

FEAR

HERE ARE TALES THAT WILL USHER YOU INTO

THE HAUNT OF

FEAR



NOVEMBER
9



\$4.95

FEATURING



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULTKEEPER



THE CRYPT-KEEPER





#1



#2



#3



#4



#5



#6



#7



#8



#9



#10

the EC CLASSICS series

Pictured above are the covers of the first ten issues of the new series of full color EC CLASSICS. Like this issue you are reading, each issue of the EC CLASSICS contains two covers and eight complete EC stories chosen from a particular EC title.

Don't miss a single issue! Ask your favorite Comic Book Shop to stock these EC CLASSICS, or subscribe directly from the publisher.

A six-issue subscription is \$25 (\$40, outside U.S.A.). Single back issues are \$6.00 each. All prices include postage. (Note: the subscription price includes mailing by third-class mail. For six issues mailed first class, the subscription price is \$35.)

When I was a wild-eyed EC Fan-Addict in the 1950s, my very favorite EC title was **THE HAUNT OF FEAR**. I still have vivid recollections of the thrill of receiving a new issue of **HAUNT** in the mail . . . remember that this was an event that happened only six times per year . . . sliding the comic out of that sturdy manila envelope . . . seeing the new "Ghastly" cover for the first time.

Graham Ingels, whom Bill Gaines dubbed "Ghastly" Graham Ingels in a letter column, was and is a painter . . . a fine artist. His comic book style and his skill with the inking brush . . . his own personal combination of dry-brush and fine-line inking . . . gave his gothic horror stories a mood that has never been equalled to this day.

This EC CLASSIC #9 contains, appropriately, the origin story of the Old Witch, "A Little Stranger". Here are the eight stories and two covers from **THE HAUNT OF FEAR** #14 and #15.

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! DRAG YOUR PALPITATING CORPSES INTO THE HAUNT OF FEAR, KIDNIES! YEP, IT'S YOUR HOSTESS IN HYSTERICS, THE OLD WITCH, READY TO RUSTLE UP ANOTHER REVOLTING RECIPE IN MY REEKING CAULDRON! SMELL IT? IT'S A SPECIAL ONE THIS TIME... EXTRA SPECIAL! READY? GOT YOUR DRIBBLE-GUTS FASTENED? GOT YOUR SHROUDS TUCKED UNDER YOUR CHINS? GOOD! THEN I'LL SERVE THE GLOBBERING STORY I CALL...

A LITTLE STRANGER!



FOR A MOMENT, THERE IS A DEAD SILENCE! THE FLICKERING LIGHT OF THEIR TORCHES CASTS AN Eerie GLOW OVER THE BODY SPRAWLED BEFORE THEM! THEY STARE WITH HORRIFIED FACES AT THE CORPSE! ONE OF THE MEN STOODS AND POINTS...

"LOOK! ON HIS NECK!
TWO PUNCTURES...!
THE MARK OF
A VAMPIRE!"

"IMPOSSIBLE!
THE BODY HAS
BEEN PARTIALLY
DEVoured! I
TELL YOU IT IS THE
WORK OF A
WEREWOLF!"



AN OLDER MAN SHAKES HIS HEAD.
NO, PETER! YOU ARE
WRONG! THE
BLOOD WAS BEEN
DRAINED FROM
THE BODY! IT IS
A VAMPIRE!



BUT A
VAMPIRE
DOES NOT
FEAST UPON
THE FLESH,
VICTOR!

HE IS RIGHT,
VICTOR! A WERE-
WOLF FEASTS
UPON THE FLESH!



THEN EXPLAIN
TO ME, IF
YOU CAN,
THE HOLES
IN THE
MEAT!

HMMMM! A
WEREWOLF
WOULD NOT DO
THAT! UNLESS...
UNLESS...



GASP! UNLESS
HE WAS
KILLED BY
BOTH!

BOTH!!
YOU MEAN...?

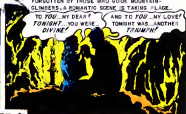


A VAMPIRE... AND A
WEREWOLF... STALKING THE
COUNTRYSIDE... TOGETHER!

MANY MILES FROM THE HORRIFIED GROUP OF
VILLAGERS, HIGH IN THE SAUVASIAN ALPS THAT
TOWER ABOVE THEIR HEADS, IN A CAVE LONG SINCE
FORGOTTEN BY THOSE WHO GUIDE MOUNTAIN-
CLIMBERS, A ROMANTIC SCENE IS TAKING PLACE...

TO YOU...MY DEAR!
TODAY...YOUR WERE-
DIVINE!

AND TO YOU...MY LOVE!
TODAY...ANOTHER
TRIUMPH!



BUT AS WE DRAW CLOSE TO THE LONELY COUPLE, WE
NOTICE SOMETHING STRANGE! SOMETHING TERRI-
FYING! THE WOMAN, ALTHOUGH VERY BEAUTIFUL,
HAS SHARP LITTLE FANGS! FOR SHE...IS A
VAMPIRE...

PERHAPS WE WILL STAY HERE
FOR A WHILE, MY SWEET! I AM
SO TIRED OF WANDERING!



PERHAPS!

...AND THE MAN'S EARS ARE POINTED... HIS FACE IS
COVERED WITH HAIR... HIS EYES GLEAM YELLOW IN
THE CANDLELIGHT! FOR THE MAN...IS A WEREWOLF...

MAYBE...MAYBE IF WE LOOK
HARD, WE WILL FIND SOME-
ONE HERE WHO WILL
MARRY US!

WE WILL SEE,
MY DEAR! COME!
IT IS ALMOST
DARK!



THE COMPLE RISE AND STROLL ARM AND ARM, DEEPER INTO THE CAVE? SOON, THEY COME UPON A SIMPLE FINE COFFIN, LYING IN THE SHADOWS...

GOOD MORNING, MY DARLING! UNTIL NEXT MONTH, WHEN AGAIN THE MOON IS FULL.

GOOD MORNING, MY DEAREST!



THE WOMAN CLIMBS INTO THE COFFIN AND LIES DOWN? SOON, HER EYELIDS CLOSE? AS THE CROW OF A ROOSTER DRIFTS UP FROM THE VALLEY BELOW, SHE FALLS ASLEEP.

TILL NEXT MONTH, MY DEAREST!



THE MAN SIGNS AND CLOSSES THE COFFIN LID? THEN HE TURNS TOWARD THE CAVE OPENING WHERE THE FIRST GREY STREAKS OF DAWN FILTER THROUGH THE OVERGROWN ENTRANCE? HIS YELLOW EYES GROW DARK.

...THE HAIR ON HIS FACE REDDENS? HIS POINTED EARS ROUND OFF? THE SHARP GLAWS OF HIS FINGERS SHORTEN...

...AND ONCE AGAIN, HE TAKES ON HUMAN FORM... THE FORM OF A SEEDY MOUNTAIN HERMIT.



FAR BELOW, THE MEN ARE JUST RETURNING WITH THE CORPSE OF THEIR FELLOW VILLAGER...

HE HAS BEEN... THE WORK OF... AND A... HEAVEN...
MURDERED? A VAMPIRE? WEREWOLF? PROTECT US?



IN HIS CAVE, THE HERMIT CURLS UP BESIDE THE COFFIN AND CLOSSES HIS EYES? A SMILE CROSSES HIS TWISTED LIPS? HE WHISPERS SOFTLY...

ELIGIA? MY ELIGIA!



THE HERMIT'S THOUGHTS GO BACK...BACK TO THAT TIME SO LONG AGO WHEN HE'D COME UPON THE FORBIDDEN PLANT GROWING HIGH IN THE BAVARIAN ALPS...



WOLFSSKANE!
GOOD LORD!

HE'D STUMBLED UPON THE PLANT ACCIDENTLY! ONE OF ITS SPINY THORNS HAD SCRATCHED HIS FOREARM...



I...I'M BLEEDING!
THE WOLFSSKANE HAS
INFECTED MY BLOOD!

... AND LESS THAN A MONTH LATER, HE'D LEARNED THE TRUTH! THAT FIRST NIGHT, WHEN THE MOON WAS FULL, HE'D AWAKENED...



WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
MY NAILS GROW LONG! MY
EARS TWITCH! MY FACE...
MY FACE...

HIS REFLECTION IN THE SHIMMERING POOL HAD TOLD HIM ALL THESE THINGS TO KNOW...



I...I AM A
WEREWOLF!

THAT NIGHT, HE'D KILLED AND FEASTED UPON HIS FIRST VICTIM! THE SECOND MONTH, AT THE TIME OF THE FULL MOON, HE'D KILLED AGAIN! BUT THE THIRD MONTH, AS HE'D SENT OVER HIS THIRD VICTIM...



WHAT'S THAT? SOMEONE...
SOMEONE IS COMING!

HE'D DARTED INTO THE BUSHES AND WAITED! SHE'D COME UP TO HIS LATEST VICTIM! ELIGIA... BEAUTIFUL ELIGIA...



SHE...SHE DOES NOT
SCREAM!

NO! ELIGIA HAD NOT SCREAMED! INSTEAD, SHE'D STOODED AND BEGUN TO DRINK HER FILL...



SHE...SHE'S A
VAMPIRE!

HE'D FLUNG HIMSELF PROUDLY
HIDING PLACE AND STOOD OVER HER,
POINTING...



HE... HE IS
MINE!

YOU...
ABANDONED
HIM!

THEY'D QUARRELED THEN

WAIT! WHY FIGHT?
THERE IS ENOUGH
FOR BOTH OF US

HMM!
BOTH!



SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL! VERY BEAU-
TIFUL! IT WAS EASY TO ACCEPT
HER OFFER! AFTER THEY'D FIN-
ISHED...



MY NAME IS
ELICIA!

AND MINE IS
JORGIO!

THEY'D FALLEN IN LOVE! LOVE AT FIRST FRIGHT.
YOU MIGHT SAY JORGIO'D AGREED.



WE WILL MEET NEXT MONTH
WHEN THE MOON IS FULL
ONCE AGAIN!

I WILL WAIT FOR
YOU, ELICIA!

EVERY MONTH WHEN THE MOON WAS FULL, THEY'D
WANDERED OVER THE COUNTRYSIDE... KILLING...
TOGETHER.

I HOPE, MY DARLING!
WHAT IF SOMEONE SHOULD
FIND YOUR RESTING
PLACE?

THEY WOULD GIVE A
STAKE THROUGH MY
HEART... AND DESTROY
ME!



SO JORGIO'D APPOINTED HIMSELF GUARDIAN OF
ELICIA'S COFFIN! ON MOONLESS NIGHTS... WHEN
HE WAS NORMAL AND ELICIA SLEPT... HE'D MOVED
HER COFFIN FROM HIDING PLACE TO HIDING
PLACE, KEEPING WELL AHEAD OF THE ENRAGED
VILLAGERS THAT COOSED THE COUNTRYSIDE,
SEARCHING FOR THEM...



I TAKE CARE OF
YOU, MY SWEET!

AND EACH NIGHT OF THE FULL MOON, THEY'D VOWED...

SOMEDAY... SOMEDAY MY
DEAR, WE WILL FIND
SOMEONE WHO WILL
MARRY US!

OH, JORGIO!
I HOPE SO!



SUDDENLY, ZORGO STARTS FROM HIS DAY-DREAM! VOICES ECHO THROUGH THE CAVE! THE VILLAGERS HAVE DISCOVERED HIS LATEST HIDING PLACE...



LOOK! A COFFIN!

WE MUST BE THE WEREWOLF! QUICKLY SHOOT!

THE EXPLOSION OF A PISTOL THUNDERS THROUGH THE CAVE AND ZORGO FITCHES FORWARD A SILVER BULLET IN HIS HEART.



THEN THE STEADY RAP-RAP-RAP OF ROCK ON WOOD AS THEY POUND THE STAKE INTO ELIGIA'S CHEST...



THE ANGRY VILLAGERS CARRY THE COFFIN... WITH ZORGO'S AND ELIGIA'S BODIES... BACK TO THEIR LITTLE HAMLET...



WE HAVE DESTROYED THEM! BOTH OF THEM!

WE WILL BURY THEM IN THE DEVIL'S GRAVEYARD!

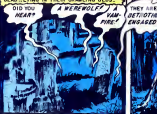
THE DEVIL'S GRAVEYARD IS A PLACE WHERE MURDERERS AND OTHER CREATURES OF EVIL ARE INTERRED! THERE... ELIGIA, THE VAMPIRE... AND ZORGO, THE WEREWOLF ARE BURIED.



GOOD RIDDANCE!

HURRY! IT IS ALMOST NIGHT!

