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HORROR

THE HAUNT OF FEAR



NO. 2



JULY

FEATURING...



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT-KEEPER

"UGH! WHAT A MESS!
BUT THEY'LL NEVER THINK OF
LOOKING FOR A FRESH CORPSE IN
THE COFFIN OF A MAN WHO
DIED IN 1867!"



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ROAD IT'S THE SECOND ISSUE OF THE HAUNT OF FEAR DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE COMMON BUYER'S GUIDE COMIC BOOK AWARDS BALLOT FOR 1990, WHICH APPEARS ON PAGE 30. EACH YEAR, THE CBS OFFERS COMIC READERS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE FOR THEIR FAVORITE MAGS. AND THAT'S GOING BUT YEAR AFTER YEAR SUPER HEROES PLUCK ALL THE LAURELS AND I'VE HAD MY FILL OF THAT. LET ME TELL YOU, IT'S JUST TIME WE URGENTLY SHOUTED OUT THE REC ODITION WE OBSERVE SO VOTE ALREADY, FAN-ADICTS!

THIS ISSUE'S CREDITS

From *The Haunt of Fear* #5 (1962)

"Front cover art by Johnny Craig."
"A Biting Finish!" art by Graham Ingels.
"Murder in the Press," art by Wally Wood.
"Tasty Monstros!" art by Jack Davis.
"Beasts of Death!" art by Johnny Craig.

From *Weird Science-Fantasy* #29 (1962)

Original cover art by Frank Frazetta.
"The Clever One," art by Wally Wood.
"Genesis," art by Reed Crandall.
"Violous Circle," art by Al Williamson.
"Adam Link in Business," art by Joe Orlando.
All stories colored by Susan Dugay and Gary Leach.

Artist of the Issue—WALLY WOOD

Wallace Allen Wood was born June 17, 1927 in Menahga, Minnesota, to a lumberjack father and a schoolteacher mother. With an ancestry of Finnish, Scots-Irish, and this other nationalities, Wally had, in his youth, brown hair, blue eyes, and an extremely slight stature.

During World War II, Wally joined the Merchant Marine and sailed to Eniwetok, Ulithi, the Philippines, South America, and Italy. After leaving the Merchant Marine, he enlisted in the Paratroopers and was stationed in Japan as a member of the 11th Airborne. Upon being discharged, he attended the New York Cartoonists and Illustrators School. Aside from the one short bit of training, most of Wally's art ability came from innate talent and self-teaching. He broke into the comic field by becoming a letterer and quickly moved up to assisting established artists. It soon became apparent that Wally was capable of taming nicely in the field on his own, so he made the fatal plunge. As Wally put it, "When I was exploited by nearly everyone in the business, I finally found my home at good old E.C."

When E.C. gave up comics entirely and concentrated on MAD the magazine, Woody became the star artist, adept at conceit and every assignment he was given. But he was ambitious to design and develop his own features, so went from the secure haven with Gaines and MAD to create his own characters and even his own magazine, Wizard, which introduced original creations by others in the field as well and became one of the first publications that led to the alternative press. Ahead of its time, there was no marketing strategy for such a curious title then, whereas today a direct distribution



Wally Wood,
circa 1970.
Photo by
Albert Ortez.

system supports dozens of independent publishers and a healthy industry eager to confront a new century.

During the 60's and 70's, Wood created many unique and successful characters including the Thunder Agents, Amman, Bucky Ruckus, The Moths, Cannon, Sally Forth, and the whole cast of the Wizard King, an expansive fantasy world that he personally published as one of the first graphic novels.

For Marvel, he redesigned Daredevil and helped establish that character as a long-lived superhero for that company. For DC, he was the original artist on a variety of characters, as well as an important contributor to their MAD-inspired title, PUOP.

But somehow, he was always measured against his brilliant early masterworks for E.C., and finished his career on a downward path, disappointed by the unfulfilled promise of his past achievements, disabled by deteriorating health, dead by his own hand at the age of 62.

—Bill Pearson

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THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

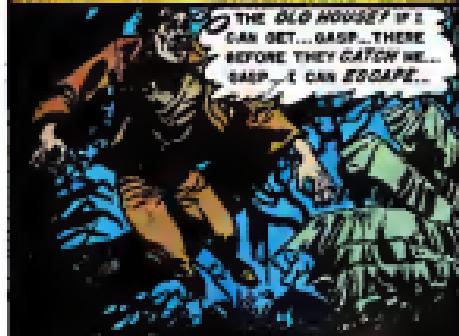
HEE, HEE! WELL, IT'S ME AGAINST THAT OLD BITCHY! THE FIRE UNDER MY CAULDRON IS LIT ONCE MORE! THE EVIL BREW IS BUBBLING AND STEAMING! I'M READY TO LICK OUT ANOTHER OF MY HORROR TALES! THIS IS A SPINE-TICKLER I CALL...

A BITING FINISH!



He could hear them now! The shouting of the enraged posse as they charged through the brush...the sating of the sloshing blood-saucous his booted strong in those nostrils...

THE OLD HOUSE! IF I CAN GET...GASP...THERE BEFORE THEY CATCH ME...GASP...I CAN ESCAPE...



SUDDENLY THE HOUSE LOOKED UP AND AS ITS BOTTED SHUTTERS HUNG BRAZILY ON WINDOWS WHERE PANES HAD LONG SINCE VANISHED! ITS SAGGING ROOF LEANED AWKWARDLY! THE CROOKED CHIMNEY WAS SILHOUETTED AGAINST THE COLD MOON...

NO ONE KNOWS
ABOUT THE FOUNDER NO
ONE BUT ME!



BRUNO BURST THROUGH THE BRICKS
DOING THE CRASH OF THE WORM,
EATER WOOD ECHOED THROUGH THE
EMPTY HOUSE...

THEY'RE GETTING OLDER...
BUT I'VE BEATEN
THEM!



HE MADE FOR THE FIREPLACE!
IT WAS A HEGE STORE APPARITION
COVERING ALMOST ONE WALL
OF THE ROOM...

THE SECRET ENTRANCE
THAT I DISCOVERED AS
A BOY...



THE STEPS WERE THERE, JUST AS
HE HAD REMEMBERED THEM! HE
STUMBBLED DOWN, THE ROTTED
WOOD GIVING WAY BENEATH HIS
WEIGHT! HE PLUNGED INTO THE
BLACKNESS...



HE LAY AT THE BOTTOM... IN THE DARKNESS... PART-
ING! HIS RIGHT LEG THROBBED WITH PAIN! IT WAS
BROKEN! ABOVE... THE THUMPING OF BOOTTED FEET
TOLD HIM THEY WERE IN THE HOUSE...

THEY'LL NEVER FIND
THE ENTRANCE TO THIS
TUNNEL WITH MY SECRET
ALL SLOWLY FOOSH! MY LEG...



UPSTAIRS, HE COULD HEAR THE MUFFLED VOICES, THE
COMPANION... THE TALKING OF THE HORSES... AS
THEY SEARCHED THE HOUSE! BEFORE HIM, THE
TUNNEL STRETCHED OUT INTO THE GLOOM...

GOT TO GET AWAY! GOT TO GET
TO THE OTHER END... TO THE RIVER!
WHAT'S THIS? A SHOVEL! GOOD!
I'LL TAKE IT WITH ME... IN CASE...



THE TUNNEL BRUNO WAS IN WAS OLD! IT HAD BEEN
USED AS AN ESCAPE FROM THE HOUSE DURING
THE CIVIL WAR... PART OF THE WELL KNOWN "UNDER-
GROUND RAILWAY"! HE DRAGGED HIMSELF FORWARD...

I WONDER... HOW MANY
OTHERS LIKE ME... USED
THIS TUNNEL TO ESCAPE
FROM THE AUTHORITIES...



AS BRUNO CRIED THROUGH THE BLACK, THOUGHTS
FLASHED THROUGH HIS BRAIN: THOUGHTS OF WHY HE
WAS THERE! OF HOW IT HAD ALL STARTED! HE REMEM-
BERED IT ALL SO WELL! FIVE MONTHS AGO... THAT
NIGHT AT ELLENCE'S HOUSE...

BUT, ELLENCE! YOU AND
I DECIDED BETWEEN US! WE
NOW WANT TO MARRY!
POW! YOU'VE GOT TO
PICK ONE...

I'M SORRY, BUT
YOU'RE BOTH
SWEET... YOU AND
BRUNO! I... I
CAN'T DECIDE!



THEN BRUNO REMEMBERED! THERE IN THE DARKNESS OF THE TUNNEL HE REMEMBERED HIS DEDICATION HAD DESCRIBED TO WAKE UP ELLER'S MIND! SETTLE IT...DINE AND FOR ALL...

HE'S GOING...HOW? HE'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT HIT HIM...



AS BOB HAD PASSED THE SPOT WHERE HE HAD KILLED BRUNO HAD HURLED HIMSELF UPON HIM...



AGAIN AND AGAIN THE LEAD PIPE HAS DROPPED DOWN...



...UNTIL BOB HAD MOVED NO MORE
HOW TO DISPOSE OF THE BODY
SOME PLACE WHERE THEY LL
NEVER FIND IT!



BRUNO HAD LIFTED HIS DEAD RIVAL
INTO HIS SHOULDERS! A PLATE HAD
FORMED IN HIS MIND! HE CARRIED
THE BODY TO THE CIVIL WAR BURIAL
MOURNING...

...SO SHE SETS
BURIED HERE AND MORE!
THEY USE THE NEW
CEMETERY NEARER TO
TOWN...



HE HAD LEFT THE BODY AND SEARCHED A NEIGHBORING
FARM AFTER HAVING FOUND WHAT HE WAS LOOKING
FOR. HE HAD RETURNED WITH THE SHOVEL! THEN HE
DECIDED TO DIE...

THE GRAVE MARKER SAYS: 'UNKNOWN
BODIES...DIED 1867!' THERE SHOULDN'T BE MUCH
LEFT OF HIM...



SOON A HOLLOW THUD TOLD BRUNO HE HAD STRUCK
OLD TRADDIS BODDIE'S COFFIN! HE LIFTED THE ROT-
TED LID...

NOTHING BUT BONES
AND SKULLS OR GLOTHAWNS!
THIS WILL DO FINE...



Bruno said his present killed victim into the jaws
of death...

You and Thaddeus ought to be nice
and comfy together, boy!

Of course they never pushed him! Bruno laughed
to himself as he moved through the tunnel...

Who'd have thought to look in the
grave of a man buried in ash?

Then Bruno thought of Ellen...
What he told her after Bob
"disappeared..."

He's probably run off, I suppose
Ellen! Maybe to the
big city! This ought
to show you who
loves you most!

The tunnel turned sharp out
Bruno's leg pained him as he
half-crawled, half-walked around
the corner...

Almost to the end now! I
remember...when I was a
boy! This part passed
beneath the old burying
ground!

...And Ellen! He had married
her soon after! He had been
happy...so happy...until...that
morning...

Ellen! Why are you
looking at me like that?
You...you failed
in your sleep!

Fear had stolen into Bruno's heart! It had crawled
up his spine like a sliver of ice...had pounded in
his brain...

What did I say,
Ellen?

You avenged him.
Don't you
avenged Bob?

He remembered it so well! As if it were yesterday!
But...Bruno croaked...it was yesterday? Bruno's
brain...his thoughts reeled! He remembered how
he had reached for her! How white her face had
been...and her throat...her throat...

Yes, Ellen! I killed
him! But...you'll
never tell anyone!
Never...

The Complete Library



If you like the book you're holding, then you'll love this comprehensive collection of every E.C., New Trend and New Direction comic book, packaged in 13 deluxe slipcased sets, as illustrated above.

These oversized, 9" x 12" sets consist of 53 hardbound books, Smythe-sewn for durability, and printed in black and white, so the fine craftsmanship of the E.C. artists can be studied and enjoyed to its fullest. All covers are in brilliant full color!

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These books are not sold in chain bookstores, but are available only from the publisher and selected comic book specialty shops. For complete information, write to:

Russ Cochran, Publisher P.O. Box 469 West Plains, MO 65775

YES, HER THROAT! HER SOFT WHITE THROAT! HOW EASILY HE HAD CLAPPED HIS FINGERS ABOUT IT! HOW SIMPLE IT HAD BEEN TO close them, tighter...tighter...until...

