Brown,

PH:

* June 6, 1992 (Saturday)

Xenocide by Orson Scott Card. At Willy & Vanessa's.

MINNESOTA

RIVENDELL

David Lenander,

PH:

* June 6, 1992 (Saturday) 1:30 PM

The Green Fairy Book edited by Andrew Lang. Ruth Berman will talk on Lang and Tolkien. At

* June 13, 1992 (Saturday) 1:30 PM

Cloven Hooves by Megan Lindholm. At the Fourth Street Fantasy Convention. Date and time tentative; check the convention program.

* July, 1992 (Saturday) 1:30 PM

Haroun and the Sea of Stories by Salman Rushdie. Date and place TBA.

WISCONSIN

THE BURRAHOBBITS

Jeffrey and Jan Long,

PH:

* June 17, 1992 (Wednesday)

The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien.

* July 15, 1992 (Wednesday)

The Hero and the Crown by Robin McKinley.

All meetings held at the Secretaries' house, unless otherwise mentioned. Contact Secretaries for times.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

THE ELVISH LINGUISTIC FELLOWSHIP

Carl F. Hostetter,

PH:

Publishes newsletter, Vinyar Tengwar, bimonthly.

* Second Sunday of each month, 1 PM

Meeting of Northern California E.L.F. For further info contact Arden Smith,

PH:

* Second Sunday of each month, 2 PM

Meeting of Washington Area E.L.F. Contact Carl Hostetter (above) for further information.

ONLINE DISCUSSION GROUPS

CATEGORY 32 (GEnie)

David Bratman, Mythprint,

PH:

Meets on the GEnie online bulletin board service. See the May 1992 Mythprint or contact the topic leader (above) for information on participating.

LETTERS — Continued from Page 4

through eighth impressions of the Allen & Unwin second edition *Return of the King*; the fifth (1976) or sixth (1978) impression of the Allen & Unwin "India Paper" edition of *The Lord of the Rings*; the first impression of the Allen & Unwin edition of the poster "Bilbo's Last Song" (illustrated by Pauline Baynes); any paperback printing prior to 1975 of Kenneth Sisam's *Fourteenth Century Verse & Prose*; and any impression prior to the fifth of the American edition (Barnes & Noble?) of *Beowulf and the Finnesburgh Fragment*, translated by Clark Hall. These impressions only, please.

Tape Review

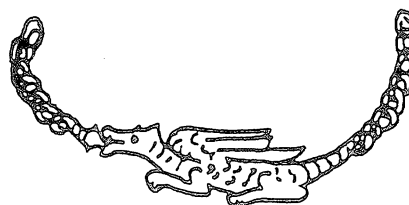
The Golden Key, written by MacDonald, read by Michael Zebulon. Audio Literature audiotope, 60 minutes, \$10.95. Available from the publishers at [redacted] Reviewed by Anne Osborn.

This audiotope is a treat for MacDonald (1824-1905) fans and a good way to introduce him to those less familiar. His prose style comes across beautifully when read aloud, emphasizing the lyricism of some phrases that can get lost among his lush adjectives. *The Golden Key* is the most complex and allegorical of his literary fairy tales, a Heaven Quest travelled by a boy and girl who seek "the Land from which the Shadows come." The boy has found, at the rainbow's end in Fairyland, a sapphire-encrusted key, but cannot guess where the keyhole might be. Their search takes them years of adversity and separation.

The elegance of MacDonald's imagery and bold creation linger, such as: feathered fish that evolve into angels as they attain wisdom; the glory and stature of the beings who rise in the rainbow's arc; and the stairway revealed by the final unlocking. His concepts, too, are memorable: the older and wiser the Great Old Ones become, the younger they look; death is only more life, with the pain removed; and fairies wish to drive from the world all untidy people.

The rich baritone of actor Michael Zebulon is unencumbered by sound effects or music. His slightly British accent enhances this unabridged spiritual coming-of-age tale.