AS THE TOWNSFOLK HURRY BACK TO THEIR HOMES... AND DARKNESS FALLS UPON THE DEVIL'S GRAVEYARD... STRANGE SOUNDS ARE HEARD... THE SOUNDS OF THE DEAD... LYING IN THEIR CRAWLING BEDS...

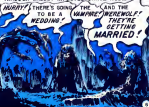


DID YOU HEAR?

A WEREWOLF! A VAMPIRE!

THEY ARE DETROTTED. ENGAGED!

LATER, IN THE BLACK OF NIGHT... WHEN THINGS OF EVIL CRAWL FROM BENEATH ROTTED SHELTERS... AND GEMETERIES YAWN... A STRANGE SCENE UNFOLDS! CORPSES PUSH THEIR WAYS UP THROUGH MAGGOT-INFESTED GRAVE MUD...



HURRY!

THERE'S GOING TO BE A WEDDING!

THE VAMPIRE

AND THE WEREWOLF!

THEY'RE GETTING MARRIED!

AND SO, AS HOWLING WINDS SHRIEK THROUGH OPEN MAUSOLEUMS... AS TOTTERING REMAINS OF EVIL STUMBLE TOWARD THE SPOT... AS CREATURES OF THE NIGHT LEER FROM BEHIND TOMBSTONES... AS FOUL GODS OF DECAY AND ROT WAFT THROUGH THE NIGHT AIR... ELICIA AND ZORRO ARE WED! THE MOANING OF THE DEAD THEIR ORGAN MUSIC... THE SCREAMING OF BANSHEES THEIR CHOIR...



THEIR HONEYMOON SUITE IS A MAUSOLEUM... A SLAB OF MARBLE THEIR BED! AS IS THE CUSTOM, THE BRIDE IS GARRIED ACROSS THE THRESHOLD... THE STAKE STILL AWKWARDLY JUTTING FROM HER CHEST...



AND SOON ALL IS QUIET AGAIN IN THE DEVILS GRAVE YARD! THE CREATURES OF EVIL RETURN TO THEIR RESTING PLACES... THE GRAVES ARE CLOSED... THE WIND DIES DOWN! DAWN BREAKS SILENTLY... ON A PEACEFUL SCENE.



AND SO IT REMAINS... FOR DAYS... AND WEEKS... AND MONTHS! THEN, ALMOST A YEAR LATER, THE STIRRING BEGINS AGAIN! THE DARKNESS FALLS, AND THE CREATURES MOVE! THE GRAVES CRACK OPEN, AND ROTTED THINGS PUSH UP...



"HURRY! IT IS ALMOST TIME!"

"TONIGHT IS THE NIGHT!"

THINGS OF EVIL STUMBLE TOWARD THE MAUSOLEUM! OTHERS PEER THROUGH THE DOOR... THE BROKEN WINDOWS! THE WIND HOWLS... THE BANSHEES SCREAM...

TONIGHT, ELICIA

AND ZORRO

EXPECT



INSIDE THE MAUSOLEUM, ELIGIA CRADLES THE LITTLE THING IN HER ARMS! CONGO STANDS OVER THEM... PROUDLY! THE CREATURES OF EVIL TITTER AND GIGGLE...

ISN'T IT CUTE?

WHAT IS IT,
ELIGIA?

IT... I... I THINK IT'S...
A GIRL!

HEE, HEE! YEP! IT WAS A GIRL, KIDDIES! IT HAD A DEAD
VAMPIRE FOR A MOTHER, AND A DEAD WEREWOLF
FOR AN OLD MAN! AND I WAS A BABY! 'LIL' TYREJOD
HUNTER! FEAR! IT WAS ME... THE OLD WITCH! YOU
FIENDS HAVE BEEN ASKIN' ME WHERE I CAME FROM, SO
I DECIDED TO TELL
YOU! OH... BY THE WAY!
HOW'D YOU LIKE TO
ATTEND A FAMILY
REUNION! MINE!
NO? WELL, THAT'S
TOO BAD! WE ALWAYS
HAVE ONE SWELL
OF A TIME! NOW
I'LL TURN YOU OVER
TO THE HADLY-
KEEPER! DID
YOU LIKE?

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! GREETINGS, MY FINE FETTERED FIENDS! YEP, IT'S YOUR HOST IN HORROR, THE VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO NARRATE ANOTHER HAUSEATING TALE FROM MY COLLECTION! SO COME INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, SIT YOURSELF DOWN ON THAT DEAD-MAN'S OREST, AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURDLING YARN I CALL...

TAKE YOUR PICK!

THE RAGGED, LITTLE BROWN STOOD UPON THE PORCH OF THE BRADEN HOME, SHIVERING FROM THE BITING WIND THAT SWIFT ACROSS THE SNOW-COVERED LAWN! HIS COAT WAS TORN AND THREADBARE... HIS PANTS, FRayed! HE HUNG A STICKY, CRACKLING HAND OF BRISKIES AS STUART BRADEN SWUNG OPEN THE DOOR AND STARED DOWN AT HIM...



STUART BRADEN SHARLED AT THE GALLOW-FACED CHILD BEFORE HIM...

GO ON, YOU LITTLE JERBAP! SCRAM! GO ON BACK ACROSS THE TRACKS WHERE YOU CAME FROM!

ONLY A QUARTER, MISTER! I GOT A LIL SISTER! SHE...



STUART SLAMMED THE DOOR IN THE PLEADING BOY'S FACE! EMMA, HIS WIFE, STOOD BEHIND HIM...

DIRTY LITTLE BRAT! SCOUND-ING ON DECENT FOLKS...

HOW COULD YOU BE SO CRUEL, STUART?

MR. BRADEN SPUN AROUND, GLARING AT HIS WIFE...

YOU MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, EMMA!

BUT THE POOR CHILD LOOKED HALF-STARVED, STU...

IF I GAVE HIM SOMETHING, I'D HAVE 'EM ALL COMING HERE... BRINGING THEIR LINE UP OUT THERE...

I DON'T SEE HOW YOU CAN BE SO GOLD-HEARTED!



THAT'S THE WAY TO GET ALONG IN THIS WORLD, EMMA! YOU'VE GOT TO BE GOLD-HEARTED! OTHERWISE, PEOPLE STEP ALL OVER YOU!

NONSENSE, STUART! A LITTLE KINDNESS NEVER HURT ANYONE!



BUT BE NICE TO SOMEONE... JUST ONCE... AND THEY'LL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOU. TRY TO SQUEEZE EVERYTHING THEY CAN FROM YOU! NOT ME! I'M NO Sucker!

YOU'VE GOT A HEART OF ICE, STUART! SOMEDAY, YOU'LL CHANGE!



BUT STUART BRADEN DIDN'T CHANGE! IN FACT, HE GOT MUCH WORSE...

I'M HOME, EMMA! SUPPER READY? I... I... WHAT'S SHE DOING HERE?

WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING FOR THE GALSIES, STUART! THEY'RE DESTITUTE!



IT'S NO CONCERN OF MINE, EMMA! JOE GALSEY MADE HIS OWN BED! NOW LET HIM LIE IN IT!

BUT, STU! JOE WAS YOUR BUSINESS PARTNER! MRS. GALSEY CAME HERE TODAY TO ASK YOU TO GIVE HIM A JOB!





ONE NIGHT, AS MR. AND MRS. BRADEN WERE DRIVING HOME FROM A VISIT TO EMMA'S MOTHER...

SHE DIDN'T LOOK VERY WELL TONIGHT, DID SHE STUART?

I DIDN'T NOTICE! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? ASK ME TO GIVE HER MORE MONEY?



IT WOULDN'T HURT! TEN DOLLARS A WEEK ISN'T VERY MUCH TO LIVE ON THESE GIRLS! YOU COULD CUT DOWN ON MY ALLOWANCE!

NOTHING DOING! I'VE GOT MYSELF TO THINK OF! IF YOUR OLD MAN HADN'T BEEN SO GENEROUS, YOUR MOTHER'D BE BETTER OFF THAN SHE IS, NOW THAT HE'S DEAD!



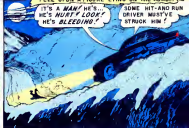
PLEASE, STUART! I'M NOT ASKING FOR MYSELF! MOTHER IS OLD! SHE... SHE... GASP!

HUH? WHAT'S THAT?

THE HEADLIGHTS OF THE BRADEN AUTOMOBILE FELL UPON A FIGURE LYING ON THE ROAD...

IT'S A MAN! HE'S... HE'S HURT! LOOK! HE'S BLEEDING!

SOME HIT-AND-RUN DRIVER MUST'VE STRUCK HIM!



STUART PRESSED DOWN ON THE ACCELERATOR AND SPED PAST THE INJURED MAN...

STUART! STOP! HE NEEDS HELP!

NOT ME, EMMA!

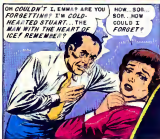
I MIND MY OWN BUSINESS! I KEEP MY NOSE CLEAN! I DON'T WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN OTHER PEOPLE'S TROUBLES!

STUART! HE'S HURT! NOW COULD YOU?

LET SOME OTHER SUGGER STOP! IT'S NO CONCERN OF MINE!

...SOR, YOU'RE INHUMAN, STUART! NO ONE COULD BE SO COLD-HEARTED! SORRY!





NATURALLY, STUART WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THIS TURN OF EVENTS.



WHAT'S A HOSPITAL? AN OPERATION? AND WHO'S GOING TO PAY FOR THIS?

STUART! IT'S MY MOTHER! SURELY, IN SUCH AN EMERGENCY...

WHAT DID YOUR OLD LADY EVER DO FOR ME? SUPPOSE THE OPERATION DOESN'T HELP! IT'LL BE THROWN OUT MONEY!



HOW CAN YOU... SOB... LOOK AT IT... SO SOLOLY!



BECAUSE SHE ISN'T MY MOTHER! SHE'S YOURS! THAT'S NOW!

FOR GOD'S SAKE, STUART...

AND WHEN THE DOCTOR CALLED...
I... I'M SORRY, DOCTOR! MY HUSBAND, SOB... SOB REFUSES... SOB... SOB... TO SOB... PAY FOR... SOB...



BUT YOUR MOTHER MAY DIE, MRS. BRADEN!

I... I KNOW! SOB! D... DO THE BEST YOU... YOU CAN, DOCTOR! I'M SOB... SORRY!



I'M HELPLESS UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, MRS. BRADEN! YOUR MOTHER NEEDS A SPECIALIST!

EMMA HUNG UP AND TURNED TO STUART! HIS FACE WAS A RIGID MASK.



I... I HATE YOU... STUART BRADEN!

HMMPH!

EMMA STARED OUT OF THE WINDOW, THE TEARS STREAMING DOWN HER FACE! THE GLISTENING SNOW GLARED IN HER EYES, CAUSING THEM TO TEAR EVEN MORE! SUD-
DENLY...



GASP! LADY!

EMMA HURRIED OUT TO THE STILL FORM LYING HALF OUT OF THE KENNEL! SHE PICKED IT UP...



THE DOG WAS STIFF! FROZEN STIFF! THE DOG WAS DEAD...

HE... SOB... HE KILLED YOU! HE MADE ME LOOK YOU OUT... SOB... AND YOU FROZE... SOB... YOU FROZE... SOB... TO DEATH...



EMMA CAME INTO THE HOUSE CRAWLING THE DEAD DOG IN HER ARMS! SHE STARED AT STUART...



STUART SHRUGGED! EMMA'S EYES BEGAN TO BULGE! HER CHEEKS GREW HOT! THE PHONE RANG...

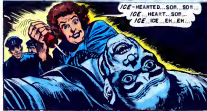
HELLO? YES! THIS IS MRS. BRADEN!



EMMA HUNG UP AND WENT INTO THE KITCHEN! WHEN SHE CAME OUT, SHE HAD HER ARMS BEHIND HER BACK! SHE MOVED TOWARD STUART, HER VOICE SHAKING UNCONTROLLABLY! SHE PRACTICALLY SCREAMED...



WHEN THE POLICE CAME TO THE BRADEN HOME IN ANSWER TO THE NEIGHBORS' FRANTIC PHONE CALLS, THEY FOUND EMMA KNEELING BESIDE STUART'S BODY, CHIPPING AWAY AT HIS CHEST WITH A BLOOD-SMEARED ICE-PAK! SHE'D BEEN AT IT FOR SOME TIME! THEY COULD TELL! AS SHE CHOPPED, SHE'D MUTTER HYSTERICALLY...