SHE... SHE'S DEAD!



AND MRS. LANE! TRYING, TRYING MRS. LANE! SHE HAD BEEN WATCHING FROM HER WINDOW! SHE DREAMED HE WOULDN'T STAND GUARDING HIS DEAD KILLED FROM HIS HOUSE... GRABBING THE DEAD KNIFE FROM THE TABLE...

"FOOT MUSTN'T FEEL
EXTERIOR, MRS. LANE! PEOPLE
HAVE TO LIVE, TOO!"



YES IT HAD BEEN YESTERDAY! HE WAS AWAY OF IT KNOW? MRS. LANE HAD BEEN HIM... STANDING OVER MRS. LANE... AND THE KNIFE... VET... STONE... RED...

"MR. KILLED EVERY
GOOD LORD, YOU'VE
GOT TO STOP HIM!
HE'S MAD AGAIN!"



THEN...THE POLICE THEY CHASED HIM! HE HAD HIDDEN IN THE WOODS...BUT THE BLOODHOUNDS FOUND HIS SCENT! AND THEN HE HAD THOUGHT OF IT! THE HOUSE...THE DESERTED OLD HOUSE WITH THE TUNNEL HE HAD FOUND, AT A BOT...

"...I CAN GET
THERE, BEFORE THEY
CATCH ME! I CAN
ESCAPE...THROUGH
THE TUNNEL..."



AND NOW HE WALK THERE! SOON WE WOULD BE AT THE END...OUT AT THE RIVER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BURDEN, BURDEN...

"THE BLOODHOUNDS? THEY
WON'T BE ABLE TO FOLLOW MY
SCENT THROUGH THE BURDEN?
I'LL WADE DOWNSTREAM!
I'LL GET AWAY!"

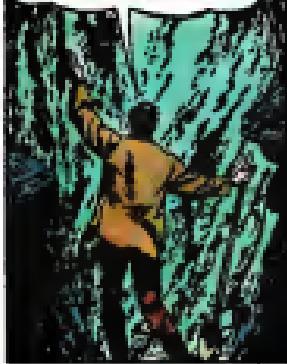


SUDDENLY, BRUNO CAME TO A STOP! THE TUNNEL!
THE TUNNEL ENDS...

"MUST HAVE CAINED AWAY!
THE HEAVY RAINS...THE
RIVER OVERFLOODED
TWO DAYS AGO..."



GOT TO GET MYSELF THROUGH
THE REST OF THE WAY! LUCKY
I BROUGHT THE SHOVEL...



Bruno bent to the task of clearing his way through the caved-in part of the tunnel. He laughed to himself.

I'LL SET THE POSSE'S LOUGH FOR ME BACK AT THE HOUSE...



THE SPASE BARR INTO THE SOFT EARTH AHEAD! THERE MIGHT MUCH ROOM TO MOVE AROUND...

I'LL HAVE TO SWITCH THE SHT FROM UP AHEAD... TO BEHIND ME...



THEN THE SHOVEL STRUCK IT! SPLINTERED WOOD! THE BLOW! Bruno lit a match and peered at what he had found...

WOOD... BRAKE HANDLES... STUDS... IT... IT'S A COFFIN!



AT FIRST HE WAS SHOCKED... BUT THEN HE REMEMBERED THIS PART OF THE TUNNEL DID PASS UNDER THE BURTING GROUNDS...

NOT TO SET IT OUT OF THE WAY... NOT TO SET IT...



THE ROTTED AND DECAYED WOOD GAVE WAY AS BRUNO PUSHED! HIS ARM SHOT FORWARD INTO THE HOLE...

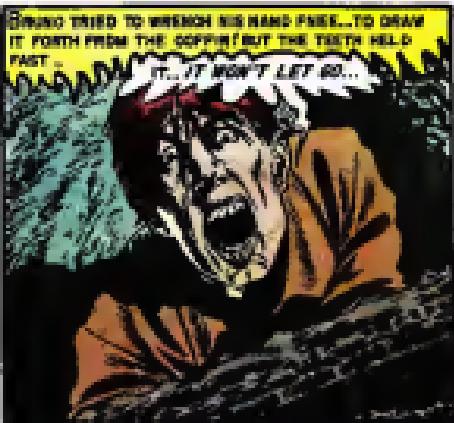
WHAT FOC... IT FEELS LIKE... LIKE... READY...



THE STENCH REACHED HIS NOSTRILS! FUNNY! SUCH AN OLD COFFIN WITH A BODY NOT YET FULLY DECOMPOSED! HIS HAND TRAVELED OVER THE FEATURES! THEY WERE PULPY AND SOFT! THEN THE TEETH CLODED DOWN...

IT... IT'S GOT MY HAND! IT'S BITING ME!





THE CRYPT OF TERROR

"WELCOME MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS! WELCOME BACK AGAIN TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! I AM THE CRYPT-KEEPER AND IT IS TIME ONCE MORE FOR ANOTHER BLOOD-CURLING, SHIMMERTHREE-YEAR FROM MY VAST COLLECTION OF HORROR STORIES WHICH I KEEP HERE IN THE CRYPT! THIS TALE CONCERN'S A CARNIVAL... THE KING THAT TRAVELS FROM TOWN TO TOWN: THE MANAGER OF THIS CARNIVAL WAS HENRY HARTNELL! LISTEN NOW AS THE STORY UNFOLDS IN HENRY'S OWN WORDS! HE CALLS IT....

HORROR & FREAK SHOW



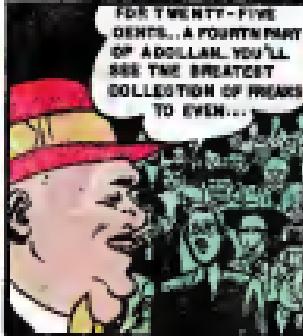
"MY NAME IS HENRY HARTNELL! I MANAGED ONE OF THOSE TWO-BIT CARNIVALS THAT HITS YOUR TOWN EVERY NOW AND THEN. YOU KNOW THE KING AMUSEMENT INDUS... AGROBOTS... CHILLIN' GAMES? THIS PARTICULAR CARNIVAL HAD A SPECIAL ATTRACTION... A FEETSHOW..."

"STEP RIGHT UP, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! SEE FANNIE, THE FOUR-HUNDRED POUND FAT LADY..."



THE OWNER OF THE FREAK CONCESSION WAS A FAT-FACED CHARACTER NAMED ZOLTZ GLANTZ FRONT... HE HAS A GREAT SHOWMAN...

FOR TWENTY-FIVE CENTS, A FOURTH-PART OF A DOLLAR, YOU'LL SEE THE GREATEST COLLECTION OF FREAKS TO EVEN...



...AND THE POOR PATHETIC CASE THEY CALLED GOFFO, THE ARMLESS AND LEGLESS BOY! HE HAD BEEN BORN WITHOUT LIMBS AND WAS QUITE HELPLESS! GLANTZ WAS PARTICULARLY MEAN TO HIM...



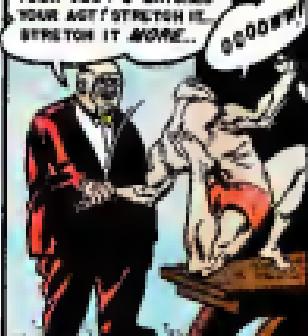
GLANTZ NEVER LOST A SINGLE OPPORTUNITY TO INFECT SEVERE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL TORTURE UPON HIS POOR FREAKS! HIS FORWARDED SENSE OF HUMOR KEPT HIM WELL SUPPLIED WITH INGENUOUS METHODS...



...BUT BACKSTAGE, HE WAS A RAT! HIS FREAKS DESPISED HIM. HE TREATED THEM LIKE DIRT! THERE WAS ~~SWANIE~~ THE PET LADY...



...AND RE-TALL, THE INDIAN HUEBER MAN... WHAT'S THE MATTER, RE-TALL? DON'T YOU LIKE YOUR JOB? I WATCHES YOUR ACT! STRETCH IT, STRETCH IT MORE...



COMBUS WAS FORCED TO EAT LIKE A DOG... AND GLANTZ ROAMED WITH SACRIFICIAL DELIGHT...



ZOLTZ WAS THE SHARP-EYED KNIFE THROWER! HIS ACT CONSISTED OF THROWING KNIVES, ICE-PICKS, CLEAVERS AND THE LIKE AT HIS WIFE WHO STOOD SPREAD-EAGLED ABOUT TWENTY FEET AWAY...



OF COURSE, GLARTZ CARES! BUT HE HAD SUDDENLY INSTILLED THAT SPARK OF JEALOUSY IN ZOLTO'S MIND THAT CAUSES THE HAM TO TROUBLE... EVER SO SUBTLE...

IF THE KNIVES COME CLOSE, MRS. ZOLTO, REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU: YOUR HUSBAND WOULD LIKE YOU OUT OF THE WAY. THERE'S A LITTLE DANCING GIRL DOWN THE MOWER...

YOU... YOU'RE JOKING, AREN'T YOU...

I'M TELLING YOU THIS, ALL OF THIS, BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO KNOW EXACTLY THE TYPE OF MAN LOONY GLARTZ WAS! THE LITTLE JOKE HE HAD PLAYED ON THE ZOLTO HAD HAD ITS EFFECT...

SHE'S GONE! LEFT ME! JUST BECAUSE I SLIPPED AND HICED HER ARM LAST NIGHT...

HMM... HMM! SHE PLUNGED THOSE KNIVES WHERE BETTING TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT, EH, ZOLTO?

THUNK

IT'S FOOL FAULT, GLARTZ! WATCH YOURSELF, FOOZIE! YOU BROKE ME UP WITH ZOLTO, OR THOSE LADS ABOUT IT, YOU'LL BE LOOKING FOR A NEW GARRIS! REMEMBER, YOU'RE NOT A YOUNG MAN...

...SOH...
...SOH... DON'T WORRY ZOLTO! I KNOW WHERE YOU CAN FIND A NEW PARTNER FOR TOMMORROW! THERE'S A LITTLE DANCING GIRL... DOWN THE MOWER...

A FEW SEATS LATERMORE, ZOLTO RETURNED TO THE CARMEL MAYBE TO MAKE UP! I DON'T KNOW! I SAW HIM IN THE CROWD AND WAS AT HIS SIDE WHEN ZOLTO WENT INTO HIS KNIFE-THROWING ACT...

THE... THE DANGER... FROM DOWN THE MOWER? IT'S FRAZZE... SOH, FRAZZE!

SHE LEFT THE GOURDS DRINKIN'! THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO! GLARTZ'S LITTLE JOKE HAD BEEN GARNED TO ITS EXTREME! SHE NEVER CAME BACK! EVEN JEDIAN TO DISMISS THE EVIL PRED-SHOW OWNERS ONE EVENING...

IT WAS GOOD, FANNY! OF YOU TO INVITE ME TO YOUR SHOW, MRS. HARTSHORN!

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU NOT TO FEED COMPUK! LET HIM FEED HIMSELF!

MRS. GLARTZ! I... I'M SORRY, COMPUK!

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, FANNY!



I WAS HORRIFIED TO SEE SUCH INHUMANITY! BUT...WHEN BLARTZ GOT UP AND...
FEED YOURSELF, DOLTO! LIKE... FAMOUS...



IT WAS DISGUSTING! BLARTZ HAD PUSHED THAT POOR HELPLESS BOY'S FACE INTO HIS PLATE! IT STARTED TO BURN! BUT DOLTO ACTED SOONER...
BLUB-BU-HY



DON'T YOU EVER TORMENT THAT BOY AGAIN, BLARTZ, OR I WILL PUT DOWN THIS KNIFE—RIGHT THROUGH YOUR LEFT ARM!



I WAS SHOCKED WITH HORROR...POWERLESS TO MOVE AS I WATCHED THE SPURTING BLOOD! BLARTZ WAS INFURIATED! HE HAD BEEN MADE A FOOL OF IN FRONT OF THE TRroupe! HE RUSHED TO A CORNER OF THE TENT...
THREATEN ME WITH A KNIFE... WILL YOU?