What MacDonald does best is fantasy ... and this, in my opinion, he does better than any man. — C.S. Lewis



News Notes

Council of Stewards news: Tina Cooper, editor of the Mythopoeic Society's fiction magazine, *The Mythic Circle*, was elected to the Council of Stewards, the Society's board of directors, at the meeting of May 9th. This is a new position: the magazine was started by people who were already Stewards in other capacities, but with Tina taking over more of the work, it was felt that she would be the best person to speak for the magazine in Council. Tina is renowned for being a lawyer and raising small triplets while she edits, and we welcome her on board!

A festschrift is being compiled to honor Fritz Leiber. Society member Bruce Byfield, author of studies of Leiber's work, is collecting reminiscences about the man and original short stories that reflect some of his interests or display the widely varied genres he's worked in. Writers tentatively in the project so far include Ray Bradbury, Eileen Kernaghan, Diana L. Paxson, and Paul Edwin Zimmer. A publisher has not yet been set.

New and upcoming fantasies: *The Armies of Elfland*, a collection of Poul Anderson's fantasy stories with new commentary by the author (Tor pb, May, \$4). *Lord Kelvin's Machine*, a 19th-century steampunk fantasy by James P. Blaylock (Ace pb, August, \$4.50). *The Forever King* by Molly Cochran and Warren Murphy, a return-of-Arthur novel (Tor hc, July, \$21.95). *Spiritwalk* by Charles de Lint, the sequel to *Moonheart* (Tor hc, May, \$19.95). *Sherwood* by Parke Godwin, in paperback from Avon, July. *The Bone Forest* by Robert Holdstock (Avon, September). *The Catswold Portal*, a cat novel by Shirley Rousseau Murphy (Roc hc, \$20, April). *Flying in Place* by Susan Palwick (Tor hardcover, June, \$17.95). *The Wolf and the Raven*, volume one of the Wodan's Children trilogy, by Diana L. Paxson (Morrow). *The Hollow Man* by Dan Simmons (combining T.S. Eliot's poem of similar title, Dante's Inferno, and Disney World) (Bantam hc, August, \$20). *A Night in the Lonesome October* by Roger Zelazny (Avon).

New anthologies: *Dragon Fantastic*, edited by Rosalind and Martin Greenberg, is a book of dragon stories including "The Dragon's Skin" by Society member Ruth Berman (Daw pb, \$5).

Awards: The first James Tiptree Jr. Memorial Award, for genderbending sf or fantasy, to *The White Queen* by Gwyneth Jones and *A Woman of the Iron People* by Eleanor Arnason. The 1991 Crawford Award, for best first fantasy novel, to *Moonwise* by Greer Ilene Gilman. The 1992 Philip K. Dick Award, for best paperback original sf novel, to *Queen of Morning, King of Day* by Ian McDonald.

The American Tolkien Society has published a short volume of (mostly free verse) poetry, *Fly Fishing in Middle-earth*, by Steve Peck, 6 poems recounting the fishing expeditions of the narrator, Dori the dwarf, and some other famous characters. It's 12 pages, illustrated, \$2.50 postpaid in the U.S.

George MacDonald corner: Johannesen Printing and Publishing is issuing clothbound (your choice of color: red, blue, or green) editions of unabridged MacDonald books. Published so far: *What's Mine's Mine*, *Sir Gibbie*, *Donal Grant*, *A Rough Shaking*, *There and Back*, and *Castle Warlock*. Each is \$19.98 postpaid (California residents add 7.25% sales tax), with discounts for 3 or more. The publisher's address is [REDACTED]

CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS

SLOTFEEST 1992, June 13-14, 1992. Sponsored by Unquendor, the Dutch Tolkien Society. Write: Jan Boom, [REDACTED]

TOLCON, June 27-28, 1992. On Tolkien. Write: Louis Epstein, [REDACTED]

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Book Review

The Sorceress and the Cygnet by Patricia A. McKillip. Ace paperback, 231 p., \$4.50. Reviewed by Eleanor Farrell.

Patricia McKillip's newest novel, *The Sorceress and the Cygnet*, tells the story of Corleu, a young man of the Wayfolk, who becomes entangled in affairs of power his people had never before dreamed existed. It is Corleu's own tainted lineage and his talent for storytelling that first attract the attention of the characters inhabiting the myths of the Wayfolk, and soon he is forced to seek the help of the sorceress Nyx Ro and to overcome the opposition of her powerful family in order to complete a quest and release his trapped people.