HER, HEH! AND THAT'S MY WARMING LITTLE STORY FOR THIS ISSUE, KIDDIES! AFTER THE MEN IN THE LITTLE WHITE COATS TOOK EMMA AWAY, THE CORONER EXAMINED WHAT WAS LEFT OF STUART BRADEN'S BODY! KNOW WHAT HE FOUND IN THE GAPING HOLE EMMA'D TORN IN STU'S CHEST? YEP! YOU GUESSED IT! CHOPPED ICE! BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE HAVILT, FRIENDS, TAKE FOR A GOLF DRIVE! NO? HMMM! TOO BAD! BYE-NOW!



IN THIS GRUESOME TALE OF
TERROR, EVERYTHING IS...

SHIP-SHAPE!



THE ENGINE OF THE TINY PLANE SPUTTERED AND COUGHED DOWN BELOW, THE CHOPPY WATERS OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC STRETCHED FROM HORIZON TO HORIZON...

INSIDE THE PLANE, THE FOUR PASSENGERS STARED IN HORROR AT THE WHITE NEEDLE OF THE FUEL GAUGE AS IT TREMBLED OVER THE EMPTY MARK...

WHAT IS IT, BOB?
WHAT'S WRONG?

WE'RE ALMOST OUT OF GAS! WE
MUST HAVE SPRUNG A LEAK
WHEN WE TOOK OFF FROM
SUAM!

HOW LONG
CAN WE
LAST, BOB?

ANOTHER TEN
MINUTES, PERHAPS!
PROFESSION! SEE
ANYTHING DOWN
THERE? AN ISLAND...
OR A JUMP?

NOT A
THING!
GOD HELP
US! WE'RE
ALL GOING
TO DIE!





FINALLY, THE PLANE CAME TO A STOP, RESTING HALF-SUBMERGED IN THE CHOPPY WATER! THE FOUR PASSENGERS SCAMBOLED OUT ONTO THE WING! FIRST, PROFESSOR HENRY WOLFSON, THE FAMOUS ZOOLOGIST...



AFTER JEAN GRADY, PROFESSOR WOLFSON'S SECRETARY, CLIMBED OUT ONTO THE WING, THE PILOT, ROBERT BRYEN, PASSED HER THE COMPACT LIFE-RAFT...



DOCTOR RUDOLF BERGER, THE PROFESSOR'S COHORT, A FAMOUS BIOLOGIST, FOLLOWED...



SEVERAL MINUTES LATER, THE FOUR SURVIVORS SAT HUDDLED IN THEIR RUBBER LIFE-RAFT, WATCHING THE DISABLED PLANE TURN TAIL UP AND SINK BENEATH THE WAVES...



TWO DAYS LATER, THE SMALL SUPPLY OF FOOD AND WATER BOB HAD MANAGED TO SALVAGE HAD BEEN USED UP! THE SURVIVORS WATCHED WITH HORROR FASCINATION AS SEVERAL BLACK FINS KNIFED THROUGH THE WATER ABOUT THE RAFT...



SHARKS! LOOK! THERE? SEE IT? A SHIP!

THE BLACK SILHOUETTE OF A SMALL TANKER LOOMED UP TO THE EAST! PROFESSOR WOLFSON BEGAN TO WAVE HIS JACKET FRANTICALLY...



HELP! HELP! START PADDLING! HURRY! SIT DOWN PROFESSOR! YOU'LL UPSET THE RAFT AND THOSE BLASTED SHARKS'LL GET US!

AS THE TINY LIFE-RAFT NEARED THE SLOWLY MOVING TANKER...



THEY DON'T SEEM TO SEE US! BOB! DO YOU NOTICE SOMETHING STRANGE? YOU'RE RIGHT, JEAN! THERE'S NO SMOKE COMING FROM THE STACKS!

SOON, THE SURVIVORS HAD APPROACHED THE TANKER CLOSE ENOUGH TO SEE...



THERE'S NO ONE ON DECK! IT LOOKS DESERTED! A DERELICT SHIP!

WHAT'S THAT STRANGE SMELL? BOB! I'M FRIGHTENED! DERELICT SHIP? OR NO... WE'RE GOING ABOARD! AT LEAST IT'S AFLOAT, AND THERE MAY BE SOME FOOD ON IT!



A FRAYED ROPE-LADDER HUNG DOWN THE SIDE OF THE DESERTED TANKER! BOB TIED THE RAFT TO IT...



PHEW! IT SMELLS MUSTY... MOLOY! THE HULL SEEMS TO BE COVERED WITH SOME KIND OF MOSS! I'LL GO FIRST! YOU NEXT, JEAN! THE PROFESSOR AND THE DOC WILL FOLLOW!

SOON, THE FOUR CRASH-VICTIMS STOOD UPON THE FOUL-SMELLING DECK OF THE STRANGE VESSEL...



THE DECK PLATES? IT FEELS AS IF THEY GIVE WAY UNDER FOOT! YOU'RE RIGHT, ZERSEN! THEY FEEL SOFT! SPONGY! G'MON! LET'S SEE IF THERE'S ANY WATER ON BOARD!



YOU GO, BRYEN! I WANT TO EXAMINE THIS FUNEUS THAT SEEMS TO COVER THE ENTIRE SHIP!

OKAY, PROFESSOR! SUIT YOURSELF! COMING, JEAN?

RIGHT BEHIND YOU, BOB!

I'LL STAY WITH HENRY, MR. BRYEN!



BOB! WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSED HAPPENED TO THE CREW?

SEARCH ME, JEAN! PROBABLY ABANDONED HER! MAYBE THE ENGINES.

YAAAAAH!



GOOD LORD! WHAT WAS THAT?

THE PROFESSOR! HE SCREAMED!

MR. BRYEN! HELP! COME QUICKLY! OH, MY GOD...



BOB AND JEAN REACHED THE DECK JUST IN TIME TO SEE THE PROFESSOR... HIS FACE TWISTED IN EXCRUCIATING PAIN, HIS ARMS CLAWING THE AIR... SINKING SLOWLY INTO A SPONGY GOOING POOL! AN ODOR OF DECAY DRIFTED TOWARD THEM...

EEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

WHAT THE! PROFESSOR!

OH, GOD! I CAN'T LOOK!



FINALLY THE PROFESSOR'S SCREAMS SUBSIDED AND HE SANK BELOW THE DECK-SURFACE! THE GOOING POOL SEEMED TO HARDEN OVER THE SPOT...

IT'S... SO... HORRIBLE! HORRIBLE!

WHAT HAPPENED, DOCTOR ZERGER?



HENRY, HE... HE WANTED TO EXAMINE THE FUNEUS THAT COVERS EVERYTHING! HE TOOK OUT HIS POCKET KNIFE AND STARTED TO SCRAPPE THE DECK! THEN... COUGH... CHORE...

GO ON, DOCTOR! THEN...



HE SEEMED TO CUT THROUGH SOME SORT OF MEMBRANE! A FOUL-SMELLING POOL Oozed FROM THE INCISION! IT... IT ENGULFED HIM! HE... CHORE... HE... JUST SEEMED TO DISSOLVE! YOU... YOU SAW THE REST!

I... I FEEL SICK, BOB! I...



JEAN PASSED OUT IN BOB'S ARMS! DOCTOR ZENGER SCREAMED AT HIM...

BE CAREFUL, BRYEN! PUT HER DOWN GENTLY!

JEAN! JEAN! HONEY! OH, LORD! I WISH WE HAD SOME WATCH!



WE'VE GOT TO BE CAREFUL, NOT TO DAMAGE THE MEMBRANE THAT COVERS THE SHIP! OTHERWISE WE'LL SUFFER THE SAME FATE AS PROFESSOR WOLFSON!

WHAT IS IT, DOCTOR? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THIS TANKER?



DO YOU KNOW WHAT PETRIFIED WOOD IS, BRYEN? IT'S WOOD THAT HAS TURNED TO STONE! YET, THE STONE SHOWS EVERY GRAIN... EVERY FIBRE... EVERY PORE OF THE WOOD! THE STONE TOOK THE WOOD'S FORM! UNDERSTAND?

WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH THIS SHIP?



THIS SHIP IS LIKE A PIECE OF PETRIFIED WOOD! ONLY IT HASN'T TURNED TO STONE! SOME FUNGUS... SOME STRANGE LIVING MATTER TOOK OVER THIS SHIP... ABSORBING IT... ASSUMING ITS FORM! THIS SHIP IS THAT LIVING MATTER NOW!

JEAN! C'MON, BABY! WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!



JEAN OPENED HER EYES! SHE SHUDDERED! BOB LIFTED HER IN HIS STRONG ARMS...

LET'S GO, DOCTOR!

PUT HER DOWN! YOU'RE BOTH TOO HEAVY...



DOCTOR ZENGER'S WARNING CAME TOO LATE! BOB FELT THE SPONTY DECK GIVE UNDER HIS FEET... LIKE A PIECE OF PAPER TEARING! DOCTOR ZENGER LUNGED FORWARD...

LOOK OUT!



BOB FELT A STINGING PAIN IN HIS LEFT FOOT AS DOCTOR ZENGER SHOVED HIM HARD! HE AND JEAN WENT SPRAWLING! THE DOCTOR WAS CAUGHT IN THE SUCKING SULKING POOL THAT OZZED FROM THE SPOT WHERE THE YOUNG COUPLE HAD JUST BEEN STANDING...

YAAAAAAGHH!

DON'T LOOK, BABY! IT'S... NO-R-RISLE!

SOB... SOB...

SOON THE DOCTOR'S SCREAMING DIED, AS ONLY HIS GLUTCHING HAND REMAINED ABOVE THE SHIMMERING POOL...



THE YOUNG COUPLE SCRAMBLED DOWN TO THE LIFE-RAFT AND PADDED AWAY FROM THE NIGHTMARISH VESSEL...

I'D RATHER FACE THE HANDSHIPS OF THE OPEN SEA THAN STAY ON BOARD THAT HORROR!

DON'T WORRY, HONEY! THEY'LL SPOT US! THEY'RE PROBABLY OUT LOOKING FOR US RIGHT NOW!



SUDDENLY BOB LOOKED DOWN AND GASPED! JEAN FOLLOWED HIS TERRIFIED GAZE! FROM A RUPTURED SPOT ON THE LIFE-RAFT'S AIR-TUBE, A SICKLY, FOUL-SMELLING, SUCKING, GULPING DOZE POURED OUT... SPREADING OVER THE BOTTOM...

THE... THE HORRIBLE STUFF! IT SPREAD TO THE LIFE-RAFT WHILE IT WAS TIED UP!

EEEEEEEEEEEEEE!



...AND EVEN THAT SOON DISSOLVED INTO IT! BOB LOOKED DOWN AT HIS LEFT FOOT! THE SHOE HAD BEEN EATEN AWAY! THE SOCK TOO! THE RAW AND BLEEDING FLESH APPEARED AS IF IT HAD BEEN CIPPED IN MOLTEN METAL...

BOB! YOU'RE HURT!

IT'S NOTHING JEAN!



BOB TOOK JEAN'S ARM AND GUIDED HER SLOWLY... CAREFULLY... TO WHERE THE FUNGUS-COVERED ROPE-LADDER HUNG OVER THE SIDE OF THE SHIP...

EASY, NOW! TAKE IT EASY! LET'S GET OFF THIS... THIS THING!

THANK GOD-NESS YOU TIED THE LIFE-RAFT UP INSTEAD OF SETTING IT ADRIFT!



THE NEXT DAY, THEIR MOUTHS RANCHED FROM LACK OF WATER, THEIR STOMACHS ACHING FROM HUNGER... BOB AND JEAN SPOTTED THE PLANE HIGH OVERHEAD! BOB BEGAN TO WAIVE HIS SHIRT...

THEY SEE US... THEY SEE US!

OH, BOB! DARLING! WE'RE SAVED!



HEE, HEE! YEP! DOESN'T A STORY LIKE THAT MELT YOUR HEART? IT DID BOB'S AND JEAN'S! IN FACT NOT ONLY THEIR HEARTS... BUT THEIR WHOLE BODIES MELTED AS THE DOZ FILLED THE RAFT-FLOOR! NOW WAS THE LIFE-RAFT PUNCTURED SO THE STUFF DOZED OUT! WELL, IT SEEMS THAT BOB'S BIG TOE HAD A HARD-NAIL... AND HE GOT EXCITED WAVING TO THE PLANE'S SKAY! SO IT WASN'T MUCH OF A RICK! ACTUALLY...

HEE, HEE... IT DIDN'T TAKE VERY MUCH! NOW COMES THE GRYFT-KEEPER! 'BYE!