IT WAS ALL OVER BEFORE I COULD DO ANYTHING! BLARTZ HOODDED UP TWO IRONS THAT THE FIRE-CAVER HAD BEEN HEATING FOR THE EVENING PERFORMANCE! THEY WERE WHITE HOT! HE RUSHED AT THE PARALYZED DOLTO...



WE SAT THERE...THE FIRECAVER AND I...AS BLARTZ PUNCHED THE WHITE-HOT IRONS INTO DOLTO'S EYES! HIS SIGHT OF ABSORBING PAIN EXPLODED UP AND DOWN THE DISTORTED MUSCLES...



ZOLTO LAY ON THE GROUND... HIS FACE CUPPED IN HIS ARMS! HE WAS SCREAMING IN AGONY! THE SMELL OF BURNED FLESH WAS ABOUT US! I FELT A WAVE OF NAUSEA COME OVER ME! AS I LEFT THE TENT FOR A BREATH OF FRESH AIR, I HEARD BLARTZ'S HYSTERICAL VOICE...



The OLD WITCH'S NICHE

Hiss Hiss! Back for a second helping of that delicacy of devilishness called The Haunt of Fear? Thrifful I'm still giddy as a ghostgirl over the liberation of my mag from under V.H.'s mangy thumb, and a lotta you tender I'll lumpkins feel the same!

Dear Old Witch,

I am glad to hear that you are going to have your own comic. I bet The Haunt of Fear will be just as good as Tales and Vault. Congratulations!

Roland Pogarty
Rochester, NY

Congrats on your new mag! Got a question for ya. Are ya gonna reprint the four issues you've already reprinted? May your eye forever bulge!

Julie Black

Not all I've reprinted all the other The Haunt of Fear issues, at least!

Dear Old Witch,

You truly deserve your own mag, and to venture out of your miserable drab surroundings. Away from the Crypt-Keeper and the Vault-Keeper. Your stories keep me on the edge of my seat. Not away, you old hog and keep them maggs rolling.

Michelle Lee
Morphett Vale, South Australia
Australia

You tell the greatest stories. I read them before I go to bed. I especially liked "Reunion." She must have been really crazy to kiss a living corpse. How do you come up with these stories? Can you send me a picture of you? A REAL picture of you?

The Mistress of Horror
Bloomington, MN

Thing is, M.H., no cameras made can survive snapping my hideous visage—the lens shatters and the film jumps out and exposes itself!

To that gruesome goblin, the Old Witch,
Morton Macawber from "For the Love of Death"
(The Vault of Horror #4) sum had a peculiar hobby, but it still isn't quite as strange as my collection of human heads!

Don Heckbarth
Brookfield, WI

Heckbarth, Heckbarth...a sister witch of mine is planning to tie the knot with a fine young zombie named Heckbarth. Must be from a branch of your family that wedded out!

Dear Old Witch,

Did you ever think about having T-Shirts? If so, I'd

be the first to wear 'em! I really liked your story "For the Love of Death." I loved it to death!

Angela McAlley
Worth, IL

How come in The Vault of Horror #3 in Grim Fairy Tales on the second page on the top left on the wall the words are upside down?

- Jerome Barnett
Tyndale Air Force Base

So talk like you will spend 25¢ to write in and ask such questions!

Dear Old Witch,

Why can't I ever find The Haunt of Fear in any of the stores, anymore? Sometimes when I'm reading Tales From the Crypt or The Vault of Horror, I think, whatever happened to The Haunt of Fear?

Grossomly yours,
Lane Dixon
Murfreesboro, TN

I dunno, Lane. I thought we'd just started! I'd say this's moving backward there in Murfreesboro.

Dear Old Witch,

I'm going insane in issue #4 of The Vault of Horror, the last story, "Wolf Bait," who did they throw out to be the sacrifice? My guess is it was the brat.

Jon Korman
St. Paul, MN

The story "Wolf Bait" in your section of The Vault of Horror #4 was truly disturbing. Ever since I read it I've been trying very hard to figure out who was most likely to become "Pupina Wolf Chow." It's taken me a lot of time but I think I know who it was, the old one. After all it was his meat that they threw to the wolves and he was the oldest (except maybe for Ivan but if they threw Ivan to the wolves who would drive the sleigh?)

Grim Steve Singer
White Oak, PA

I got a recipe I would like to share with you. It's called Redish Rodent. First you cut two radishes, then you get two rat heads, spill their guts all over, then fry.

John Martinez
Corona, CA

Sounds like a good recipe for the Oogled Gourmet, my favorite show on ZBS (Zombie Broadcasting System).

And now, dearies, it's time you get back to the real reason you're pawing through this pulpy periodical, the stories! But keep piling on those cards and letters, too!

The Old Witch's Niche

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I THOUGHT OF CALLING THE POLICE-BUT I KNEW THAT IT WOULD GO NO GOOD! GLANTZ HAD ACTED IN SELF-DEFENSE! AND HE HAD THE FREAKS SO TERRIFIED, THEY WOULD BE AFRAID TO TESTIFY TO THE CONTRARY A FEW WEEKS LATER...

ZOLTOS? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HIDING IN HERE?

WHO... MH... - WAITING!

YES, ZOLTOS! IT IS OF ME AND YOU HIDING?

IT'S FUNNY AND COMPUK AND XETAL AND THE REST! THEY'RE TAKING CARE OF ME TILL MY EYES HEAL...

THAT'S GOOD OF THEM ZOLTOS!

YEAH! THEY BRING ME FOOD... AND THEY HIDE ME FROM MR. GLANTZ!

BUT... YOU CAN'T GO ON LIKE THAT FOREVER, ZOLTOS!

OH, NO! WE'RE WORKING ON THAT...

WORKING

ON WHAT?

AN ACT? THEY'RE TEACHING ME! IT'S EASIER, EASIER THAN I THOUGHT!

TEACHING YOU AN ACT?

YEAH! THROWING KNIVES AGAINST IT'S EASY! THEY JUST PASE ME TOWARD THE BOARD... AND I TRY TO WIRALIZE MY PARTNER...

PARTHEN?

SURE! COURSE WE'RE ONLY USING A DUMMY! WHEN I GET REALLY GOOD, THEN... MAYBE...

ZOLTO WAS LIKE A LITTLE BOY AGAIN! HE BUBBLED AND CHATTERED ABOUT HIS NEW ACT AND HOW GOOD IT WOULD BE! I FELT SO SORRY FOR HIM...

SO YOU WON'T TELL MR. GLANTZ ABOUT ME? WELL, YOU, MR. MARTINISAT AT LEAST NOT UNTIL I'M READY!

READY FOR WHAT?

READY TO SHOW IT TO HIM, OF COURSE! THEN... MAYBE HE'LL FORGIVE ME... AND TAKE ME BACK!

TELL ZOLTO! MARRY ME... WILL... WILL... FORGIVE ME?

I FELT AS IF I WANTED TO CRY! THE FREAKS HAD DONE WORRIES WITH ZOLTO! HE HAD NO MALEICE! AND HE HAD SUCH CONFIDENCE IN HIMSELF...

...I WORRY IF IT COULD BE POSSIBLE... IF HE REALLY COULD GO ON AGAIN... *THROWING ARMED KNIVES*



AND THEN... ONE NIGHT ABOUT A MONTH LATER... ZOLTO STUMBBLED INTO MY OFFICE...

TONIGHT, MR. MARTINISAT? I'M SORRY TO PERTURB YOU, TONIGHT! FANNIE TOLD ME MR. GLANTZ WOULD SEE MY ACT TONIGHT!

I'LL BE THERE! ZOLTO! I WOULDN'T MISS IT FOR ANYTHING!

AND I MEANT IT! THAT NIGHT, I MADE MY WAY TO THE FREAK TENT! I KNEW THE AUDITION HAD ALREADY STARTED, FOR I HEARD LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE AS I ENTERED...

SHAWL, ZOLTO!

GOOD SHOT!

A LITTLE HIGHER THIS TIME...



I WATCHED FASCINATED! I HAD COME IN BEHIND THE BACKSTAGE SO THAT I COULD SEE THEIR FACES! THEY WERE SMILING! IT HAD BEEN SO LONG SINCE I HAD BEEN PART OF THEM SMILE...

HOW AN ACT! FROM ZOLTO! TO THE LEFT THIS TIME... JUST ABOUT AN IRON...



ZOLTO THREW THE ICE PICK! IT MADE A DULL SOUND AS IT HIT! ZOLTO WAS SMILING TOO, ALTHOUGH IT WAS A BLANK FACE! A FACE WITHOUT EYES LACKS SO MUCH EXPRESSION...

GOOD, ZOLTO! HAHAH! GOOD!

ANOTHER ZOLTO! ...AND TO THE RIGHT...



THE SECOND ICE-PICK WAS THROWN! IT'S GOING TRUE! THEY ROARED WITH DELIGHT! I APPLAUSED TOO, ALTHOUGH I COULD NOT SEE FROM MY VANTAGE POINT HOW CLOSE IT CAME....

SOMEONE'S THERE! BEHIND THE BOARD!

IS THAT POSS., MR. HASTHORST? HELLO TO YOU IT IS I!



I'M SHOWING MR. GLANTZ MY ACT! CAN YOU SEE WELL?

WELL ENOUGH, DOLTO! GO AHEAD!



I DID NOT WANT TO MOVE! I HAD NOT BEEN SUCH HAPPINESS AMONG THE FREAKS FOR SO LONG THAT I WANTED TO STAY WHERE I COULD SEE THEIR FACES... NOT THE BOARD....



I LOOKED FOR GLANTZ! I WANTED TO SEE HIS EXPRESSION! I KNEW HE WOULD GO FOR THIS ACT! BUT... HE WAS NOT DOWN IN THE SEATS....



THE CLEAVER LANDED WITH A DULL THUD! I LOOKED DOWN! THERE WAS A POOL OF BLOOD AT THE BASE OF THE BACK-BOARD! I COULD SHIVER WEST DOWN MY SPINE....



GLANTZ WAS BANNED, AND THROWN OFF THE BOARD! AND DOLTO'S ARM HAD BEEN HORRIBLY BAD... OR SO BAD AS THE SAME MAY BE! HE HAD PAINFULLY MISSED! THE FREAKS HAD GUGGED HIM! WELL, I BELIEVED A PRAYER AS I LEFT.

YES HERE WATCHERS, DOLTO! ANOTHER CLEAVER AND YOUR ACT WILL BE OVER...

LONG LIVE MERCY ON OR THEM...



HUH, HUH! AND THAT'S HENRY HASTHORST'S STORY! STRANGE TALE, EH? FREDRICK FOBBSAT WELL, OLD LOOKEY CERTAINLY HAD IT COMING... AND IT CAME! NO-PHYS., JOHN-YE, CLEAVER! OH, THAT LAST CLEAVER WAS THE TOPPER, HEHHEH... GET IT AFTER THAT, GLANTZ LOST HIS HEADWELL, SEE YOU IN MY OWN MAGAZINE.

TALKED ABOUT THE GRIFT? UNTIL THEN, DON'T LISTEN TO OLD KNIFE'S TALKS!





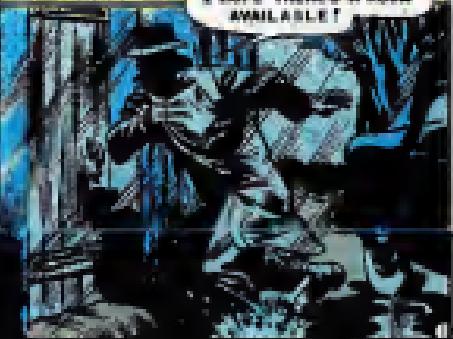
THIS TALE IS ACTUALLY ABOUT
TO HAPPEN TO YOU! I CALL IT...
A TASTY MORSEL!

YOU PEER THROUGH THE BLINDING DOWNPOUR AT THE
SIGHT. THE HEADLIGHTS OF YOUR CAR REFLECT ON THE
WATER-SOAKED WOOD. YOU CAN barely MAKE OUT THE
Faded LETTERS THEY READ...

