

HEISENBERG'S MAGAZINE

by

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Things seemed a bit strange in the new offices of Dell Magazines. I always like

to know what the place looks like where I send my stories, so I had arranged to

have lunch with Stan Schmidt on the Tuesday after they moved to their new building next to Radio City Music Hall. I arrived a little early, and told the

receptionist that I was here to see anyone from Analog, just in case Stan wasn't

in yet.

"Hold on," she said, dialing an extension on the phone. The reception area felt

empty, even with the cardboard boxes everywhere. I think it was the relatively

small pile of mail on the receptionist's desk that made it seem so empty.

In a minute, the entire editorial staff of Analog ran down the hall to greet me.

The exotic Tina Lee, the muscular Scott Towner, the beautiful Sharah Thomas

--

everyone except Stan. Tina had galley's for me, and Scott proudly handed me a box

filled with copies of the July 1995 issue I had ordered.

"Thanks, guys." I looked down at all the stuff they had handed me, and when I looked up, Tina and Scott had already gone. That was fast, I thought. Sharah still waited for me.

I reached into my bookbag and surreptitiously handed Sharah a submission for Asimov's, so Stan wouldn't know about it. We hugged in greeting; Sharah and I had become good friends since we first met at the Nebulas in 1995 and discovered

that we had attended Harvard together and lived in the same dorms.

"I'm sorry to interrupt you guys as you're settling in," I said to her as she led me to their cubicles.

A smile lit up her face. "Think nothing of it. I would stop the world just to get a phone call from you."

We arrived at the cubicles. Sharah said goodbye and disappeared behind a partition.

Stan was on the telephone, looking none the worse for wear despite the bump on

the head I gave him with a Hugo rocket back in the "Probability Zero" section of

the October 1995 issue. (Look it up, I'll wait.) As always, his eyes twinkled with delight when he saw me. He was even more pleased to see me than ever before, and I wasn't sure why. Maybe it had something to do with the

Analytical

Laboratory Award, the Hugo nomination, or the Campbell nomination.

He hung up the phone and said, "Michael! Are you ready? I want to try a new restaurant today, Argentine Pavillion. New to me, I mean; I've never eaten there, but I've seen it before."

"OK by me. Know where it is?"

"Yep. I've been by it a dozen times. Let's go." I dropped my stuff in his office

cubicle, and we headed out onto Sixth Avenue. I followed Stan to 46th Street, and we walked up and down it twice. All the while Stan kept looking around.

Finally, we stopped in front of an abandoned storefront. "It's not here," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"I could have sworn this was it."

I thought for a moment. "Well, we have two choices. We can go back to the offices and look it up, or we can call Information on a pay phone."

"Good idea. I saw a few pay phones on the corner. Let's go."

We got to the corner, and there were no payphones. Stan scratched his head, puzzled. Then he laughed.

"This is familiar," he said.

"Restaurants and phones disappearing is familiar?" I asked, incredulously.

"Well, the disappearing part, I mean. Because of the move, a lot of stuff seems

to have been misplaced. Boxes of issues that I thought were in one place turn out to be somewhere else. Even the papers I put on my desk this morning vanished."

"That doesn't sound good," I said, thinking of my contracts and checks.

"Oh, it does have its good points. All the slush manuscripts from unknown writers disappeared, as well as all the Asimov's Hugos." He grinned.

"Maybe it's a quantum phenomenon," I suggested. "Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, and all that. Perhaps there's a wave of uncertainty passing through

the magazines, even as we speak, making changes left and right."

"Hm," Stan said, a gleam in his eye. "You might want to make a 'Probability Zero' out of that."

I was stunned; I had just been making a joke. "You want another recursive story

about Analog?" I asked. "Well, if you're willing to publish it, I'm willing to

write it." Then a thought struck me. "Hey, it'll give me a chance to work Sharah

into a story. She's been bugging me to do so, ever since she realized that Ian

and Scott were in the last one."

He nodded. "You'd better not mention that in print, though, or a lot of people

will bug you to put them into stories. Especially Tony Lewis; he loves to keep

track of recursive science fiction stories, and would probably ask to be mentioned in one. In the meantime, let's head back to the offices, before they

disappear entirely." We laughed.

Stan had taken only one step when I spotted a pay phone on our corner. "Stan! Look!"

He did, and frowned. "I would have sworn this wasn't here a moment ago," he said, as I called Information and found the restaurant. The address they gave was for the abandoned storefront, and when we got there, it was no longer the abandoned storefront, but the restaurant Argentine Pavillion.

We didn't question it; maybe there was a wave of uncertainty passing through our

lives at the moment. After all, the fate of the digests had seemed uncertain for

quite some time; these were probably residual quantum effects we were experiencing.

We entered the restaurant and sat down to order lunch. Stan began raving about

my stories, and all the ideas he had for my career. He finished by saying, "Michael, as long as I am editor of Analog, your stories will always have a market. We're going to make you a star!"

I blushed and looked down at the table. I still felt a little uncertain about the suddenness of all my success. But I also felt grateful that Stan Schmidt had

shown such faith in me as a writer.

Then I looked up. "Stan? Stan!" I shouted, but he had already disappeared.

END

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