The characters in *The Sorceress and the Cygnet* reminded me quite a bit of those in the "Riddle-Master" trilogy: individual, strong-willed, quirky, full of unexpected talents. McKillip rarely if ever uses totally evil characters in any of her books: all of her characters have some sympathetic features. The reader can understand what motivates them, and the central conflicts in the story never deal with one group conquering another, but rather with more complex interactions and situations requiring alliance and compromise. This is very refreshing: one can take only so much of heroes set the exhausting task of Saving the World.

McKillip is one of the finest stylists writing fantasy today, and her sense of style is very evident in this book. Here she creates several settings with a definitely surreal touch, especially the inside of a wagon belonging to a very unique tinker, and the house in the marsh where Nyx Ro studies her latest brand of sorcery. McKillip has a real talent for creating settings with a history to them, without going into the minutiae that lesser writers feel they need to give depth to their created worlds. Reading this book, I felt that these myths — the Gold King, the Blind Lady, the Blood Fox — really exist, somewhere, and that the author has just brought them to my attention. As visual as the author's

writing is, she uses very broad strokes in her imagery: phrases of color or sound rather than detailed descriptions. This allows the reader to use his imagination while reading and effectively to participate in the creative process itself. (It also, I think, puts off readers who want to have every detail spelled out for them, but this is hardly a worthy criticism of the book.) *The Sorceress and the Cygnet* is a delightful addition to the list of Patricia McKillip's consistently original and well-written works of fantasy literature.

NEWS NOTES — Continued from Last Page

The J.R.R. TOLKIEN CENTENARY CONFERENCE, Aug. 17-24, 1992. At Keble College, Oxford, England. See May issue for prices. Write: Pat and Trevor Reynolds, [REDACTED]

MYTHCON XXIV, July 30-August 2, 1993,

[REDACTED]
Theme: Down the Hobbit Hole and Through the Wardrobe: Fantasy in Children's Literature. Scholar Guest of Honor: Jane Yolen. (The other previously announced Guest of Honor, Robin McKinley, will be unable to attend.) Memberships: \$35 until September 15, 1992; \$40 to December 31, 1992; \$45 to May 31, 1993; \$50 afterwards. One-day memberships, \$25 at the door. Room and board prices (good through December 31, 1992): \$32 per day per person, double occupancy, \$35 per day per person, single occupancy. The banquet will be extra (price to be determined later). For memberships, write care of Joan Marie Verba, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] For information on presenting papers, contact David Lenander, [REDACTED]

MYTHCON XXV, Summer 1994. To be held in the Washington DC area. Guests: Verlyn Flieger (Tolkien scholar) and Judith Mitchell (fantasy artist). Watch this space for details.

Book Review

Mirabile by Janet Kagan. Tor hardcover, 276 p., \$18.95. Reviewed by Earl G. Fisher (in his forties), Jenny Williams (14) and Joe Williams (18).

Though Joe and Jenny both started Janet Kagan's *Mirabile*, neither could get past the first ten pages — which is a shame, for though the beginning is difficult, the ever-changing, dangerous yet humor-filled world of *Mirabile* is a sensation-laden territory worthy of a close look.

The book is actually six separate, yet intertwined, stories about life on the planet *Mirabile*, which has been settled by colonists several generations removed from their ancestors who set out from Earth. The first chapter was an award-winning short story in *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, and forms the beginning point for the remaining chapters. "Sections" would be a better word, and Ms. Kagan has done an artful job of enlarging a short story into a full-length work.

The main character in *Mirabile* is Annie Jason Masmajeán — the middle name denotes her profession (and, stupid me, I didn't figure out what a Jason was until late in the story). When *Mirabile*'s ancestors left Earth, they sent along embryo and gene banks for every plant and animal that was known to exist. Good idea. They also installed a genetic failsafe: a redundancy in the gene pool so that if a species were lost, it could reappear somewhere down the genetic line. Not so great an idea (from the colonists' point of view). Janet Kagan has taken an idea that would be typical for a scientist to think of using, and made an extremely clever story out of the misplaced scientific premise that "scientists can do no wrong." For example: wheat plants could reproduce accidentally as sunflower seeds. The sunflowers could reproduce as bumblebees. And the bumblebees could become butterflies. Ad infinitum. Admittedly, a wild concept — but also very fanciful, and in Ms. Kagan's hands even believable.