"END-OF-THE-ROAD
INN! THANK GOODNESS I
COULDN'T GO ON MUCH
FURTHER IN THIS STORM!"

YOU TURN INTO THE TREE-LINED ROAD AHEAD. YOU CAN SEE THE LIGHTS OF THE INN
SHINING THROUGH THE HEAVY RAIN. YOU PULL
UP TO THE DOOR...

"I HOPE THERE'S A ROOM
AVAILABLE!"



IN ANSWER TO YOUR FEVERISH KNOCKING, THE DOOR IS OPENED BY A LARGE UGLY-FEATURED MAN...

YES? Z... I WAS CAUGHT IN THE STORM! I WAS WONDERRING IF I COULD FIND LODGING HERE... FOR TONIGHT!



HIS SHADY EYES FOLLOW YOU AS HE STEPS ASIDE AND YOU ENTER THE RUNDOWN INTERIOR...

IS THERE A ROOM FOR ME?

I THINK I HAVE ONE VACANT!



YOU STUDY YOUR HOST! HE IS TALL ALMOST OVERKILLED! HE STOPS BEHIND THE DESK AND PUNCHES A RATTLED BOOK... ITS PAGES YELLOWED WITH AGE... FORWARD...

IF YOU'LL SIGN... OF COURSE! THE REGISTER...



THEN THE INNKEEPER TAKES A KEY AND LEADS YOU UPSTAIRS TO YOUR ROOM! AS HE CROSSES THE DOOR, THE MURKY GHOST OF FOUL AND BEARDED HORROR!!...

IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, JUST LET ME KNOW!

THANK YOU! I WILL!



HE LEAVES! YOU LISTEN AS HIS HEAVY FOOTSTEPS DESCEND DARK STAIRS AND FADE OUT OF EARSIGHT! YOU LOOK ABOUT YOUR ROOM! THE ROOM IS SPARILY FURNISHED! A THICK LAYER OF DUST COVERS EVERYTHING!

WELL! I GUESS I'LL TURN IN! DRIVEN THROUGH THE RAIN HAS TIRED ME!



THE ROOM IS COLD AND DARK! YOU SEARCH THE CLOSET FOR A BLANKET! THERE IS MONEY! THE SINGLE THIN BED SPREAD WILL NOT BE ENOUGH! YOU LOOK FOR THE HOUSE PHONE...

BLAH! I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO GO DOWNSTAIRS AND ASK HIM FOR A BLANKET!



YOU OPEN THE DOOR OF YOUR ROOM AND LOOK OUT! THE HALL IS DARK AND DESERTED! YOU GO DOWNSTAIRS! THE LIGHT FROM THE FIREPLACE CASTS DANCING SHADOWS THROUGH THE LOBBY! THERE IS AN EXTRASORDINARY STRANGENESS ABOUT IT! AND THE INNKEEPER IS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN...

H-H-H-M! GUESS I'LL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL HE COMES BACK FROM WHEREVER HE IS! THIS GHOST LOOKS APPYTIME...



YOU SIT DOWN! THE WARMTH OF THE SHACKLING FIRE FEELS GOOD! YOU WAIT AT THE LOADING FLAMES... WONDER WHERE HE CAN BE...



THE FIRE LEAPS UPWARD! THE BURNING LOGS SPITTED AND SPAWN YOU SHOUT! YES! THE DRIVE THROUGH THE RAIN HAS EXHAUSTED YOU... IT

IS JUST AS SOON SPEND THE NIGHT DOWN HERE BEFORE THIS FIRE! IT'S SO... AWAY!



SUDDENLY THE BLOOD FREEZES IN YOUR VEINS! FROM OUT OF THE DARKNESS COMES... A VOICE? GOD... WHAT A HORRIBLE SOUND!



YOU JUMP TO YOUR FEET! YOU STRIKE YOUR ENDS, LISTENING! THEN YOU HEM IT AGAIN! AN AGO-HIKING BOA!! IT WRINKLES THE HAIR ON YOUR NICE DRAWL...

IT'S COMING FROM BEHIND THAT DOOR!



YOU STEAL TOWARD THE DOOR! YOU REACH OUT CAUTIOUSLY AND THIRST THE KNOB! IT SWINGS OPEN! STEPS LEAD DOWN INTO THE DARKNESS! FROM DOWN THERE... IN THE BLACKNESS, YOU HEAR IT AGAIN... BUT WEAKER...

I'VE GOT TO SEE WHAT IT HIT! PERHAPS THE INNKEEPER...



YOU MOVE SLOWLY DOWN RICKETY STEPS! ALL IS SILENT NOW! YOU LISTEN! THEN ANOTHER SOUND MENACES YOUR EARS! ANOTHER DRAP, DRAP...

LIKE SWOPS OF WATER... FALLING INTO A SUGAR...



YOU CURSE YOURSELF FOR NOT BRINGIN' A FLASHLIGHT! THE DRAP... DRAP, DRAPPING IS CLOSER NOW! YOU'RE ALMOST UPON IT! THEN YOU HEAR THE SWAPPY-FRAPPY, THE WEEP AND WHIMPERING! YOU SEARCH YOUR POCKETS FOR A MATCH! YOU FIND ONE! YOU STRIKE IT! THE GELLIN FILLS WITH LIGHT...

OH, LORD...



IT IS A MAN! A STRANGER...NOT THE INNKEEPER! HE LIES ON A TABLE...TIED THERE BY ROPE! HIS EYES ARE WIDE IN HORROR AS HE STARES AT THE BURNING MATCH! THEN YOU LOOK DOWN...

A PAN! A PAN HALF-FILLED WITH... BLOODY...



YOUR STOMACH HEAVEST YOU WATCH WITH HORROR! THE MAN'S ARM HANGS LIMPLY...THE WRIST SLASHED! THE BLOOD TRICKLES DOWN HIS FINGERTEIPS AND Drips INTO THE PAN! HE WHIMPERED...LIKE A DOG THAT HAS JUST BEEN STRUCK BY A CAR...

HE...HE'S BLEEDING TO DEATH! I'VE GOT TO...



THE MATCH BURNS SO HOT YOU DROP IT IN PAINT THE DARKNESS GLOWS IN! THE STEADY DRIPPING CONTINUES! SUDDENLY...

THE CELLAR DOOR! SOMEONE'S COMING!



YOU HIDED YOU COULD SEEING A FILE OF BOXES! A MAN THUMPS DOWN THE STEPS! HE CARRIES A LANTERN! HIS EYES GLEAM IN THE FLICKERING YELLOW LIGHT...



YOU WATCH TOO FRIGHTENED TO MOVE! HE APPROACHED THE MAN TIED TO THE TABLE! THE WHIMPERING HAS CEASED NOW! EVEN THE DRIPPING HAS SLOWED CONSIDERABLY! A CREEPING HORROR TELLS YOU...

HE...HE'S DEAD!



THE INNKEEPER BOGS HIS HEAD AS IF IN SILENT AGGRESSION! HE UNTIES THE LIMP BODY AND SWINGS IT OVER HIS SHOULDERS! HE CARRIES IT THROUGH A DOORWAY...

I...I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM HERE! THE INNKEEPER... HE...HE'S A MURKER!



YOU START TOWARD THE STAIRS! YOU AVOID LOOKING AT THE PAN ON THE FLOOR! THEN, YOU STOP...STARTLED! A MOTOR HAS STARTED! IT THROBS...MATCHING THE RAGING BEAT OF YOUR OWN HEART! YOUR EYES FOLLOW THE SOUND...

IT...IT LOOKS LIKE A...

DOC FROZEN-FOOD...

LOCKER?



SKELETON

It was obvious that he was a goner and would be dead within five minutes. His coat and shirt were slashed brutally and blood came pouring out of him in torrents. His eyes were wide and glassy, his mouth moved instinctively but the only sounds which came to his greyish lips were gurgled and incoherent. And then suddenly his body stopped quivering for a moment and he looked up with a glint of recognition at the Police officers surrounding him.

"Out of Fairview..." he whispered, and the Police Stenographer pressed closer, notebook ready. "F-Fairview...the cemetery," continued the man, with the knife slashes decimating his lifeblood away. "The headstone... It's marked... P-Paul Kleeg..."

The Homicide Captain leaned over the dying man. "Who are you... how did you get to Police Headquarters? Who stabbed you... where are they?"

The man's mouth moved convulsively and his words were barely audible. "M-My name... Weldon. T-Two days ago... got out of State Prison. Came here to see Kleeg's grave... open it... make sure he was dead like papers said. Kleeg was in on bank job with me ten years ago... I was grabbed... he got away. Then I heard he died... eight years ago... come to make sure!"

A bubble of blood burst on the man's lips and a shudder passed down his body, but after a moment he continued: "Opened his grave... o-case all rotten and full of weeds..."

only a skeleton left there... grinning as if Kleeg was laughing at me! I bent over skeleton... to see if he was buried with ring or any other jewelry I could use... when his hand reached out and grabbed me! I-I couldn't move... then he stabbed me with some kind of blade he had... some kind of knife..."

The man's head fell back and a last tortured gasp escaped him. He was dead. The Captain gave his orders in a hushed voice: "Have the Morgue pick 'im up right away! Name's Weldon, eh? Must be the one listed among this month's releases from up-river. Come on... we'll scount over to Kleeg's grave out at Fairview! Craziest story I ever heard... imagine, a skeleton stabbing a man to death!

The circle of Police stared into the opened grave. The Captain spoke first, as he moved down to it, past the cemetery workmen who had shoveled away the dirt that covered it. "A skeleton... just like Weldon described it. And it looks as if it has been dug up very recently..."

"Craziest story any of us ever heard!" a Sergeant said aloud. "What probably happened is that Weldon went off his rocker and stabbed himself! Who ever heard of a skeleton..."

At that moment the Captain looked up from the decaying coffin, his face chalk-white. "His story is crazy," he said, "and only an insane man would believe it! But just look at THIS!"

The officers craned forward. There, clasped in the fleshless hand of Paul Kleeg's skeleton, was a blade several inches long. Rusted so completely that it had almost merged with the long tapering bones which clutched it! And covering the entire length of that corroded blade was a sticky dark brown substance. Blood, just beginning to dry!

A HORRID SICKNESS DRIVES YOU FORWARD! YOU HESITATE BEFORE IT...BUT THEN YOU LIFT THE LID...
"NO! NO! LORD...LORD, NO!"



BESIDE THE REFRIGERATED LOCKER IS A BARREL...A BARREL OF REDDISH-BROWN LIQUID! A BARREL OF BLOOD! YOU SLAM THE LID SHUT AND TURN, LEAVING ON THE LOCKER FOR BALANCE...

"VAMPIRE! HE COLLECTS THE BLOOD OF HIS VICTIMS!"



YOU START TOWARD THE STAIRWAY...BUT THEN YOU HEAR THE INHESPERE RETURNING! YOU JUST HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO HIDE! HE CATCHES THE BODOM...HIS EYES BLAZING... HIS LIFE MONSTY! HE PICKS UP THE PAN OF RED LIQUID FROM THE FLOOR...



THEN...AS YOU WATCH IN TERROR, HE OPENS THE FREEZER AND POURS THE CONTENTS OF THE PAN INTO THE BARREL...



THEN HE BEGINS TO SHUT THE LID...HE STOPS! HE OPENS IT AGAIN! HIS GRIM LIPS SPREAD IN AN EVIL SMILE! HE REACHES FOR A TIN OF HAMMERS ON THE WALL...



HE STOOPS DOWN, REACHING INTO THE BARREL! YOU HEAR THE SPLASHING OF THE DARKLY RED-BROWN LIQUID AS HE DIPS INTO IT...



YOU WATCH HIM BRING THE CUP TO HIS LIPS AND DRINK IT DOWN! A SMALL STREAM TRICKLES DOWN HIS CHIN... YOU DREAM...



IT IS TOO MUCH FOR YOU! YOU DASH TOWARD THE STAIRS SWATHING YOUR HEAD SWISH...THE STAIRS SEEM TO MELT BEFORE YOU! YOU SPRAZL, HALF-WAY UP!

YOU... YOU'VE BEEN SUFFLING ON ME!