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! ONE MORE TO GO, AND THEN YOU CAN ALL RETIRE FOR YOUR NIGHTMARES! YEP! IT'S YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER'S CHANCE TO TERRORIZE YOU, NOW! COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! FLIP DOWN ON THAT PLANK, AND I'LL TELL YOU A DELICIOUS LITTLE TALE, GUARANTEED NOT TO BORE YOU! IT'S CALLED...

THIS LITTLE PIGGY...



NORTH OF DELHI, NEAR MEERUT ON THE RIVER GANGES IN INDIA, A YOUNG BRITISH OFFICER RODE UP HIS PANTING STEED AND POINTED OFF TOWARD THE GRASSY CLEARING BEFORE HIM.

LOOK, SIR! IN THE
BRUSH! A
WILD BOAR!

I SEE, SIR! I'VE SEEN
HIM! THIS LOOKS LIKE
GOOD HUNTING
GROUND FOR BOARS!



THE BRITISH OFFICER AND HIS INDIAN SERVANT SPURRED THEIR HORSES AND CONTINUED ON THEIR TRIP! SEVERAL HOURS LATER, THEY REACHED A WALLED SETTLEMENT...



THERE'S THE GARRISON, SINIA!

A SENTRY SEES US, SINIA! HE SIGNALS US TO STOP!

THE SENTRY LEANED OVER THE STOCKADE WALL, AIMING HIS RIFLE.

HALT, YOU TWO! WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE WITH THE GOVERNOR?



I AM LIEUTENANT HORACE STURDY, ROYAL REGIMENT LANCERS! GOVERNOR STURDY IS MY UNCLE!

OH, YES, LIEUTENANT! THE GOVERNOR IS EXPECTING YOU! OPEN THE GATES!



OPEN THE GATES!

THE STOCKADE GATES WERE SWUNG BACK AND LIEUTENANT STURDY AND HIS SERVANT SINIA RODE INTO THE GARRISON ENCLOSURE...



HORACE! MY BOY! GOOD TO SEE YOU!

UNCLE FELIX! YOU'RE LOOKING WELL!

LATER, AT TEA, LIEUTENANT STURDY QUERIED HIS UNCLE...



I SEE THERE'RE PLENTY OF WILD BOAR IN THESE PARTS, UNCLE! WHEN IS THE NEXT HUNT?

HUNT? OH, NO! WE HUNT NO BOAR IN MESSUT, HORACE!



WHAT? YOU HAVE NO FERT CLUB, UNCLE? YOU DON'T GO FIB-STICKING HERE?

HEAVENS, BOY! THE BOAR IS A SACRED ANIMAL UNDER! THE INDIAN THIRDSMEN HERE WOULD SHOOT IT!



BUT YOU ACTUALLY WORRY ABOUT WHAT THOSE HEATHEN DEVILS THINK? NOT ME! THE FIRST CHANCE I GET, I'M GOING...

YOU'LL DO NO SUCH THING, HORACE! I FORBID IT! IT MIGHT NEAR A NASTY UPRISING IF YOU WERE TO KILL ONE OF THE SACRED BOARS!

BUT IGNORING HIS UNCLE'S WARNING, BEFORE DAWN THE NEXT DAY, LIEUTENANT STURDY AND HIS INDIAN SERVANT RODE OUT OF THE GARRISON ENCLOSURE ARMED WITH SPEARS...

HALF AN HOUR LATER THE TWO MEN SPOTTED THEIR QUARRY NOSING ABOUT IN THE LOW GRASS OF AN OPEN CLEARING...

SPURRING HIS HORSE, THE LIEUTENANT BORE DOWN UPON THE UNSUSPECTING BOAR, HIS SPEAR RAISED. THE DEAD-EYED ANIMAL TURNED, SNORTING, AT THE SOUND OF THE DHRUSHING HORSE...



DESPITE ITS ANKWARD APPEARANCE, A BOAR IS QUITE SWIFT. LIEUTENANT STURDY'S QUARRY SPUN AROUND AND STARTED OFF THROUGH THE LOW GRASS. THE LIEUTENANT'S SWIFT STEED QUICKLY CLOSED THE GAP BETWEEN HIM AND THE SCURRYING ANIMAL.

SUDDENLY, THE CRAFTY WILD HOG JINKED ON TURNED SHARPLY IN ITS TRACKS. LIEUTENANT STURDY PULLED UP SHARPLY ON THE REINS, AND HIS HORSE REARED...



THE LIEUTENANT HUNG FOR A MOMENT, AS IF SUSPENDED IN MID-AIR... THEN FELL TO THE GROUND! THE SQUEALING BOAR SWUNG TOWARD HIM, ITS RED-EYES GLAZING... ITS LETHAL TUSKS LOWERED! IT CHARGED...

SIMIA SPED ACROSS THE CLEARING AND, AS HE CROSSED BETWEEN THE PROSTRATE LIEUTENANT AND THE CHARGING WILD BOAR, PLUNGED HIS LANCE INTO THE SNORTING HOG'S BACK...



THE FATALITY INJURED BOAR ROLLED OVER AND OVER AND LAY QUITE STILL! SIMIA DISMOUNTED AND STOOD OVER IT! LIEUTENANT STURDY GOT TO HIS FEET AND DUSTED HIMSELF OFF...

WE...WE'D BETTER NOT MENTION MY CLOSE CALL TO MY UNCLE, SIMIA! HE WILL BE ANGRY ENOUGH AS IS...

AS YOU WISH, SAHIB! WHAT WILL WE DO WITH THE BOAR WE HAVE KILLED?



WHY, YOU'RE GOING TO PREPARE IT THE WAY WE DO IN KABIR, SIMIA! I'LL SHOW YOU NOW! ONE TASTE OF A WELL-ROASTED BOAR, AND UNCLE WILL FORGET TO BE ANNOYED WITH ME!

VERY GOOD, SAHIB! COME! THE SUN IS COMING UP! YOUR UNCLE WILL BE UPON US SOON!



LATER, IN THE GARRISON KITCHEN, LIEUTENANT STURDY SHOWS SIMIA HOW TO PREPARE ROAST-BOAR...

FIRST YOU BOIL THE ANIMAL IN THIS BAT OF SCALDING WATER, SIMIA! THAT IS HOW YOU REMOVE THE BOAR'S BRISTLES...

YES, SAHIB!



AFTER YOU'VE BOILED THE HAIRS OFF, YOU ROAST THE BOAR ON A SPIT OVER A BED OF RED-HOT COALS!

YES, SAHIB!



YOU'LL SERVE THE ROASTED BOAR ON A WOODEN PLATTER WITH AN APPLE IN ITS MOUTH TONIGHT AT DINNER, SIMIA!

YES, SAHIB!



AND SO, THAT NIGHT...

I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU, UNCLE! TONIGHT WE FEAST UPON SOMETHING SPECIAL! ALL RIGHT, SIMIA?

A SURPRISE, HORACE? HOW NICE!



SIMIA ENTERED, CARRYING THE ROASTED BOAR! ITS SUGGESTIVE ODOR FILLED THE DINING-ROOM! IT LAY, GROUCHING, UPON THE GRAY-STAINED PLANK... AN APPLE IN ITS MOUTH...

YES, UNCLE! TONIGHT WE EAT ROAST BOAR!

GOOD LORD! HORACE! YOU IDIOT!



ONE OF THE NATIVE WERENUT SERVANTS STARED IN HORROR AT THE ROAST BOAR! THE GOVERNOR EXPLODED...

GET THAT BLASTED THING OUT OF HERE!

BUT, UNCLE! AREN'T YOU EVEN GOING TO TASTE IT? IT'S DELICIOUS!



GOVERNOR STURDY SHOT A GLANCE AT THE NATIVE SERVANT WHOSE FACE NOW WAS A GRIM MASK SHOWING NO EMOTION.

I TOLD YOU ABOUT THE NATIVES IN THESE PARTS, HORACE! NOW I'LL HAVE TO APOLOGIZE TO THEIR TRIBAL CHIEF!

NONSENSE, UNCLE! NO ONE CAN SPEAK THE BLASTED PID!



THE WERENUT BOWED AND LEFT THE DINING-ROOM...

YOU STUPID FOOL! THAT SERVANT IS A MEMBER OF THE LOCAL TRIBE! HE'LL REPORT IT!

I'M SORRY, UNCLE! I DIDN'T KNOW.



THE GOVERNOR GLARED AT HIS NEPHEW

FROM NOW ON, UNTIL I CAN SNEAK YOU OUT OF THIS PROVINCE, YOUR LIFE ISN'T WORTH TWO SHILLINGS! YOU'LL STAY WITHIN THE BARRISON WALLS! UNDERSTAND?

I UNDERSTAND, UNCLE!



THE NEXT DAY...

WELL, I SAW THE CHIEF OF THE WERENUTS TODAY AND MADE A FORMAL APOLOGY! I TOLD HIM YOU DIDN'T KNOW THAT THEY HELD THE BOAR IN SUCH HIGH REGARD! I'VE ASSURED HIM IT WOULDN'T HAPPEN AGAIN! YOU'RE LEAVING HERE TOMORROW!

YES, UNCLE!



AFTER GOVERNOR STURDY LEFT HIS NEPHEW'S ROOM...

DID YOU HEAR THAT, SIMHA? WE'RE GETTING KICKED OUT TOMORROW!

I HEAR, SAHIB!



WELL, I'M NOT LEAVING TILL I GET ME A BOAR'S HEAD TO BRING BACK WITH ME TO KADIN!

NO, SAHIB! THAT IS NOT WISE! LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE!





NONSENSE, SIMIA! UNCLE WILL NEVER KNOW! AND WHAT IF THE MEERUTS FIND OUT? WE'LL BE ON OUR WAY BY THEN! UNCLE WILL HAVE THE TROUBLE! NOT US!

NO, SAHIB! I NOT GO WITH YOU!



I'M ORDERING YOU TO GO WITH ME!

NOT NO! I TELL YOUR UNCLE!



ALL RIGHT, I'LL GO MYSELF! TOMORROW AT DAWN! BUT, SO HELP ME, SIMIA... IF MY UNCLE FINDS OUT... IF YOU BREATHE A WORD... I'LL CUT YOUR TONGUE OUT!

Y-YES, SAHIB!

THE NEXT DAY, BEFORE SUNRISE, LIEUTENANT HORACE STURDY, ROYAL BENGAL LANCERS, RODE OUT INTO THE BOAR COUNTRY WITH HIS SPEAR.



ALL RIGHT, YOU LITTLE DEVILS! JUST ONE OF YOU... SHOW YOUR UGLY SHOUT...

HORACE SPOTTED A BOAR SOON AFTER! HE LOWERED HIS SPEAR AND KICKED HIS HORSE! THE WILD PIG SNORTED...



IT WHEELED SHARPLY... STARTING TO RUN ON ITS SHORT LITTLE LEGS! HORACE WAS OVER IT... HIS LANCE POISED...



THEN THE SPEAR WAS RAMMED HOME! THE WILD BOAR SQUEELED, ROLLING OVER AND OVER! LIEUTENANT STURDY DISMOUNTED AND KNELT TO SEVER ITS HEAD! HE NEVER NOTICED THE BROWN MUSCULAR HAND SEIZE HIS HORSE'S DANGLING REINS...



GOOD SIZE! I'LL MAKE A BEAUTY OF A PLASURE! TOO BAD I CAN'T HAVE HIM ROASTED...

THE WHIRRY OF HIS HORSE MADE HORACE LOOK UP! A WEEBUT TRIMSMAN SAT ASTRIDE THE STEED! A ROUGHLY Hewn LANCE HUNG IN THE NATIVE'S HAND...



WHAT THE...
I SAFF GET
OFF MY...

RUN...
INFIDEL!

THE WEEBUT POINTED OFF TOWARD THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING...

RUN! RUN ON I SWEAR YOU WHERE YOU STAND!

W-W-WAIT! I.I.



THE LANCE WAS RAISED! LIEUTENANT STURDY BACKED AWAY FROM ITS RAZOR-SHARP POINT! THEN HE TURNED...AND RAN...



HELP!
HELP!

HE HAD ALMOST REACHED THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING WHEN HE HEARD THE HORSE'S HOOVES BEHIND HIM...



NO! NO!

HORACE TURNED TO SEE THE WEEBUT CHARGING DOWN UPON HIM, THE LANCE POISED...



YAAAAAAAAAAAAA... GOR!

HIS SCREAM WAS CUT SHORT AS THE SPEAR WAS RAMMED HOME...