Unfortunately for the colonists, there are some minor problems inherent within this genetical

wonderland. For example, a species can develop that never existed before, with attributes from several extant species. This makes for some really strange animals. As if this wasn't a big enough problem, the colonists also have to contend with *Mirabile*'s indigenous species. Most of these fauna and flora are benign — but many are dangerous, most are of an unknown quality, and some are latent, popping up when least expected.

As head Jason, it's Annie's job to determine whether any species which is not Earth-authentic is a Dragon's Tooth or not. And then she must decide if the species is a "keeper". As if this responsibility wasn't enough to bear, Annie must also deal with colonists who disagree with her decisions — sometimes violently.

Mirabile is written in the first person, which no doubt adds to the problem of understanding what is happening, especially in the beginning. Overall, however, this viewpoint adds to the charm and color of the story. I found Ms. Kagan's characterizations not only finely tuned but a lot of fun. The best parts of the book, though, were the crazy assortment of animal and plant-life forms that developed, and how they affected the lives of everything around them. My favorite beastly was Mabob, a three-foot tall parrot-dodo bird with an amazing intelligence.

The pace of the book is very fast; no time for boredom on this world! The love affairs are old-fashioned and there is far more humor than blood. I thought the book was excellent, although young teens may not have the patience to get involved. As helpful background before you read *Mirabile*, look up Jason and the Argonauts, especially the part at the field of Ares (where dragon's teeth were sown). As for the title, it may be simply Latin: "marvelous" or "wonderful". Then again, you might want to check out Mendel and his genetic research with four-o'clocks (scientific name, *Mirabilis*). But you don't need to understand all your *RR*, *rr*, and *Rr* to enjoy this book. Just sit down and prepare for blast-off.

Mythprint is the monthly bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society, a nonprofit educational organization devoted to the study, discussion, and enjoyment of myth and fantasy literature, especially the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Charles Williams. To promote these interests, the Society publishes three magazines, and sponsors local discussion groups and the annual Mythopoeic Conferences.

Membership and Subscriptions

The address for subscriptions and back issues of *Mythprint* and other Society publications is:

Mythopoeic Society Orders Dept., [REDACTED]

Membership in the Mythopoeic Society is \$5 for one year or \$10 for two years, entitling you to members' rates on publications.

Members' rates

(not including \$5/year membership)

	One year	Two years
Third class U.S.	\$ 7.50	\$15.00
First class U.S.	\$11.00	\$22.00
Canada; or, Overseas surface	\$12.00	\$24.00
Overseas air	\$15.00	\$30.00

Institutional and non-members rates

	One year	Two years
Third class U.S.	\$12.50	\$25.00
First class U.S.	\$16.00	\$32.00
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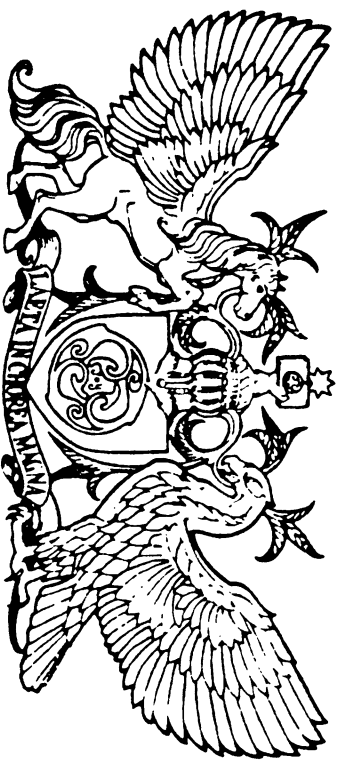
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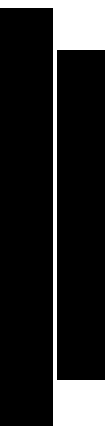
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