IN A FLASH HE IS UPON YOU... HIS STRONG HANDS HOLDING YOU. YOU'RE WEAK WITH FEAR AND HUNGER! YOU CANNOT FIGHT HIM...

I HADN'T

PLANNED ON ANOTHER VICTIM TONIGHT?



HE CARRIES YOU TO THE TABLE! HE TIES YOU DOWN! YOU SCREAM...

IT IS USELESS TO CRY OUT! WE ARE QUITE ALONE IN THIS INN! AND ME, THE ONLY OTHER GUEST...



YOU WATCH, WIDE-EYED, AS HE BRINGS THE PAN AND PLACES IT UNDER THE TABLE, UNDER YOUR HARSH ARM...

YOU... YOU'RE HUNGRY... A MAD FRIEND?

PERHAPS?



THE KNIFE BLADE GLITTERS IN THE LANTERN LIGHT! HE COMES TOWARD YOU... FRANCHISING IT...

HAVE FAITH... SOON I NEED FAITH... YOUR BLOOD! I MUST SAVE IT...



THE KNIFE BURNS AS THE COLD BLADE SLICES INTO YOUR WRIST! YOUR HEAD SWIMS! YOU CAN HEAR HIM TALKING, AND THE STEADY DRIP... DRIP...

SOMETIMES I HAVE NO QUESTS FOR BREAST BUT I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY! I HAVE MY SUPPLY... THERE... READY WHEN I NEED IT...



YOUR HEAD POUNDS NOW! THE ROOM WEAVES BEFORE YOU! YOU FEEL YOURSELF SUFFLING... SUFFLING INTO THE BLACKNESS OF OBSCURITY...WEAK... DIZZY... THE DRIP... DRIP... DRIP...



SUDDENLY YOU OPEN YOUR EYES! YOU SQUINT! THE FIRE IS LOW NOW...BUT SLOWING WARM! YOU ARE IN THE CHAIN BEFORE IT...

OH, GOD! IT WAS ONLY A DREAM! A HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE!



YOU BREATH A RISH OF RELIEF! YOU'D BEEN DREAMING THE WHOLE THING! YOU LOOK UP! THE INNKEEPER IS SMILING DOWN AT YOU...

I DIDN'T HAVE THE HEART TO DISTURB YOU!

YOU SHOULD HAVE! I HAD THE MOST HIDEOUS NIGHTMARE! I...I...



SUDDENLY YOU HEAR IT! THE STEASY DRIPPING! YOU START TO RISE! YOU CANNOT MOVE! YOU'RE TIED TO THE CHAIN AND BEHIND YOUR SLASHED WRIST IS A PAIL...HALF-FILLED WITH BLOOD...

IT'S TRUE! MY DREAM...YOU ARE A VAMPIRE!



THE INNKEEPER'S SMILE VANISHES AS HE STARES AT YOU! THERE IS DAWNING ON HIS FACE...

HOW DARE YOU CALL ME A VAMPIRE?



YOU'RE DRAINING MY BLOOD! YOU'RE GOING TO PUT IT IN THE BARREL...DOWNSTAIRS...IN THE FREEZER-CHEST! YOU ARE A VAMPIRE...



YOU'RE WRONG, MY FRIEND! I AM NO VAMPIRE! I HATE BLOOD! I CAN'T STAND MEAT THAT TASTES OF BLOOD! I AM A SKELETON! I LIVE ON BLOODLESS...FLESH! I HAVE A FREEZE-LOCKER DOWNSTAIRS...BUT IT'S WELL STOCKED WITH DEAD HUMAN FLESH!



AH! SHOULD THE DREAM...REALITY...THE SAME...YET DIFFERENT! THE BLACKNESS IS CLOSING IN ON YOU NOW! THE DRIPPING IS SLOWING UP! PERHAPS THIS TOO IS NOT A DREAM! PERHAPS YOU WILL WAKE UP FROM THIS NIGHTMARE...ALSO THE LAST THING YOU SEE...BEFORE EVERYTHING FADES...IS THE INNKEEPER...AND HIS MEAT CLEAVER...

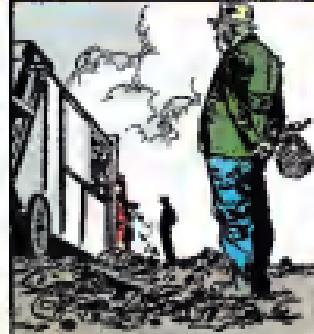


THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HUCH! AN INCREASE IN THE POPULATION OF A GREAT CITY'S TEEMING MILLIONS IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE STATE-TIONAL... BUT TO THE SANITATION DEPT. IT MEANS ONLY THAT MUCH MORE GARBAGE TO COLLECT...



Having eaten their fill of garbage, they at once travel to the city dump and purr contentedly while they discharge their cargo.



THE CITY HAS A FUSE, EFFICIENT SYSTEM FOR THE REMOVAL OF TRASH, AND ONE OF ITS MOST RESPECTED ASSETS IS ITS FLEET OF STREAMLINED TRUCKS!



HERE IS WHERE EVERY BIT OF THE CITY'S COLLECTED WASTE IS BROUGHT, AND IT IS HERE, IN THIS SCAVENGERS' PARADISE, THAT ONE MAY FIND...



THESE PROUD VEHICLES COVER EVERY PART OF THE METROPOLIS, AND THERE ARE BUT FEW ITEMS THAT CANNOT BE CRUSHED, BROKEN AND HACKED TO BITS BY THEIR GLEANING, WHIRLING BLADES...



HEH! HEH! QUITE A JAWSEWING THING TO FIND, ISN'T IT? NATURALLY, THE MAN ALMOST FAINTED UPON VIEWING HIS HORRID DISCOVERY! BUT HE RAGED MADLY TO INFORM THE POLICE... AFTER HE HAD REMOVED THE RING AND STUFFED IT INTO HIS POCKET, OF COURSE! HOW YOU MAY ASK, DID THE HAND HAPPEN TO BE LYING IN THE CITY DUMP? HEH! HEH! WELL, THEREIN LIES OUR STORY! IT'S A SWAMPY TALE AND I CALL IT...

SEEDS OF DEATH!



LET'S GO BACK IN TIME TO WHERE OUR STORY REALLY BEGAN, TO A SMALL FARM ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE LARGE CITY.



ON THIS PARTICULAR FARM LIVED THE OWNER, BASIL WOODS... HIS WIFE CONNIE...



...AND A HIRED HAND NAMED CLIFF!



OH CLIFF... CLIFF! HE'S SO CRANKY!

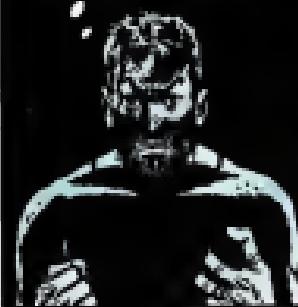
CONNIE, DARLING, IF HE HITS YOU AGAIN... SO HELP ME, I THINK I'LL KILL HIM!



HAHAH! THE FOOLS! THEY THINK I DON'T KNOW THEY'RE IN LOVE! THEY THINK I'VE BEEN BLIND TO WHAT'S GOING ON BEHIND MY BACK!



NO MAN CAN TAKE MY WIFE
FROM ME AND I'VE / I'LL FIX
THE DIRTY HOME-WRECKER
WHEN THE TIME COMES!



HOH, HOH! WELL, THAT'S THE SITUATION, DEAR READERS... THE
ETERNAL TURKEYNEUTER! TIME PASSED... AND BASIL WAITED
PATIENTLY UNTIL ONE DAY...

SURE, MRS. WOODS?

CLIFF, WHILE YOU'RE IN TOWN TODAY,
WOULD YOU BUY ME SOME GARDENIA
SEEDS? I WANT TO PLANT THEM IN
THE GARDEN!



HE'LL BE IN THE CITY ALL DAY...
WON'T BE BACK TILL LATE TO-
NIGHT! AND HE'LL PROBABLY
TAKE THE SHORT-CUT 'ROSS
THE FIELD TO THE HOUSE...
HMM-HL...



... AND SO, LATE THAT NIGHT...

EVENING, CLIFF! / AWF OHL...
DID YOU GET MY
WIFE'S GARDENIA
SEEDS?

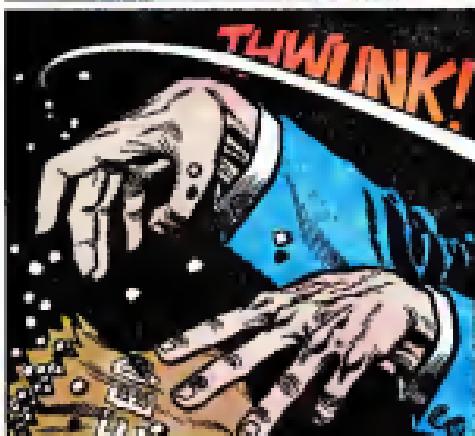


MR. WOODS!
YES, I HAVE
THEM RIGHT
HERE!

HERE THEY ARE! WANT TO
TAKE A LOOK?



THWINK!

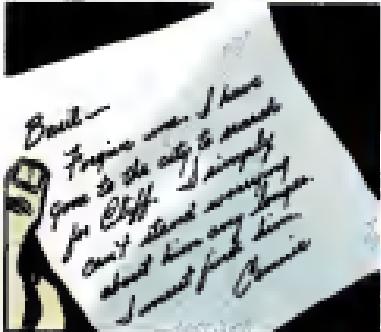


BOOOSH! THERE... IT'S DONE! HOW TO BURY
HIM... BOOOSH!... RIGHT HERE! HEE, HEE! IN TIME
TO SOME, HIS BODY'LL MAKE FINE FERTILIZER
FOR THIS FIELD! BOOOSH!



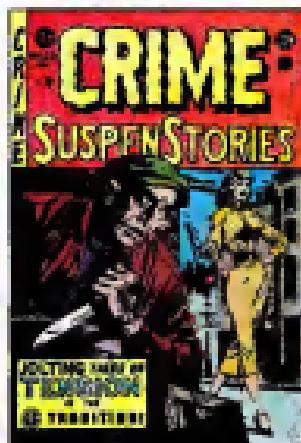
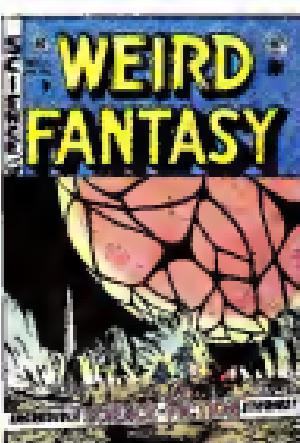
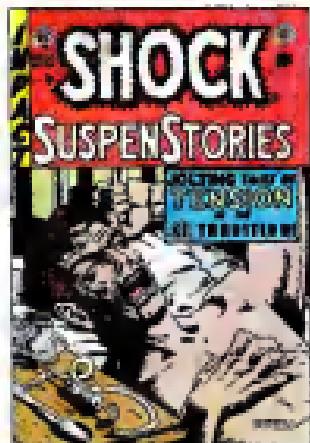


WELL THE DAYS DID PASS BUT CONNIE DIDN'T FORGET! AND ONE EVENING AS BASIL RETURNED FROM THE FIELDS...



A RARE E.C. OFFER

Seventeen years ago a small publishing company called East Coast Comix reprinted a number of the original E.C.'s in full color as regular 32-page comic books. Without national distribution the market was not able to sustain their continuation. Shortly after they ceased production we bought the remaining small inventory, realizing they would become real collector's items someday. With the return of E.C. through Gladstone, that day has come! None of the material in those 1973 and '74 reprints has appeared or is scheduled to appear in any Gladstone title. The Shock SuspenStories comics also have no place on our schedule. The following are available individually while the very limited supply lasts.



- Shock
SuspenStories 12
December, 1953
\$5.50

- Weird
Fantasy 13
May, 1952
\$5.50

- Crime
SuspenStories 25
October, 1954
\$5.50

Drug abuse is dealt with for one of the first times in comics in the powerful Joe Orlando effort, "The Monkey." Reed Crandall's "The Kidnapper" generated mail from many parents. Wally Wood toussée on suicide in "The Fall Guy." And a murderous alcoholic is portrayed in "Deadline" by Jack Kamen.