THAT NIGHT, LIEUTENANT STURDY'S WORRIED UNCLE ENTERED THE BARRISON DINING-ROOM WITH LITTLE APPETITE (EVEN THAT SOON VANISHED WHEN HE CAUGHT SIGHT OF THE FIGURE ON THE TABLE! IT LAY IN A CROUCHED POSITION ON A HUGE PLANK! ITS HAIR HAD BEEN BOILED OFF, AND ITS FLESH BROILED TO A CRISP! IN ITS MOUTH, WAS A JOTON! BREAD OFFICE...)



GOOD LORD!
HORACE!

HEH, HEH! SO IF YOU KNOW ANY BONES, RIGGERS, TAKE A LESSON FROM THE WEEBUT! YEP! THAT'S MY STORY! POOR HORACE WAS ROASTED THROUGH AND THROUGH! THERE WASN'T BEEN MUCH BOAR-HUNTING IN WEEBUT SINCE THEN, THOUGH! SEEMS THAT NOBODY WANTS TO END UP ON A GRAY-STAINED PLANK! AS THE WEEBUT CHIEF PUTS IT, "AN APPLE A DAY KEEPS THE HUNTERS AWAY!" AIN'T IT THE FRUIT? BYE NOW! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY WAG-TALES FROM THE CRYPT!



WE'LL
ALL SEE YOU
NEXT IN MY
WAG-TALES
FROM THE
CRYPT!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! CAN'T RESIST ME, EHY LOVE MY COOKING, EHY WELL, COME ON INTO THE HAUNT OF FEAR MAM, AND I'LL WHIP UP ANOTHER MAD-MAS-RECIPE IN MY CAULDRON! YEP! IT'S THE OLD WITCH, YOUR FREAKING RESEMBLANCE OF THE REVOLTING... YOUR MACABRE MENU-MAKER... YOUR SNIFFER-SNEF... GREEPS-COOKER... MADNESS-MIXER... SCREAM-STEWER... AND SO FORTH! SO FASTEN YOUR GHOOOL GUPS FOR ANOTHER SERVING OF SNEER HORROR, AND I'LL BEGIN THE TASTY TALE I CALL...

CHATTER-BOXED!

IT WAS A BRISK DAY IN NOVEMBER, 1947 THE NIN LAY SPRAWLED ON THE COLD SIDEWALK WHERE HE HAD FALLEN! HIS FACE WAS ASHEN-WHITE... HIS LIPS BLUE! THE CROWD AROUND HIM FORMED QUICKLY... ANXIOUS EYES PEERED DOWN AT HIM...

WHAT HAPPENED?

HE JUST FEELED OVER!

SOMEBODY GET AN AMBULANCE!

HE HE LOOKS DEAD!



SEVERAL MINUTES LATER, AN AMBULANCE, ITS SIREN SCREAMING, PULLED UP TO THE CURB BESIDE THE PROSTRATE FIGURE.

"ONE SIDE! LET ME THROUGH!"

"ALL RIGHT! BACK UP! GIVE HIM AIR!"

THE WHITE-COATED AMBULANCE DOCTOR KNELT OVER THE MAN LYING ON THE GRAY SIDEWALK. HE LISTENED WITH HIS STETHOSCOPE... FELT FOR A PULSE... THEN SHOOK HIS HEAD...

"THIS MAN IS DEAD!"

IT WAS AN HOUR LATER THAT EILEEN FILBURY FINALLY SAID GOOD-BYE TO HER FRIEND SADIE! THEY'D BEEN AT IT, TALKING, FOR EVEN LONGER THAN THAT! AS SOON AS SHE HUNG UP...

"HUNT ON, DEAR! ANOTHER CALL! AND I HAVE SO MUCH TO DO!"

YES! THIS IS... WE'VE BEEN TRYING MRS. FILBURY! TO REACH YOU FOR AN HOUR. MRS. FILBURY! BUT! YOUR LINE WAS BUSY!

OH! I WAS CHATTING WITH A GIRL FRIEND! WHO IS THIS?

THIS IS THE MORGUE CALLING, MRS. FILBURY! YOU'D BETTER BRACE YOURSELF! THEY BROUGHT YOUR HUSBAND'S BODY IN HERE A WHILE AGO! HE'S... DEAD!

A HUSH FELL OVER THE PEOPLE SEATED IN THE FUNERAL PARLOR'S CHAPEL! THE COFFIN LID WAS OPENED! THE VOICE OF THE ORATOR BEGAN TO DRONE! JACOB FILBURY'S FUNERAL SERVICES HAD BEGUN...

AND SO... IN FINAL PEACE... JACOB FILBURY'S REMAINS WILL BE LAID TO REST! BUT HE LEAVES BEHIND THE LOVE, THE DEVOTION, THE KINDNESS HE PRACTICED WHILE HE LIVED...

THE FUNERAL ORATOR'S VOICE DRONE ON AND ON, INTERRUPTED ONLY BY THE PITIFUL SONGS OF THE MOURNERS BEFORE HIM! SUDDENLY, A SHRIEK ECHOED THROUGH THE FUNERAL CHAPEL...

EEEEAAA!



SHEER HORROR GRIPPED THE MOURNING GATHERING! ALL EYES STARTED AT THE OPEN COFFIN! A WHITE VEINED HAND REACHED UP GRASPING THE COFFIN LID...

AND AS JACOB FILBURY SAT UP, THE CHAPEL WAS FILLED WITH CRIES OF TERROR! WOMEN MOURNERS JERPING ON THEIR BLACK DRESSES, SCRAMBLED FOR THE EXITS! MEN PUSHED AFTER THEM! A GIRL FELL, SCREAMING, AND THE OTHERS TRAMPLED OVER HER...

YAAAAAAAAAAAAAGGHHH!

SOME, ROOTED WITH MORTAL FEAR TO THE SPOT WHERE THEY STOOD, JUST STARED AT THE PALE FIGURE RISING IN HIS COFFIN! SUDDENLY, JACOB'S EYES BLINKED OPEN! COLOR RUSHED TO HIS CHEEKS! HE LOOKED AROUND...

THE DOCTOR STROKED HIS CHIN THOUGHTFULLY! JACOB FILBURY WUNG HIS HEAD...

WHA... WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

GOOD LORD!

HE'S ALIVE!

YOU SURFERED WHAT IS COMMONLY CALLED A CATAPLECTIC FIT! MR. FILBURY! CATAPLECTIC FITS CLOSELY RESEMBLE DEATH!

BUT DOCTOR! I MIGHT HAVE BEEN BURIED ALIVE!

DOCTOR! TELEPHONE! MRS. CONDIKIAN!

JACOB FILBURY'S FAMILY PHYSICIAN, DOCTOR HENLEY BENDISBERG, PICKED UP THE PHONE...

TEN MINUTES LATER...

GOOD-BYE, MRS. I WAS SAYING, CONDIKIAN! OR... I COULD'VE BEEN WHERE WERE I BURIED ALIVE! WE, FILBURY!

EXCUSE ME, FILBURY! OH, YES, MRS. CONDIKIAN! IS THAT SO? IS THAT SO? NO?! HMM! OH, DE AR! REALLY? WELL, I'LL TELL YOU WHAT YOU SHOULD DO! TAKE A POT AND BOIL UP...

YES! TELLING HOW LONG A CATAPLECTIC FIT WILL LAST! AND IT IS RARE THAT A PHYSICIAN CAN TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IT... AND ACTUAL DEATH! NOW...

TELEPHONE, DOCTOR! MRS. REREPPIUS!

OH, EXCUSE ME, FILBURY!

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...

YES, MRS. BEREFFUS? YOU DO THAT? YES? GOOD-BYE! ER...



IS IT POSSIBLE THAT I MAY HAVE MORE OF THESE ATTACKS, DOCTOR?

QUITE POSSIBLE, MR. FILBURY! WE MUST BE VERY CAREFUL TO SEE THAT WE AVOID WHAT ALMOST HAPPENED YESTERDAY! WE MUST...



ON? EXCUSE ME, ER... MR. FILBURY?



GOOD-BYE, DOCTOR?

JACOB FILBURY WAS FRIGHTENED... TERRIBLY FRIGHTENED! HE RUSHED TO HIS BROTHER'S HOUSE...

NOT HOME! HMMPH! HE'S NEVER HOME! ALWAYS OUT, GALLIVANTING! JUST WHEN I NEED HIM!



AS JACOB CAME IN THE FRONT DOOR OF HIS OWN HOME... NO, SAGIE! REALLY? HMMPH! ALWAYS YOU'RE KIDDING! SHE DID? OH, WAIT UNTIL MARY HEARS ABOUT THIS! SO ON TELL ME MORE!



SUDDENLY JACOB FILBURY'S FACE BRIGHTENED! HE GRINNED... OF COURSE! THAT'S IT! THAT'S THE WAY TO MAKE SURE I'M NOT BURIED ALIVE!



SAGIE? SERIOUSLY? OH, NO! FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! WELL, I'LL BE...

MR. FILBURY HURRIED TO THE UNDERTAKER! THE PLAN WAS FORMING IN HIS MIND... THE SOLUTION... SO YOU SEE, IF I DO HAVE A CATALEPTIC FIT, AND YOU DO BURY ME ALIVE... I'LL BE ABLE TO LET MY FAMILY KNOW! THEY'LL COME AND DIG ME UP!



ALL RIGHT, MR. FILBURY! WE'LL FOLLOW YOUR INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER.

THEN MR. FILBURY WENT TO HIS FAMILY DOCTOR AND TOLD HIM HIS PLAN...

EXCELLENT IDEA, FILBURY! IF YOU ARE SURVIVED ALIVE DURING YOUR CATALEPTIC FIT, YOU'LL CONSUME PRACTICALLY NONE OF THE AIR IN THE COFFIN! WHEN YOU COME OUT OF IT, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO LAST LONG ENOUGH...



TELEPHONE, ER, DOCTOR? THANKS, DOC! BYE!

FINALLY, MR. FILBURY COMPLETED HIS ARRANGEMENTS...

I'LL PAY MY BILLS IN ADVANCE, EVERY MONTH! SATISFACTORY?

FINE! WE'LL TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING, MR! WOULD YOU LIKE TO PAY FOR DECEMBER NOW?



JACOB WENT OUT INTO THE CHILL NOVEMBER AIR FEELING CONFIDENT THAT HIS PROBLEM WAS SOLVED...



YES, SIRRE! PERFECT! PERFECT!

EARLY THE NEXT MONTH, IT HAPPENED! A CAR CAREENED CRAZILY ACROSS A DESERTED STREET AND SMASHED INTO A BRICK WALL! THE IMPACT OF TONS OF STEEL AND SHATTERING GLASS ECHOED INTO THE NIGHT.



WHEN THE AMBULANCE DOCTOR EXAMINED THE UNFORTUNATE DRIVER...

THIS MAN IS DEAD!

THAT'S JACOB FILBURY! I RECOGNIZE HIM!



DOCTOR BENDISSEER ASSURED MRS. FILBURY...

NO, MRS. FILBURY! HE'S DEAD ALL RIGHT! THE CRASH DID IT! IT'S DEFINITELY NOT A CATALEPTIC FIT!

THEN... SOB... I SUPPOSE WE... SOB... MIGHT BE WELL GO AHEAD... SOB... WITH THE FUNERAL!



THE UNDERTAKER, HOWEVER, INSISTED THAT HE FOLLOW MR. FILBURY'S INSTRUCTIONS...

THAT'S THE ARRANGEMENT, MRS. FILBURY! YOUR HUSBAND DEMANDED IT! I'M GOING TO SEE THAT IT'S CARRIED OUT! NO EMBALMING!

BUT, REALLY, MR. BOXER! THE OTHER THING! ISN'T THAT A LITTLE RIDICULOUS? BURY JACOB WITH A CONNECTED TELEPHONE!



HEE, HEE! YEP, KIDDIES! THAT'S THE DEAL! THAT'S WHAT FOUR OLD JACOB FILBURY ARRANGED WITH THE UNDERTAKER AND THE TELEPHONE COMPANY... THAT HE BE BURIED WITHOUT BEING EMBALMED, ALONG WITH A CONNECTED TELEPHONE IN HIS COFFIN! NOW, NOW! LET'S NOT START GUESSING HOW MY LITTLE TALE ENDS! 'CAUSE! LET'S READ ON!



AND SO ON THAT GOLD SATURDAY IN EARLY OCTOBER, JACOB FILBURY'S COFFIN WAS LOWERED INTO THE GRAVE.



SILENCE CLOSED IN AS THE MOURNERS LEFT AND THE GRAVE WAS COVERED OVER! THE THIN TELEPHONE WIRE COMING FROM THE FRESH MOUND OF CEMETERY EARTH SWAYED IN THE WINTRY WIND...

NIGHT DROPT OVER THE GRAY HEADSTONES LIKE A BLACK PHANTOM! ALL WAS STILL... EXCEPT FOR THE WHINE OF THE WIND STREAMING PAST THE WIRE! THEN CAME DAWN! TOWARDS AFTERNOON...



YAAAAAHHHHHHH!

FOR JACOB FILBURY HAD HAD A CATAPLECTIC FIT! HE'D SUFFERED IT WHILE DRIVING! THAT'S WHY HE CRASHED! BUT THE CRASH HADN'T KILLED HIM! HE WAS ALIVE... BURIED ALIVE!

HELP! HELP ME... SOMEONE!

AND THEN JACOB FELT IT, BESIDE HIM! THE GOLD BLACK INSTRUMENT! THE TELEPHONE!



OH... THANK HEAVENS! THANK HEAVENS THEY REMEMBERED!

JACOB LIFTED THE RECEIVER! THE DIAL TONE BRIGAN TO HIM! HE COUNTED THE LITTLE HOLES CAREFULLY TO MAKE SURE HE'D DIAL THE RIGHT NUMBER.

MY WIFE, EILEEN! I'LL CALL HER! SHE'LL COME AND GET ME! LET'S SEE! THAT'S THE THIRD HOLE! THAT'S THE SEVENTH!



DARN! DARN! SO I'M A WOODEN MEDAL WITH LEATHER TRIMMINGS ON YOUR NOSE? SO YOU FIGURED THAT OUT, TOO? WELL, THE DOC WAS ON THE PHONE COMPLAINING ONE OF HIS COMPLAINTING PATIENTS...

BUSHY? I SHOULD GASP. SMOKE HAVE KNOWN? WHAT'LL I DO? YEE! THAT'S IT. THAT'S IT.

WHAT'LL I DO?
YES? THAT'S IT
THAT'S IT...

100

BUT THE DIAL TONE DIDN'T COME! BECAUSE MINUTES BEFORE, THOUSANDS OF MILES WEST-
WARD...

LOOK UP
THERE!

PLANES! HUNDREDS
OF THEM!

GOOD
LORD!



NO, FRIENDS! THE DIAL TONE DIDN'T COME! BECAUSE AT THAT MOMENT, THE NATION'S PHONE CENTERS WERE TIED UP WITH ARMY, NAVY, AND NEWSPAPER CALLS! THE WIRES WERE JAMMED! ALL CIRCUITS WERE BUSY...

PLEASE... GASP... CHOK... NOT MUCH AIR... LEFT!
OPERATOR! GASP... A DIAL TONE... SO I CAN...
PLEASE... GASP... CHOK... GASP... DIAL THE
OPERATOR... GURGLE...



"PLEASE HANG UP" THE JAPANESE
HAVE JUST BOMBED PEARL
HARBOR!



DEAD... GASP! NO DIAL TONE!
THE PHONE IS DEAD!
OPERATOR... GASP... OPERATOR...
CHOK...



IN FACT, THE JAP IN JACOB'S COFFIN RAVE OUT LONG BEFORE THE LITTLE GRANGE LIGHT ON THE TROUBLE-SWITCHBOARD INDICATED THAT A PHONE WAS OFF THE HOOK SOMEWHERE! SO THE SHRIIL VOICE OF THE OPERATOR FELL ON DEAF EARS IN THAT DARK UNDERGROUND HORIZONTAL PHONE BOOTH... FOR JACOB HAD SUFFOCATED...

THIS IS THE OPERATOR!
I'M SORRY! OUR
CIRCUITS ARE BUSY!
PLEASE HANG UP...



HEL, HEL! YEP, KIDDIES! LIKE I SAID IN THE BEGINNING... IT WAS 1941! I THOUGHT YOU WERE PRETTY SUREWIT. OH! THOUGHT YOU HAD IT ALL FIGURED OUT? WELL, I HOPE I OUT-SMARTED YOU! AS FOR JACOB... WELL, HE AND HIS TELEPHONE ARE PRETTY DECAYED BY NOW! I STILL GET A CALL FROM HIM ONCE IN A WHILE, THOUGH!

USUALLY, I'M NOT HOME... SO HE LEAVES A SPURT-MESSAGEFAND NOW, THE FAULT-KEEPER ARRITS WITH HIS LITTLE NUMBER! DID YOU LATER? GOT ANOTHER BOMBABAY TALE FOR YOU! 'BYE, NOW!



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

REMEMBER THE STORY ABOUT THE THREE HOLES IN THE GROUND CALLED 'WELL, WELL, WELL'? HEH, HEH! NOW, YOUR PAULP-KEEPER BELIEVES IN DEFLATION! SO COME INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, SIT YOURSELF DOWN ON THAT BUCKET, AND I'LL BEGIN THE TALE OF ONE HOLE IN THE GROUND CALLED...

all Washed Up!



IT WAS AN OLD WELL! NO ONE USED IT ANYMORE! THE WATER DEEP BELOW ITS SLIMY-WALLED SIDES SHIMMERED IN THE MOONLIGHT! A MUSTY DOOR OF STAGNATION AND STALENESS DRIFTED UP FROM THE BLACKNESS BENEATH ITS STONE RIM! THE MOSS-LADEN WATER BUCKET HUNG SILENTLY ON THE FRAYED ROPE COILED ABOUT THE WEATHERBEATEN HANDLE! INSECTS SWARMED BENEATH THE ROTTED BRID THAT STOOD OVER IT! A TWIG SNAPPED HEARILY! A FIGURE MOVED OUT OF THE DARKNESS...TOWARD THE WELL! A WOMAN...



SHE CAME UP TO THE WELL AND LEANED OVER IT! THE MOONLIGHT GLISTENED ON HER TEAR-STAINED CHEEKS! SHE LOOKED DOWN AT THE STAGNANT WATER FAR BELOW...

HOW LONG CAN WE GO ON LIKE THIS, HARRY? PEOPLE ARE TALKING! THEY SAY BOB, THEY SAY YOU DON'T INTEND TO MARRY ME!

A SECOND FIGURE CAME OUT OF THE SHADOWS AND MOVED TO THE SIDE OF THE UNHAPPY WOMAN! A MAN...

THEY'RE WRONG, MARGIA! I WANT TO MARRY YOU! BUT I CAN'T! NOT YET! I'M NOT READY!

WHEN, HARRY? WHEN WILL YOU BE READY?

AS SOON AS I'VE SAVED UP ENOUGH MONEY! I'VE GOT A JOB NOW! IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE I GET A PROMOTION! THEN...

YOU'VE PUT IT OFF AND PUT IT OFF! ALWAYS THE SAME EXCUSE! YOU HAVEN'T THE MONEY!

IT ISN'T AN EXCUSE, MARGIA! CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND?

I UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING, HARRY! PERFECTLY! I'M SORRY YOU NEVER GAVE ME A RING! I WOULD GIVE IT BACK... NOW!

MARGIA!

WE'RE FINISHED, HARRY! I'M TIRED OF WAITING! BOB'S CALLED ME TODAY! HE'S BACK IN TOWN! HE WANTS TO SEE ME! HE WANTS TO KNOW IF I'M... FREE... OF TIES! I'M GOING TO TELL HIM... YES!

MARGIA! COME BACK! WAIT!

GOOD-BYE, HARRY! I'LL SEE YOU AROUND...

THE WOMAN DISAPPEARED INTO THE GLOOM! THE MAN STOOD... STARING INTO THE BLACKNESS WHERE SHE'D VANISHED! THE SILENCE CLOSED IN AGAIN! A BREEZE STIRRED THE WELL SUCKET! THE PRAYED ROPE CREAKED...

BOB'S SANDERS! THAT RICH NO-GOOD (B) who HE ALWAYS WANTED MARGIA! NOW HE'S GOING TO TAKE HER AWAY FROM ME!

MARCIA'S LAUGHTER RIPPLED THROUGH THE STILL NIGHT AIR! GREGG TOOK HER IN HIS ARMS...



GREGG: THESE LAST FEW WEEKS HAVE BEEN WONDERFUL! I JUST WONDERFUL! I'VE LOVED EVERY MINUTE OF IT!

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO END, MARCIA! IT COULD GO ON AND ON... LIKE THIS... IF YOU'LL SAY YES!

MARCIA TURNED AWAY, STARING DOWN AT THE SHIMMERING WELL-WATER FAR BELOW...



ARE... ARE YOU PROPOSING TO ME, GREGG?

YES, MARCIA! I'M ASKING YOU TO MARRY ME! WHAT DO YOU SAY?



I'M NOT SURE I LOVE YOU, GREGG!

I'LL MAKE YOU LOVE ME, DEAREST! JUST GIVE ME THE CHANCE! SAY YOU'LL MARRY ME!



YES, GREGG! I'LL... I'LL MARRY YOU!

SWEET-HEART!



HARRY GLENCHED HIS FISTS AND SWORE SILENTLY AS HE WATCHED FROM HIS HIDING PLACE...

I WON'T LET YOU HAVE HER, GREGG! I WON'T! SHE'S MINE! MINE!

MARCIA PULLED AWAY FROM GREGG! SHE SMILED...



I'VE GOT TO GO IN NOW, GREGG! IT'S LATE! CALL ME TOMORROW!

I WILL, HONEY! GOOD-NIGHT!

AFTER MARCIA WENT OFF DOWN THE PATH TOWARD HER HOUSE, GREGG LEANED OVER THE WELL AND GRINNED! HE WAS TOO BUSY WITH HIS OWN THOUGHTS TO HEAR THE CRACKLE OF THE LEAVES BEHIND HIM.



HARRY BROUGHT THE ROOM DOWN ON GRESS'S HEAD AGAIN AND AGAIN! SOON IT FELT AS IF HE WERE POUNDING AN OLD WOTH-EATEN PILLOW.



HARRY KNELT AND SLIPPED THE RING FROM GRESS'S FINGER...



THERE WAS A SECOND OR TWO OF SILENCE, AND THEN A MUFFLED SPLASH FAR BELOW! HARRY PEERED DOWN AT THE RIPPLING MURKY WATER! SUDDENLY...



HARRY STARED DOWN AT GRESS'S LIFELESS BODY LYING BEFORE HIM! THEN, SOMETHING CAUGHT HIS EYE! SOMETHING SPARKLING...



HARRY PUSHED THE RING INTO HIS BREAST POCKET AND LIFTED GRESS'S BODY...

NOW TO GET RID OF YOU, GRESS! WHERE THEY'D NEVER THINK OF LOOKING FOR YOU...



HARRY PUSHED GRESS'S BODY OVER THE STONE RIM OF THE WELL! FOR A MOMENT, IT HUNG THERE... PRECARIOUSLY...



THE RING SPINNED DOWNWARD CRAZILY! HARRY LUNGED FOR IT, ALMOST GOING OVER! IT WAS TOO LATE.



A LIGHT FLICKED IN IN MARGIA'S HOUSE! A WINDOW RATTLED OPEN! HARRY DUCKED INTO THE SHADOWS.



SEVERAL MINUTES LATER, HARRY BLOWED DOWN TO A WALK, BREATHING HEAVILY! HE'D GOTTEN OUT OF THERE... FAST...



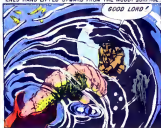
A WEEK PASSED! EACH NIGHT UNDER THE COVER OF DARKNESS, HARRY WOULD RETURN TO THE WELL WITH SOME STRING AND FISH HOOKS! HOUR AFTER HOUR, HE'D DANGLE THE HOOKS INTO THE MURKY WATER.



SEVERAL TIMES DURING THOSE NIGHTS OF FROGGLING THE HOOKS WOULD CATCH ONTO THE FOOT BELOW, AND HARRY WOULD BE FORCED TO SNAP THE STRING AND BEGIN AGAIN...



ONCE, HARRY PULLED HARD, AND A BLOATED WHITE-EYED HAND LIFTED UPWARD FROM THE MUDDY SURFACE.



DURING THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED THE MURDER, HARRY WOULD VISIT MARGIA... TO COMFORT HER.

HE NEVER *INTENDED* TO MARRY YOU, MARGIA! CAN'T YOU SEE THAT NOW?



AND AS THE WEEKS WENT BY...

OH, HARRY! I'VE BEEN SUCH A FOOL! CAN YOU FORGIVE ME?

FORGET ABOUT HIM, MARGIA! IT'S ALL OVER! LET'S PICK UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF!



MEANWHILE, HARRY CONTINUED TO FISH FOR GREGG'S RING WITH NO SUCCESS...

IT'S NO USE! THERE'S JUST ONE ALTERNATIVE...