Special issue with two tales illustrated by Wallace Wood, including "Home to Stay," an unforgettable adaptation of two Ray Bradbury short stories. E.C.'s science fiction and horror editor/artist Al Feldstein has a bio with photo.

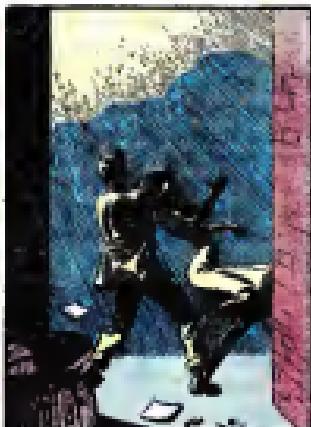
Jack Kamen's lead deals with multiple murder; Reed Crandall's story involves a knife and some "cutting up" during a prison break; Bernie Krigstein's effort chronicles madness; and George Evans' yarn weaves brutal fiction of a sadistic police lieutenant.

INSTRUCTIONS: Prices quoted include postage. List each comic on individual orders by title and number of original publication, as indicated above. Each comic will be shipped individually bagged and securely wrapped. Make checks or money orders payable to Bruce Hamilton, Inc., and mail to:

Rare E.C. Offer • Bruce Hamilton • P.O. Box 4236 • Prescott, AZ 86302

GOODBYE, MY CHILD. I'M SORRY
I COULDN'T BE OF ANY HELP,
BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN MY
SON FOR QUITE SOME
TIME!

THANK YOU
GOODBYE







HEH NATURALLY CONNIE WAS UNAWARE OF HER HUSBAND'S FATE, AND FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, SHE SEARCHED THE CITY IN VAIN... FOR CLIFF...



FINALLY, SHE RETURNED TO THE FARM. SAO AND WE ARE, SHE TOOK THE SHORT-CUT ACROSS THE FIELD TOWARD THE HOUSE. SUDDENLY SHE STOPPED... HER EYES WIDENED!



SHE STOOD TRANSPiRED IN HORROR! BEFORE HER, NOT TEN FEET FROM WHERE SHE STOOD, WAS A MOUND OF BLOODSTAINED JELL. AT ONCE, THERE CAME THE SHOCKING REALIZATION THAT AT LAST SHE HAD FOUND... HER HREDOUS CLIFF.



HEH, HEH, HEH! I THOUGHT THAT CLIFF WAS A BIT ADDiWEY, DIDN'T YOU? BUT THE REST OF THE STORY CERTAINLY HAD SOME AWESOME, FEARiWE MOMENTS! AND CLIFF... HE REALLY GOT A SHORT-CUT WHEN HE TOOK THE SHORT-CUT! BUT DON'T FEEL TOO SAD ABOUT HIM! HEH! NOT EVERY MURDER VICTIM CARRIES HIS OWN BUNCH OF FLOWERS TO HIS GRAVE! WELL, THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT! I DON'T WANT YOU TO DIE LAUGHiNG WHILE READING A HORROR STORY! HEH! HEH! HEH!





WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY





Frazetta's unenclosed cover illustration as it was originally drawn and reprinted for *Famous Fantasy*, #217.

THE CHOSEN ONE

I HAD BEEN ASLEEP, BUT MY SLEEP HAD BEEN FITFUL, FILLED WITH THE VAGUE, FORMLESS STUFF OF TROUBLED DREAMS. BESIDE ME, MY WIFE BREATHED SOFTLY. IN THE NEXT ROOM, MY SON SLEPT PEACEFULLY, HIS DOG AT THE FOOT OF HIS BED. ALL REPOSED WELL...AS IT SHOULD BE. YET, THE THIN TERRORS OF THE FEARS WITH WHICH I HAD LIVED FOR SO LONG PLUGGED AT MY BRAIN. I AROSE AND WENT TO THE WINDOW, AS IF SOMETHING...SOME SIGHT...DRAWN ME THERE...



HOW SHALL I DESCRIBE THAT APPALING MOMENT. I SAW THE BALL...A BLOWING SHIMMERING SPHERE OF LIGHT...HOVERING OVER THE LAWNS OF MY SUBURBAN HOME. I SAW IT SWELLE LIGHTLY, AND I THOUGHT THAT I WAS STILL DREAMING...



IT...IT CAN'T BE?
IT...CAN'T...

AS I WATCHED IN DISBELIEF AND TERRIFIED FASCINATION, I SAW TWO PEOPLE WITH LINES LIKE LIQUID SILVER AND FACES LIKE THE FACES OF ANGELS EMERGE FROM THE BLOWING BALL...



IT WAS NO DREAM! I KNEW THAT NOW. I SLIPPED INTO A ROBE AND WENT TO MEET THEM...

WE MUST BE SILENT! WE MUST TAKE HIM AND GO... QUIETLY!

I HEARD THEIR LIPS DID NOT MOVE AND YET I HEARD THEIR VOICES, AS IF THEIR THOUGHTS LEAPED OUT INVISIBLE WIRES FROM THEIR MINDS TO MINE. I HEARD AND I KNEW WHAT THEY WERE HERE. THEY'D COME FOR MY SON...

NOT NOW YOU CAN'T! THERE IS NO CHOICE! WE MUST! LET YOU? YOU WON'T!

HIS CALL REACHED ME FROM THIS... 200TH TO 100,000TH. THIS IS SOME END OF MONSTROUS PRACTICAL JOKES! THERE ARE NO OTHER HABITATED WORLD! NOTHING... NOTHING CAN REACH ACROSS SPACE!

CALL...



WORDS... WORDS... I SPOKE THEM, AND YET I DID NOT BELIEVE THEM AS I SPOKE. I KNEW. I HAD KNOWN FOR SOME TIME, AND THE EYES THAT LOOKED AT ME WERE SOFT AND FILLED WITH PITE...

OUR SHIP HAS CROSSED SPACE AS HIS GAZE DISSECTED SPACE. YOU KNOW THAT HE DOES NOT BELONG IN FOUR WORLDS! THAT MUCH WE CAN GRASP FROM YOUR THOUGHTS, JUMBLE THOUGH THEY ARE!



WITH US, HE WOULD BE AMONG HIS OWN RACE. HE WOULD BE HAPPY. WOULD YOU DENY HIM HAPPINESS?

MAKING...

DO NOT FIGHT FOR HIM. WE WILL GIVE HIM ALL THE LOVE WHICH FATE COULD GIVE HIM... AND MORE. FOR ANY NAME, LET US PASS!



THEY SAY THAT IN A CRISIS, A MAN'S LIFE FLASHES BEFORE HIS EYES IN A MOMENT'S TIME. I MEDITATED THIS, IN MY CRISIS... ONLY FOR AN INSTANT... AND IN THAT INSTANT, IT WAS AS IF TIME ROULED BACKWARD... TEN THOUSAND...

YOU'RE... SURELY CERTAIN DOCTOR? I'M... STILL NORMAL!

IT WOULD APPEAR SO, PROFESSOR FULLER!

AS FAR AS TESTS AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS CAN SHOW, YOU ARE QUITE NORMAL. BUT BEYOND THAT...

BESIDE THAT, YOU WOULDN'T TAKE AN OATH ON IT. YOU WOULDN'T SWEAR THAT THE BROWN CHILD MY WIFE IS CARRYING WILL BE... LIKE OTHER CHILDREN!



SPEAK! HOW COULD I SWEAR, PROFESSOR? YOU ARE A MAN OF SCIENCE... AN EXPERT ON ATOMIC POWER. FOR TWO YEARS, YOU'VE WORKED ON THE ATOMIC FILE AT ALAMOGORDO. IF YOU WERE IN MY PLACE, WOULD YOU SWEAR AN OATH?

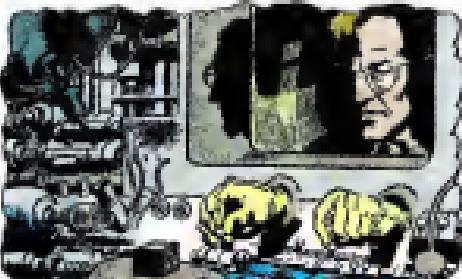
HOW I GUESS NOT! WE... WE KNOW SO LITTLE OF THE EFFECTS OF RADIO-ACTIVITY ON THE GENES AND CHROMOSOMES...

DOCTOR!... E... I KNOW I'M BEING FOOLISH, BUT I CAN'T HELP THINKING ABOUT IT. WHAT IF THE CHILD IS A... A FREAK? A MONSTER? IT WOULD BE MY FAULT!

YOU DON'T KNOW FOR CERTAIN IF YOUR WORK OR THE FILE HAS AFFECTED YOU, PROFESSOR. WHY ANTICIPATE? WHY NOT WAIT... AND SEE?

 DAINTY?

WE KNOW SO LITTLE. WE TOYED WITH GIANT FORCES AND WE LIVED IN FEAR. AT LEAST, I LIVED IN FEAR. BUT THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO. SO I WROTE. I WENT BACK TO WORK, AND EVEN AS I WORKED, I PRAYED THAT MY WORK HAD NOT MADE MY CHILD A MONSTER...



NO, MY SON WAS NOT DEFORMED. BUT... HOW MANY INFANTS LOOK UP AT YOU OUT OF EYES THAT SEEM TO SEE THROUGH YOU? HOW MANY CHILDREN WALK AT SIX MONTHS... SPEAK AT ONE YEAR... READ AT THE AGE OF TWO?



I PRAYED... AND AT FIRST, IT SEEMED TO ME THAT MY PRAYERS HAD BEEN ANSWERED. WHEN MY SON WAS BORN, HE HAD NO EXTRA LIMBS, NO VISIBLE DEFORMITIES.

THE DOCTOR SAYS HE'S FINE, TOO! ISN'T HE BEAUTIFUL, HENRY?

YES, LAURA. HE'S BEAUTIFUL!



LAURA! DID YOU SEE? HE WAS READING! I TELL YOU, READING THIS!

REALLY, HENRY? I KNOW HOW PROUD YOU ARE OF COURSE BUT, READING! COME, NOW! HE WAS JUST LOOKING AT THE PICTURES, DEAR, HOW COULD HE KNOW HOW TO READ?



I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT HE DOES. LAURA, HE'S...HE'S NOT LIKE OTHER KIDS. THE WAY HE SPEAKS, THE WAY HE MISPRONOUNCES EVERYTHING. YOU MUST HAVE NOTICED!

OF COURSE I'VE NOTICED. BOBBY IS EXCEPTIONALLY DARVING FOR HIS AGE BUT DON'T YOU DARE TELL HIM SO, DEAN. YOU'LL SPOIL HIM!



MY SON WAS SO...SO COLD. CAN YOU UNDERSTAND? THERE WAS NO MIRACLE. HE DIDN'T SUDDENLY REVEAL HIS GENIUS. HE WAS TOO CLEVER FOR THAT. BUT I KNOW WHAT LAY BEHIND THOSE ICY EYES OF HIS...

WELL, WHY DON'T YOU GET LONELY BY READING, WHAT KIND OF A CHILD ARE YOU? DON'T YOU CARE ABOUT ANYTHING? ARE YOU SO SUPERIOR TO THE REST OF US?

HENRY?

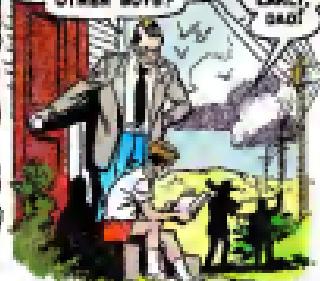


HE WASN'T ONE OF US. I SAW THAT CLEARLY. MY SON WAS WHAT ONE DAY HER MIGHT BE. HE ENDURED US, KNOWING HIS OWN SUPERIORITY. BUT I LOVED HIM. HE WAS STILL MY SON, AND MY LOVE MADE ME TENDER AND IRRETRACEABLE...