AND SO, ABOUT TWO MONTHS AFTER THE MURDER... ONE DARK NIGHT, HARRY CAME TO THE WELL WITH A COIL OF STRONG ROPE.

IT'S THE ONLY WAY! I'VE GOT TO GO DOWN THERE AND GET IT!



HARRY SLID THE ROPE AROUND ONE OF THE BEAMS THAT SUPPORTED THE WELL SHED AND TIED IT SECURELY.



THEN HE SLIPPED OVER THE STONE RIM OF THE WELL AND BEGAN TO LOWER HIMSELF, HAND UNDER HAND, DOWN INTO THE DARK MUSTY SHAFT.



PHEW! WHAT A SMELL!

THE STENCH OF THE STAGNANT WATER BELOW SCARED HARRY'S NOSTRILS! SOON HE REACHED ITS MURKY SURFACE.



I HOPE IT'S NOT TOO DEEP!

THE WATER ROSE SLOWLY! IT HAD REACHED HARRY'S CHEST WHEN HIS FEET TOUCHED SOMETHING SOFT.



I... I'M STANDING ON THE BODY!

HARRY TOOK A DEEP BREATH AND DUCKED BELOW THE SURFACE! HE REACHED DOWNWARD FOR THE RING...



IT MUST BE HERE... SOMEWHERE...

MARCIA SAT BOLT UPRIGHT IN HER BED AS THE HYSTERICAL SHRIEKING ECHOED THROUGH THE STILLNESS OF THE NIGHT...



WHAT...
WHAT'S
THAT?

SHE SLIPPED ON A ROPE, HURRIED DOWNSTAIRS AND OUT INTO THE DARKNESS.



IT...IT'S COMING FROM
THE WELL!

THE SPLASHING AND SCREAMING WERE INDEED COMING FROM THE WELL! MARCIA PEERED OVER THE EDGE! FAR BELOW, HARRY WAS TRYING TO PULL HIMSELF UPWARD...



HARRY! HELP ME, MARCIA! PULL!
PULL! HE'S... HE'S... HE'S
TRYING TO DRAG
ME UNDER!

MARCIA BEGAN TO PULL WITH ALL HER STRENGTH! HARRY CONTINUED TO SHRIEK! LITTLE BY LITTLE HE CAME OUT OF THE WATER! AND THEN SHE SAW IT...



GOOD
LORD!

THE ROTTED, SWOLLEN, WHITENED, GRIMING THING HAD CLOSED ITS TEETH AROUND HARRY'S ANKLE! IT HELD IT IN A VICE-LIKE GRIP! TRICKLES OF BLOOD RAN FROM THE WOUNDS IT HAD MADE.



PULL... MARCIA! PULL!
OH, LORD... THE ROPE...

HARRY!
HARRY...
IT'S
GREGG!

AND AS THE ROPE SNAPPED UNDER THE STRAIN, THE TWO OF THEM DISAPPEARED INTO THE DARK MURKY WATER! MARCIA STARED IN HORROR AS THE LAST FEW BUBBLES ROSE... AND BROKE ACROSS THE STAGNANT SURFACE...



HEW, HEW! AND THAT'S MY LITTLE YARN FOR THIS TIME, KIDDIES! HARRY AND GREGG ENDED UP IN THE DRINK... TOGETHER! WELL-WATER YUH GONNA DO? AS FOR MARCIA... SHE WAS LEFT HIGH AND DRY! BY THE WAY... BEFORE YOU GO ON TO THE OLD WITCH'S NIGHE, LET ME OFFER YOU A COOL, REFRESHING, THIRST -



QUENCHER!
THAT IS IF
YOU HOLD
YOUR NOSE!
BYE, NOW!

THE OLD WITCH'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!



HEE, HEE! IN VAULT OF HORROR NO. 87, I TOLD YOU BLOOD-THIRSTY LITTLE FIELDS A STORY I CALLED, 'A GRIM FAIRY TALE!' MY IDIOT EDITORS WENT SO WILD OVER THAT ONE (THEY'RE BOTH IN GAGES, NOW!), I'VE DECIDED TO TELL YOU ANOTHER! I CALL THIS LITTLE CHILDISH CHILLER...

MARRIAGE VOWS!

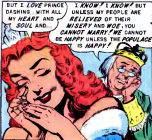
ONCE UPON A TIME... LONG, LONG AGO... THERE LIVED IN A TINY KINGDOM A KIND-HEARTED KING AND HIS BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER... **PRINCESS BUTTERCUP!** NOW PRINCESS BUTTERCUP WAS MADLY IN LOVE WITH A HANDSOME PRINCE FROM A DISTANT KINGDOM... BUT WHEN SHE ASKED HER FATHER IF SHE COULD MARRY HIM, HER KIND-HEARTED FATHER REPLIED...



BUT FATHER, DEAR! I LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL MY HEART AND SOUL... AND FINGERS... AND TOES!

I KNOW, BUTTERCUP DEAR! BUT OUR PEOPLE ARE STARVING! OUR KINGDOM IS POOR! A ROYAL MARRIAGE AT THIS TIME WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE! YOU SEE... I'M AFRAID!





BUT I LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL MY HEART AND SOUL AND...

I KNOW! I KNOW! BUT UNLESS MY PEOPLE ARE RELIEVED OF THEIR MISERY AND WOE, YOU CANNOT MARRY! WE CANNOT BE HAPPY UNLESS THE POPULACE IS HAPPY!

CAN YOU HIRE JESTERS TO GO AROUND AND MAKE THE PEOPLE HAPPY, FATHER? AFTER ALL, I DO LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL MY HEART AND...

I CAN'T, BUTTERCUP! THE ROYAL TREASURY IS EMPTY... CLEAN... BUSTED... FLAT!



CAN'T YOU BORROW MONEY, FATHER? I DO LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL MY...

NEVER! THE ONLY ONE THAT I COULD BORROW MONEY FROM IS KING BLACKHEART... OUR BLACK-HEARTED NEIGHBOR...

UGH! HIM I HATE!

YOU GET THE PICTURE, BUTTERCUP!



AND SO, BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS BUTTERCUP COULD NOT MARRY HAPPOUSOME PRINCE DASHING! AT LEAST NOT UNTIL THE PEOPLE OF HER FATHER'S KINGDOM WERE BETTER OFF AND HAPPY! BUT THE LONGER SHE WAITED, THE WORSE THINGS GOT! THE PEOPLE GOT UNHAPPY... AND UNHAPPY AND UNHAPPY... SO...



SO... FATHER! WHAT WILL I DO? I HAVE WAITED... AND WAITED! THE PEOPLE HAVE GOTTEN UNHAPPY AND UNHAPPY! AND I DO LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL OF MY HEART AND SOUL... AND FINGERS... AND TOES!

THIS IS NO LONGER A QUESTION OF YOUR HAPPINESS. MY CHILD! OUR KINGDOM IS IN A CRISIS! IT IS THE PEOPLE I AM THINKING ABOUT!

THE PEOPLE? BUT WHAT ABOUT POOR LITTLE ME... AND PRINCE DASHING... WHOM I LOVE WITH ALL OF MY HEART AND SOUL...

THE PEOPLE COME FIRST, MY CHILD! IT IS THEIR HAPPINESS YOU MUST BE CONCERNED ABOUT! AFTER THEY ARE HAPPY, THEN YOU CAN BE HAPPY! BUT NOW... THEY STARVE! THEY WALK THE STREETS IN RAGS...



FINALLY THE KIND-HEARTED KING COULD STAND IT NO LONGER! THINGS WERE WORSE THAN EVER! SO ONE DAY...

DAUGHTER, DADDY! I'VE DECIDED TO SWALLOW MY PRIDE! I'VE DECIDED TO ASK OUR BLACK-HEARTED NEIGHBOR, KING BLACKHEART, FOR A LOAN!

OH, DADDY! THEN MAYBE I CAN MARRY PRINCE DASHING, WHOM I LOVE WITH...



THE DAUGHTER! IF I'M ABLE TO BORROW ENOUGH, AND MY PEOPLE ARE HAPPY, THEN YOU COULD MARRY... ER... WHAT'S HIS NAME?

PRINCE DASHING... WHOM I LOVE WITH ALL OF MY HEART AND SOUL AND...



SO... KIND-HEARTED KING KINDHEART AND HIS BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER, PRINCESS BUTTERCUP, WENT TO THE NEIGHBORING KINGDOM TO SEE BLACK-HEARTED KING BLACKHEART! NOW, KING BLACKHEART HAD NEVER MET PRINCESS BUTTERCUP! HE NEVER KNEW HIS NEIGHBOR HAD SUCH A BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER! SO...



DO YOU NEED MONEY, EH, KING KINDHEART? WELL, I THINK A LOAN COULD BE ARRANGED!

YOU DO?

OH, DADDY!

...ON ONE CONDITION, OF COURSE!

EH? ONE CONDITION?

ANYTHING! ANYTHING!



MY CONDITION, KING KINDHEART, IS THAT YOU GIVE ME YOUR DAUGHTER'S HAND IN MARRIAGE!

WHAT? BUT SHE LOVES ANOTHER!

NO! NO!

HER, HER? EITHER THAT YOUR DAUGHTER'S HAND... OR NO LOAN.

NEVER! NEVER!

CAN I SPEAK TO MY DAUGHTER FOR A MINUTE ALONE?



NEVERTHELESS, I MUST OBTAIN THE
LOAN! I'M CONCERNED ABOUT OUR
PEOPLE! I MUST CONSENT TO GIVE
KING BLACKEART YOUR HAND IN
MARRIAGE!



BOB: BO-BO!
 BOB: NOW, NOW,
 PRETTY
 BUTTERCUP!
 DO NOT BE
 UNHAPPY!



SO, KIND-HEARTED KING KINDHEART AND HIS BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER, PRINCESS BUTTERCUP, RETURNED TO THEIR OWN KINGDOM.

YOU MUST BE BRAVE.
BUTTERCUP! YOU MUST THINK
OF OUR PEOPLE! REMEMBER!
THEIR HAPPINESS COMES FIRST!



NEWS OF THE COMING ROYAL MARRIAGE WAS ANNOUNCED THROUGHOUT KING-HEARTED KING KINDHEART'S KINGDOM...

HEAR YE...HEAR YE! BE IT KNOWN THAT ON TUESDAY, AUGUST FIFTH, GOOD KING BLACKHEART WILL TAKE OUR BELOVED PRINCESS BUTTERCUP'S HAND IN MARRIAGE!

BUT...

BUT WE THOUGHT PRINCESS BUTTERCUP LOVED PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL HER HEART AND SOUL... AND FINGERS... AND TOES!

PLEASE! THERE'S MORE! HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

...AND BE IT KNOWN THAT ON THAT DAY EACH AND EVERY CITIZEN WILL RECEIVE A MEDIUM-SIZED BAG OF GOLD...IN CELEBRATION! GOLD, COURTESY OF LOAN BY KING BLACKHEART!

AH! CRAFTY THAT! THE DEVIL, THAT KING BLACKHEART!

DAYS PASSED! A WEEK WENT BY! PRINCESS BUTTERCUP REMAINED IN HER ROOM, CRYING HER EYES OUT.

SOME, MY CHILD! SEE HOW HAPPY OUR PEOPLE ARE! SEE HOW HAPPY YOU HAVE MADE THEM!

SEE HOW UNHAPPY I AM, SOO, FATHER!

I KNOW, DAUGHTER! I KNOW! BUT WHAT CAN I DO?

THE WEDDING DATE DREW NEAR! THEN, ON THE EVE OF THE ROYAL MARRIAGE DAY...

I HAVE IT! I HAVE IT! A WAY OUT, FATHER!

TELL ME, DAUGHTER! TELL ME!

THE NEXT DAY, THE WEDDING DAY... STEEPLE BELLS TOLLED! PEOPLE DANCED IN THE STREETS! SOON, KING BLACKHEART'S COACH APPEARED...

HERE HE COMES!

ONE SIDE!

LOOK! BAGS OF GOLD!



THE BAGS OF GOLD WERE DISTRIBUTED TO THE POPULACE...

THERE' THE LAST ONE! NOW, LET'S GET ON WITH THE CEREMONY, KING KINDEART!



KING BLACKHEART LED KING BLACKHEART INTO THE CASTLE...

THIS WAY, KING BLACKHEART!

NO TRICKS, KING KINDEART! I'VE KEPT MY PART OF THE BARGAIN!



...DOWN A LONG DARK CORRIDOR...

AND I WILL KEEP MY PART, KING BLACKHEART! A BARGAIN IS A BARGAIN! HERE!

AM! THE CHAPEL!



THE CHAPEL WAS FILLED WITH ROYAL GUESTS! NEAR THE ALTAR STOOD PRINCESS BUTTERCUP! AT HER SIDE STOOD PRINCE DASHING...

WHAT'S THIS, KING KINDEART? I AM TO HAVE YOUR DAUGHTER'S HAND IN MARRIAGE... NOT HIM!

THAT'S RIGHT, KING BLACKHEART! THERE'S TO BE A DOUBLE CEREMONY TODAY!



PRINCE DASHING WILL MARRY BUTTERCUP...

WHAT? BUT...



KING KINDEART EXTENDED A VELVET PILLOW! KING BLACKHEART STARED AT IT IN SHEER HORROR...

...AND NOW... YOU WILL HAVE MY DAUGHTER'S HAND IN MARRIAGE!

GOOD LORD!



HEE, HEE! YOU! THEY MADE THE OLD BOKING KING BLACKHEART, SO THROUGH WITH IT TOO, KIDDIES! AND AFTER THAT, EVERYBODY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER... PRINCE DASHING WITH ONE-ARMED PRINCESS BUTTERCUP... AND BLACK-HEARTED KING BLACKHEART WITH HIS HANDY WIFE!



HEE, HEE! AND THAT'S MY FAIRY TALE FOR THIS ISSUE! BARRY! THAT'S WHAT I TOLD YOU! BYE, NOW!

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HMMPH! FAIRY TALES! WHAT NEXT? PRETTY SOON THAT OLD HAG WILL BE TELLIN' "FUNNY-LITTLE-ANIMATED HORROR STORIES! WELL, NOT ME! I'M FROM THE OLD SCHOOL! STRAIGHT GORE... THAT'S MY LORE!" YEP! IT'S YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER, READY TO DIG UP ANOTHER TALE OF TERROR FROM MY COLLECTION! SO SIT DOWN ON THAT SAMPLE-CASE, AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURDLER I CALL...

DEATH OF SOME SALESMEN!



"YOUR NAME IS STUART FRATHERS? YOU'RE A SALESMAN... A TRAVELING SALESMAN! FOR TWO YEARS NOW YOU'VE BEEN CRIVING THESE BAGS-WOODS ROADS, HUSTLING YOUR LIFE! YOU GO FROM FARMHOUSE TO FARMHOUSE, MAKING YOUR PITCH? SOMETIMES YOU HAVE A SALE... MOSTLY NOT! TODAY LOOKS LIKE ONE OF YOUR BAD DAYS..."

"NO! NO, I SAID! NOW SCRAM!"

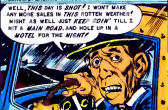
"WELL, THANKS ANYWAY! I'LL STOP BY AGAIN!"



SOME OF THESE BACKWOODS ROADS ARE **SMOOTH**. SOME ARE **PRETTY BAD**! LIKE THE ONE YOU'RE ON NOW! IT'S **MUDDY** AND **BUTTED**! YOUR BEAT-UP OLD CAR ROCKS AND ROLLS! THE SKY ABOVE YOU IS **BLEAK** AND **GREY**! YOU CURSE SOFTLY TO YOURSELF.



AND THEN IT STARTS COMING DOWN! THE RAIN! IT FLOODS ACROSS YOUR WINDSHIELD...PATTERING LOUDLY ON THE CAR ROOF! YOU CAN HARDLY SEE THE ROAD AHEAD! THE RUTS AND HOLLOWES FILL WITH WATER! YOU BOUNCE ALONG...SPLASHING THROUGH THEM.



THE RAIN CONTINUES! SUDDENLY YOUR CAR SAGS AWARDWARD TO THE RIGHT! THE ENGINE COUGHS AND STALLS! YOU'RE OVER YOUR WHEEL HERE IN A PUDDLE...



YOU SIT THERE, IN THE MIDDLE OF THAT RAIN-FLOODED MUDDY BACKWOODS ROAD, COUNTING TO TEN! THEN YOU LOOK AROUND...



YOU PEER THROUGH THE BLOODY DOWNPOUR! THEN YOU SEE IT! **THE HOUSE!** IT STANDS BLACK AND SOMBER, OUTLINED AGAINST THE GREY SKY...



YOU LEAP FROM YOUR STALLED AUTO AND START FOR THE HOUSE! THE RAINDROPS SLAM AGAINST YOUR FACE! YOUR CLOTHES BEGIN TO SOAK UP THE WETNESS! YOU SPLASH THROUGH THE RAIN-SWELLED PUDDLES.



AND THEN YOU'RE ON THE PORCH! THE HOUSE IS OLD AND WEATHERBEATEN! THE SHUTTERS ARE BROKEN AND HANG CRAZILY FROM RUSTED HINGES! THE BLINDS ARE CRANN! THERE'S NO SIGN OF LIFE! BEHIND YOU, THE RAIN POURS NOISILY OFF THE PORCH ROOF.



YOU FOUND YOUR FIST ON THE FLimsY DOOR! THE SOUND ECHOES THROUGH THE HOUSE! FOR A MOMENT ALL IS STILL SAVE FOR THE RAINDROPS! THEN HEAVY FOOTSTEPS APPROACH! THE DOOR CREAKS OPEN...

YES? HELLO! I WONDER IF YOU CAN HELP ME? I'M A TRAVELING SALESMAN AND MY CAR...



THE OLD WOMAN WHO HAS ANSWERED THE DOOR GRINS! SHE STEPS BACK, HER FACE BEAMING.

A SALESMAN! COME IN! COME IN!

MY CAR STALLED DOWN ON THE ROAD! THE WHEELS MUST HAVE GOTTEN WET!



THE OLD WOMAN CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND YOU AND CALLS...

ESAN! IT'S A SALESMAN!

I'LL BE RIGHT THERE, HENRIETTA!

I WONDER IF YOU PEOPLE HAVE A PHONE?



AN OLD MAN CAME INTO THE ROOM, SMILING WARMLY.

PHONE? PHONE? NO PHONE! SALESMAN, EH?

OH, THAT'S TOO BAD! I THOUGHT I MIGHT CALL IN FOR A TOW! I'M STUCK... DOWN AT THE ROAD!

CAN WE OFFER YOU ANYTHING, MR...MR...



THATCHER, MA'AM? STUART THATCHER? I'M WITH THE JACKSON COMPANY! A CUP OF COFFEE WOULD HIT THE SPOT. IF IT WOULDN'T BE TOO MUCH TROUBLE!

COME INTO THE KITCHEN, MR THATCHER? NO TROUBLE AT ALL, MR THATCHER!



YOU FOLLOW THE NICE OLD COUPLE INTO THEIR KITCHEN! YOU LOOK AROUND AND GASP! YOU'RE AMAZED! THAT OLD HOUSE WITH SUCH MODERN APPLIANCES...

WIT! YOU CERTAINLY HAVE ALL THE LATEST CONVENIENCES, FOLKS!

OH, YES! YOU SEE, WE'VE HAD SALESMEN VISIT US BEFORE!

TELL 'EM 'BOUT THE FIRST ONE, HENRIETTA! THE ONE THAT SOLD US THE REFRIGERATOR!



THE OLD WOMAN'S FACE DARKENS! SHE STARES AT YOU WHISPERING HOARSELY...

OH, YES! THE REFRIGERATOR! ESAN AND I'D SAVED FOR YEARS. MR THATCHER! PUT AWAY EVERY CENT WE COULD MANAGE! WE'D ALWAYS WANTED ONE! THEN THAT SALESMAN CAME. THE ONE THAT SOLD US THAT ONE!

THE DIRTY NO GOOD CROOK!



YOU SHIFT UNCOMFORTABLY IN YOUR SEAT, STUART THATCHER! THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT THIS OLD GUY, BUT YOU CAN'T PUT YOUR FINGER ON IT...

GROOK! IT DIDN'T WORK, MR. THATCHER! THE REFRIGERATOR DIDN'T WORK! HE CHEATED US! TOOK OUR LIVES' SAVINGS!



THAT'S TOO BAD! I'M SORRY!

...THAT'S WHY FROM THEN ON... WE VOWED THAT IF ANY OTHER SALESMAN TRIED TO SELL US ANYTHING...



...WE'D MAKE SURE IT WORKED FIRST!

THAT'S WISE!

TELL 'EM ABOUT THE FREEZER, EBAN!



EBAN POINTS TO THE LARGE FROZEN-FOOD LOCKER STANDING NEXT TO THE REFRIGERATOR.

WHEN HE CAME... THE ONE SELLING THE FREEZER... WE MADE SURE IT WORKED!

SHOW 'EM, EBAN!



YOU LOOK AROUND, FRANTICALLY! THESE PEOPLE ARE MAD! EBAN PATS THE NEW ELECTRIC STOVE...

FELLER THAT CAME WITH THIS WAS REAL NICE! BUT THAT FIRST GUY WAS NICE ALSO! CAN'T FROST 'EM JUS' 'CAUSE THEY'RE NICE! TRIED THE STOVE OUT, TOO!

OPEN THE OVEN DOOR, MR. THATCHER!



EBAN FLINGS OPEN THE FREEZER LID! YOU LOOK DOWN! SUDDENLY, YOUR HEART STOPS! A WAVE OF NAUSEA SWEEPS OVER YOU! INSIDE THAT LOCKER IS A FROST-COVERED BLUE-SKINNED BODY...

GOOD LORD!

MADE SURE, ALL RIGHT! TRIED IT OUT ON HIM... THE SALESMAN!

WORKED GOOD! SEE?



YOU PULL DOWN THE OVEN DOOR... JUST A CRACK! YOU STEP BACK HORRIFIED! THE DOOR FALLS OPEN ALL THE WAY! INSIDE IS A BROWN-GAUSTED WELL-ROASTED CORPSE...

STOVE WORKED GOOD, TOO! SEE!

DON'T GET ANY IDEAS ABOUT *JOHNAN*, MR. THATCHER! THIS SHOT-GUN'S LOADED...









YOU TURN AWAY FROM THE SORY EIGHT! EBAN GRINS AT YOU... AN IDIOTIC TOOTHLESS GRIN...

BY THE WAY, MR. THATCHER? WHERE'S YOUR PRODUCT?

BACK... IN THE CAR!



DOES IT WORK? MR. THATCHER?

I... I DON'T KNOW!

GET IT, EBAN!



EBAN SCURRIES UP THE CELLAR STAIRS! HENRIETTA STANDS, LEERING AT YOU... THE GUN POINTED...

WE'LL SOON SEE, MR. THATCHER! WE'LL SEE IFN IT WORKS!

P-PLEASE! I'LL... I'LL PAY YOU... ANYTHING!



YOU HEAR THE FRONT DOOR SLAM AS EBAN GOES OUT! YOU'RE SCARED, AREN'T YOU, STUART? WHAT CAN YOU DO? THERE PEOPLE ARE MANIACS! THEY MEAN BUSINESS...

YOU... YOU DON'T WANT...

WHAT I SELL, MR. AM! I...

SHUT UP!



THE DOOR SLAMS AGAIN! FOOT-STEPS RESOUND THROUGH THE HOUSE...

NEED HELP, EBAN?

NOPE! I CAN MANAGE!

P-PLEASE!



EBAN COMES DOWN THE STAIRS! HE CARRIES IT UNDER HIS ARM! YOU FEEL DIZZY?... SICK! THEIR VOICES SOUND VERY FAR AWAY...

WHAT'S HE SELL, EBAN?

IT'S CALLED MOTHER JACKSON'S LITTLE HOUSE-WIFE HELPER... THE HANDY-DANDY MEAT SLIDER!

CHOKO...



HEH, HEH! AND IF YOU'RE LUCKY, STUART, THAT OARN THING YOU'VE BEEN SELLING MAY WORK GOOD! THEY'RE AWFUL MESSY WHEN THEY'RE NOT SHARP! HEH, HEH! THAT'S MY YARN, PARS! HOPE YOU LIKED IT! AND IF ANY OF YOU TRAVELING SALESMAN ARE LOOKIN' IN, AND WANT THE ADDRESS OF A COUPLE OF LIKELY PROSPECTS, I'LL SEND YOU EBAN AND HENRIETTA'S! THEY'D LOVE TO SEE A DEMONSTRATION OF YOUR ARTICLE! 'BYE, NOW! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAGAZINES FROM THE CRYPT!

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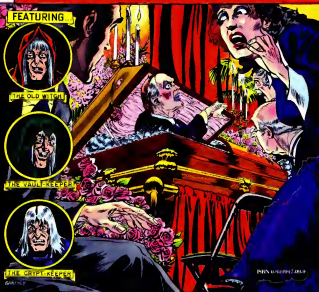


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