LAURA HAD NEVER BEEN able TO UNDERSTAND, BUT I WAS RIGHT. A MUTATION IS NOT ALWAYS OF THE BODY. OTHER BOYS PLAYED. OTHER BOYS ROMPED. BUT NOT MY SON. HIS INTERESTS WERE OF THE MIND...

BOBBY, IT'S SUCH A NICE DAY. WOULDN'T YOU LIKE NOT TO PLAY BALL WITH THE OTHER BOYS?



BUT YOU HAVE NO FRIENDS, TOO NEVER BOYED WITH OTHER CHILDREN. DON'T YOU EVER GET LONELY?



WHAT ON EARTH HAS GOTTER INTO YOU, HENRY? YOU SOUND AS THOUGH YOU THOUGHT BOBBY HATED US. WHAT HAS HE DONE?



NOTHING! THAT'S JUST IT! NOTHING! MAYBE HE DOESN'T HATE US, MAYBE HE ONLY FEELS SORRY FOR US. I DON'T KNOW. BUT I KNOW ONE THING: I'M SICK OF BEING LOCKED IN AS THOUGH I WERE A JEWISH



SORRY, SIR. YOU KNOW THE REGULATION. WE HAVE TO CHECK EVERY PERSON WORKING ON THE FILE. YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO RADIATION.



AH! HAVE BEEN YOU FOOL? WHAT GOOD IS THAT GINGER COUNTEN NOW? THE DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE!

A NEW BEGINNING



The man lifted his head from his arms and looked drowsily through the window as twilight fell. All 'round, the earth lay still, wallowing. A cool breeze stirred the new leaves and a sigh, long and tortured, escaped his lips. He was not old, yet not young either; for pain had carved deep furrows across his forehead and along his cheeks. He had known more despair than just one lifetime could bring.

He shifted now, in his seat, and tired fingers groped toward the instruments on the panel before him. He touched each dial, each button, each lever, gently, and then his arms fell numbly into his lap.

"Fool boy," he thought. "Fool, fool, FOOL!"

the last, a hoarse scream... shattering the silence... startling him so that minutes passed, and he still trembled. He closed his eyes and saw...

a boy, himself, some days ago... a boy laughing, glowing with excitement, bursting with his secret, yet not daring to confide it to anyone. The delicious agony on the days crept by toward THE day. The day the newspaper said the rocket would take off. Over and over again, the boy lived his plan, 'till THAT day, when he stowed away, hidden amongst the huge crates of instruments. The ecstasy of fear that was his 'til blast-off! And yet they did not find him 'till they were three days out from Earth.

He remembered landing on the planet — exploring it in the suit they had cut down to fit him. The men were very patient with him, and explained each phase of the exploration and the importance of each new discovery. The youth's heart sang. His mind soaked up every word.

And then came the terror of the illness. Two of the scientists, the oldest of the group, died while they were still on the planet. Three more, middle-aged, succumbed. And then after a night of arguing, the project was abandoned, as fear of dying on a strange planet and a longing for the loved ones on Earth triumphed over scientific curiosity.

But the return was too late to save the lives of the rest of the men. One by one they died, the last one with a prayer for the last survivor... the boy, now full grown, made old before his time by the deaths of his friends. The controls, set with care, and rechecked before the last scientist died, brought the young man closer to home. His sanity remained with him only because of the memory of his parents, his friends, and the whole wonderful world of beautiful people awaiting him.

And then, the landing. The anguish of that morning remained. At its recall, the man flinched, and a gasp stirred the air in the ship where he sat, as memory of that morning stabbed him again.

The earth was quiet and grey. There was nothing but flatness before him as far as the eye could see... flatness covered with a fine grey ash. Not a building stood, not a bird soared through the sky, and not a leaf clung to the charred branches of the few trees that stood. It had taken hours, before he remembered. The BOMB! They had used it! And what most men had scoffed at, and a few, when thus the rest, had learned, had come to pass. Chain reaction! Uncontrollable!

And there was nothing left... no one to comfort the boy came home.

That was the part that hurt so unbearably. After weeks of hope, the realization, the acceptance. He was alone... the last man on Earth. Alone... and when the trees came back to life, there was no one with whom to share the beauty of Spring. There was no joy at the first blades of grass. There was no one. No one but the man.

The sadness in his face deepened as he fought the urge to cry. But there was no one to see the tears. No one to hold him, to comfort him, to love him. So, once more, he gave way. The tears poured down his cheeks. His eyes were twin pictures of his agony. He cried, and then, aloud, "OH, GOD. SOMEONE — SOMEONE, PLEASE!"

At last, exhausted, he stopped sobbing. And then, Adam lay down his head, and slept.

I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT DAY. I'D SNARLED AT THE DOOR OUT OF MY OWN MISERY...BECAUSE MY SON WAS NOT MY SON...BECAUSE I WANTED HIM TO LOVE ME AS I LOVED HIM. THERE HAD TO BE A WAY TO HIS HEART...

BOSSIE? THAT
DOVE! DO THOSE
DOVES BELONG
TO ANYONE?

ONLY TO HER, MR.
GUNNISON'S JUST A
STRAY! HE'S BEEN HANGIN'
AROUND HERE EVER
SINCE THE PLACE
WAS PUT UP! SHUTS...

I DON'T ASK FOR THE
DOVES' LIFE HISTORY!
I ONLY WANT TO KNOW
IF ANYONE OWNED THE
DOVES. IF NOT, MY SON
MIGHT LIKE TO HAVE
ONE!

HELP YOURSELF.
WE'VE BEEN CONSIDERING
WHAT TO DO WITH THEM.
IF GUNNISON DOESN'T
MIND, WHY SHOULD I?



THE STORY OF IT, I BROUGHT MY SON
A PET. I TRIED TO BUY MY WAY BEHIND
THE WALL OF REJECTION AND REJECTION.
DAY BY DAY, I SAW FINAL PROOF THAT IT'S
FATHERED SOMETHING BEYOND MY UNDER-
STANDING...

MY SON AND THE DOG HAD BE-
COME INSEPARABLE. BUT IT
HAPPENED THAT ONE DAY, WHEN OTHER
BOYS AND THEIR DOGS
WOULD JUST LOOK INTO
DURKEE'S EYES...AND HE'D KNOW...

HE'D GO OUT...AND RETURN...
WITH WHATEVER THE DOG
SEEMED TO WANT...



LAWRENCE, YOU...YOU SAY
DUKE, DON'T YOU?
BOBBY JUST...JUST
LOOKED AT DUKE AND
HE KNEW THAT DUKE
HAD THOUGHT HE
JUST LOOKED AT
THE DOG!

I KNOW, DEAR, REMARKABLE.
ISN'T IT? BOBBY SEEMS TO BE
ABLE TO READ DUKE'S MIND.
IT'S AMAZING! THE DOG'S
TELEPATHIC! THAT'S IT!



TRAINED? BOBBY HADN'T TRAINED DUKE! HE'D
CONTROLLED HIM. HE KNEW WHAT DUKE WAS THINK-
ING...THE WAY HE PROBABLY KNEW WHAT I WAS THINK-
ING...WHAT LAWRENCE WAS THINKING...

DAD, WOULD YOU OPEN THE
BANK DOOR? DURKEE'S ON THE
STEPS AND HE WANTS TO
COME IN!

DON'T DURKEE?
IT'S...OF COURSE...



HE WAS RIGHT, TOO! BOBBY
WAS ALWAYS RIGHT...



SORRY, HOW
DID YOU
KNOW? DAD, IT
WAS AT THAT
MOMENT?

INTENTION, I
GUESS, DAD. IT
JUST... JUST
FLASHED
THROUGH
MY HEAD!



I REMEMBER IT ALL... IN AN INSTANT...
EVERYTHING... THOSE CALM, GOLD INTEL-
LIGENT EYES LOOKING UP AT ME... BURNING
INTO MINE, ARE MY FEAR. YES, I WAS
AFRAID, I ADMIT IT, BUT NOW, AS THE
PAST VANISHES AND I STAND BEFORE
THESE CREATURES FROM ACROSS THE
VOID, I KNOW THAT BOBBY IS STILL MY
FLESH AND BLOOD. HOW CAN I LET HIM
GO...



YOU CANNOT PREVENT IT! TRUST! YOUR WORLD
HAS BEEN SO FAR TO GO. YOU FIGHT... STRUGGLE
AGAINST EACH OTHER... LIE... GREAT... STEAL!
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO YOUR WORLD IF A SUPER
INTELLIGENCE SHOULD DECIDE TO... SAY...

CONTROL IT?



THE CREATURES FROM THE RADIANT HALL
MOVED PAST ME AND INTO THE HOUSE. I
UNDERSTOOD. ON EARTH, MY SON MIGHT ONE
DAY BECOME A TYRANT... A DICTATOR. IN THEIR
WORLD HE WOULD BE AMONG EQUALS...



WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THIS
INTELLIGENCE WHICH HAS SO
DESTITUTED SOME AMONG YOU WERE
USED FOR EVIL? WOULD YOU
HAVE YOUR WORLD ENSLAVED?
PERHAPS DESTROYED?

IN YOUR HEART, YOU
KNOW THAT WE MUST
TAKE HIM AWAY... TO
WHERE WE CAN WATCH
OVER HIM... TRAIN HIM
RIGHT. THERE IS NO
OTHER WAY!



YET, INSIDE ME, INSTINCT
STRUGGLED AGAINST LOGIC.
THEY WERE RIGHT, BUT HE
WAS MY SON. THEY WERE
TAKING AWAY MY SON WHILE
THEY WERE UPSTAIRS, I
FOUND MY GUN...



AND I WAITED FOR THEM TO
COME DOWN, CARRYING THEIR
BURDEN...



I STOOD THERE, MY FINGER TREMBLING ON THE TRIGGER. AND THEN MY HAND DROPPED LIMPLY... .

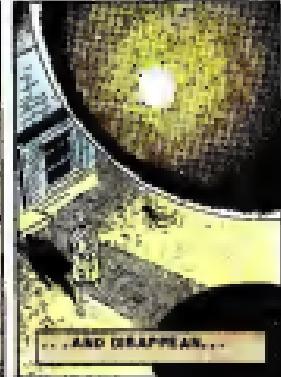


THEN I WENT BACK INTO THE HOUSE... .

I STOOD TO ONE SIDE AS THEY PASSED ME AND WENT OUT TO THE SHIP AND CLIMBED IN... .



...AND I WATCHED THE GLEAMING SPHERE RISE INTO THE NIGHT TO THE STARS... .



...AND DISAPPEAR... .

...AND SAT BY THE WINDOW ALL NIGHT UNTIL THE DAWN CRESTED UP FROM BEHIND THE EAST AND ERASERED THE STARS... .



...AND BOBBY CAME INTO THE ROOM... .



DAD WHERE'S DUKE? I CAN'T FIND HIM... AND ERASERED?

I KNOW...

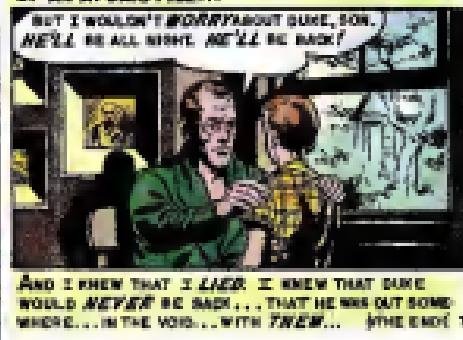
YES, THEY'D HEARD THE CALL AND THEY'D COME ACROSS SPACE TO ANSWER. MY BOY WAS ABSOR-
MATE FOR A BIT OF A BOOKWORM. A BIT TOO
BRAVE, BUT NORMAL...



YOU KNOW WHERE'S DUKE, DAD?

YES, BOY! I... I FOUND THE FRONT DOOR OPEN. I'M AFRAID I FORGOT TO CLOSE IT LAST NIGHT! HE MUST HAVE GONE OUT!

NO, MY BOY WASN'T A INSTANT AT ALL! NOT LIKE DUKE! NOT LIKE A DOG WHELPED IN THE SHADOW OF AN ATOMIC FILE...



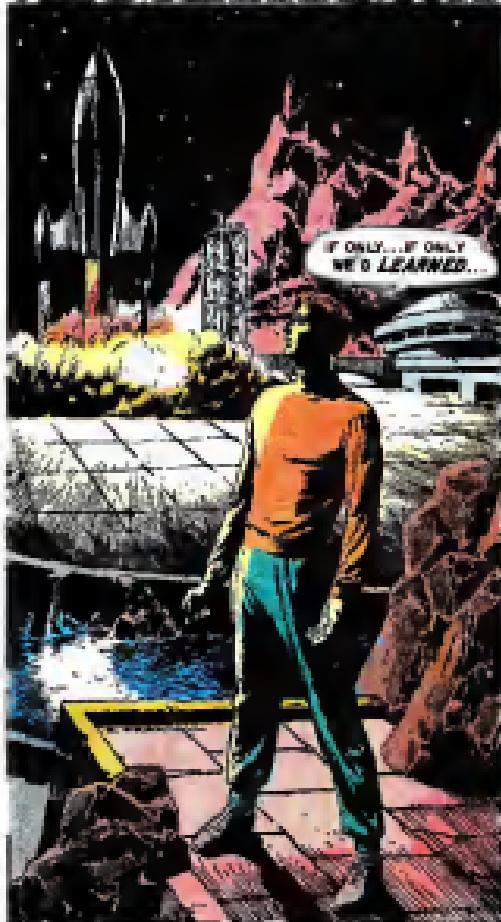
BUT I WOULDN'T BE SURE ABOUT DUKE, SON.
HE'LL BE ALL NIGHT. HE'LL BE BACK!

AND I KNEW THAT I LIES. I KNEW THAT DUKE
WOULD NEVER BE BACK... THAT HE WAS OUT SOMEWHERE... IN THE VOID... WITH THEM... (THE END)

GENESIS

THE SHIP WAS THE LAST. IT THREW ITSELF UPWARD ON A PILLAR OF FLAME INTO THE EMPTY OCEANS OF SPACE. AND I AM ALONE. THEY'VE GONE WITH BITTER WORDS AN DIREC JESTS, THE OTHERS, THEY'VE LEFT THE CLEAN ABSOLUTE SILENCE OF MARS AND THEY'VE RETURNED TO EARTH...TO THE SCRAWLING CROWDED PLACES. THE DREAM...THE HOPE...IS ENDED, AND THE TRAILS ARE HOT AND SALTY ON MARS...

MARY, RED MARY, GODDESS OF PROMISE, COOL MARY...WHOSE VIBRANT QUIET WE'D TORN TO SHREWD WITH OUR BULLDOZERS AND OUR TOO-LOU CLAWHAWER AND OUR EAGER SCRATCHING IN ITS SAND FLESH. NOW SHE CAN SLEEP AGAIN...UNDISTURBED, THIS TIME TIME FOREVER. THE GOLDEN HAS BEEN ABANDONED...



I WALK AND THE VOICE WHISPERS TO ME. THE VOICE, I'D HEARD IT SO MANY TIMES IN THE PAST WEEKS, HURSE MY SKULL, HURSE MY BRAIN, WHISPERRING. AND ALWAYS, AFTERWARDS, THERE'D BEEN THE PAIN. IT IS BECAUSE OF THE INEVITABLE PAIN THAT I HURRY...



BACK TO THE ABANDONED CITY... BACK TO THE EMPTY SHELLS. I FIND MY BED AND THROW MYSELF UPON IT AND THE AGONY CLOSES AROUND ME LIKE A DIANT PITT, CRUSHING. THE PAIN, THE AWFUL SHATTERING PAIN... AND YOU KNOW THE DISEASE IS THE OTHER PAIN... THE PAIN OF REMEMBRANCE...



I'D LOOKED UP WHEN TORISON'S SPHERE... UP TO THE TINY GREEN BALL THAT WAS EARTH. AND IT'S REMEMBERED THEM, TOO...



THAT IS, UNLESS WE CAN LEAVE EARTH AND ESCAPE THE RADIATION?

OR THE DAY MAN DISCOVERED ATOMIC FORGE, HE COMMITTED SUICIDE? THE UNKNOWN RELEASES OF ENERGY HAVE RELEASED STRANGE THINGS!

I CRY ALONG WITH THE REMEMBERING. HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN? THIRTY YEARS? YES... THIRTY YEARS AND I'D STOOD AND STARED AT PROMISED MARS ON OUR ASTRO-SCREEN AS WE HURLED TOWARD IT.



THERE'S BEAUTIFUL! SHE IS! SHE'S BEAUTIFUL!

FOUR OF US HAD LEFT EARTH IN A SLIM NEEDLE OF GLEAMING ALLOY, BUT I HAD BEEN THE FIRST... THE FIRST MAN TO SET FOOT ON MARS, AND TO FALLIN IN LOVE WITH HER.

HIGHLIGHT SNAP OUT OF IT! IF YOU'RE HOLDING UP THE PARADE, WE'VE GOT MORE TO DO...



I'D REMEMBERED THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE PLATE THEY'D ENTRUSTED IN '65, A FEW SHORT MONTHS BEFORE

DO THEM, AND MAY SUCCEED BE YOUNG... FOR YOUTH ARE OUR ONLY HOPE! YOUTH IS DOOMED!

MARL DOOMED?
SIR, YOUTHE...
YOU'RE DOOMED!

DEATH IS NEVER HUMOROUS.
CAPTAIN HARPER, WITHIN A GENERATION, THE ENTIRE RACE WILL BE STERILE!
A CANTER FROM NOW, MAR
WILL HAVE CEASED TO EXIST!



CERTAIN RADIATIONS... CERTAIN FORCES WE ARE UNABLE TO DODGE WITH. THEY ARE SLOWLY, STEADILY OVERLOADING US... MAKING US IMPOTENT!

IT DOESN'T SEEM POSSIBLE...

IT IS... HORRIBLY SO!
EARTH IS A DYING PLANET... FOR MAN IS DYING. BUT IF YOUR TRIP IS SUCCESSFUL... IF MAN CAN ESCAPE TO AN UNCONTAMINATED WORLD... WE CAN BUILD AGAIN...



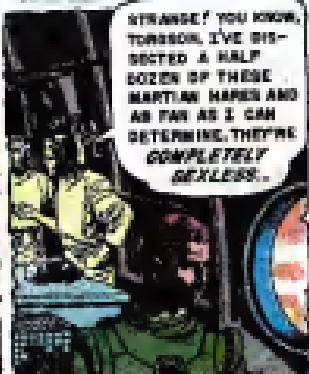
THE NATIONS OF THE
WORLD HAVE POOLED
THEIR RESOURCES?
WE'RE BEGIN CONSTRUCTION
OF THE FIRST
SPACE SHIP. YOU FOUR
HAVE BEEN CHOSEN TO
MAN THIS SHIP... TO
ATTEMPT TO REACH
MARS!

IT HADN'T SEEMED REAL... THE WHOLE THING.
EVEN WHILE I'D STUDIED AND LEARNED TO
FLY THE SHIP, IT HADN'T SEEMED REAL. AN
AIR FORCE CAPTAIN... A BIOLOGIST... A MEDICAL
DOCTOR... WE WERE MORTALS, AND YET
A WORLD HAD WATCHED, PRAYED FOR US.
AND, ONE DAY, THE PRAYERS HAD BEEN
ANSWERED. I'D STEPPED FROM OUR SHIP,
THE FIRST MAN ON MARS...

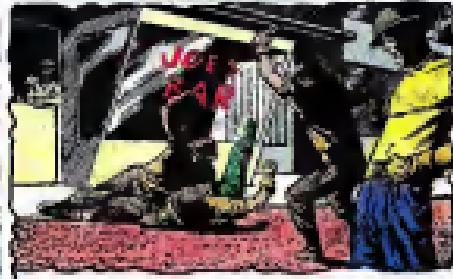


I LONGED TO RETURN AGAIN TO MARS, SO I'D JOINED THE
FIRST COLONISTS. WE'D BEEN BUILDING. THE OTHERS
HAD COME: THE FARMERS... THE STOREKEEPERS... AND
WITH THEM, THE SPOILERS... THE ADVENTURERS. AND
I'D WAITED FOR MY LOVE, DEEP DOWN INSIDE...

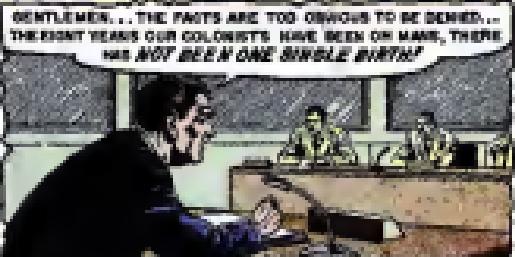
MY TRICK WAS FINISHED WITH THAT.
I'D WANDERED THE EMPTY DESOLATION WHILE THE OTHERS HAD
RETURNED TO EARTH. AND MARS HAD GONE INTO MY HEART. MY
SOUL. WHEN WE'D LEFT AT LAST,
A PART OF ME HAD REMAINED
BEHIND...



THEY'D COME. AND THEY'D SPLITT THE SILENCE WITH
THEIR CHATTER. THEY'D ROARED THEIR HUNGER,
BECAUSE THE YEARNING FOR THE RACE TO SURVIVE WAS
BRED INTO THEM. THEY'D MADE MARS HUNGRY WITH
THEIR DIL. BUT THEY'D BUILT...



THEY'D RAISED A NEW WORLD. THEY'D BOOTTED PEACEFUL
MARS WITH HOOT CITIES, AND THEY'D REMAINED HUNGRY. THEY'D
BRIBED AND NATED AND SCANNED HER VELVET NIGHTS WITH
THEIR NEON SIGNS. AND THEN, MARS HAD TAKEN HER SILENT
REVENGE...



BUT, MR. PRESIDENT! THE RADIATIONS
WHICH ARE MAKING MAN STERILE HERE
ON EARTH DO NOT EXIST ON MARS!
WHY CAN'T OUR COLONISTS
REPRODUCE?



WHY
HERE
IS THE
ANSWER,
GENTLEMEN

THE THING THAT THE ATTENDANT HAD PLACED UPON THE COUCH, PRESIDENT'S DEER HAD BEEN A CASE WITH A SINGLE SEASIDE MARTIAN NAME. IT'D CROPPED OUT SLOWLY, THEN, THE COUCH, HAD BEEN WHAT HE ON MARS HAD BEEN SO MANY TIMES...

WHY, IT'S... IT'S LOSING ITS SNARE!

IT... IT'S SPLITTIN' IT
TO... TO REGARD THAT
SOME OF THE FORMS
OF MARTIAN LIFE
REPRODUCED BY
EVOLUTION...

NOT
SOME?
ALL?

THERE IS YOUR
ANSWER, GENTLE-
MEN! EVERY LIVING
THING ON MARS
REPRODUCES ITSELF
BY BINARY Fission...
SPLITTING... AS AN
AMOEBA DOES HERE
ON EARTH.

AND MAN...
MAN IS NOT
AN AMOEBA!



EXACTLY, GENTLEMEN, MAN IS NOT AN AMOEBA! SOMETHING IN THE ATMOSPHERE ON MARS... LIKE THE RADIATIONS HERE ON EARTH... WILL NOT LET MAN REPRODUCE HIS WAY! MARTIAN, GENTLEMEN, IS BOOKEED!

THE LAUGHTER ON MARS HAS DIED DOWN, THE FARMERS AND THE STOREKEEPERS AND THE HARD-FACED ADVENTURERS HAD FALLEN SILENT. COLONISTS HAD STOPPED COMING. THE ATMOSPHERE ABOVE THE RED SANDS HAD BEGUN TO SEethe WITH THE VIBRATIONS OF DISCONTENT...



IF WE'RE GOING TO DIE
OUT, AT LEAST WE CAN DO
IT AT HOME... ON EARTH!

I'M GOING HOME!
AND IF THE REST
OF YOU HAVE ANY
SENSE, YOU WILL
TOO!



I'D WATCHED THEM GO. TO SEEK THEIR ROCKETS BLAST AT THE RED SAND AND CLIMB AWAY FROM MARS.
BUT, I'D STAYED...



ALL THROUGH THE LONG YEARS I'D STARED, WATCHING THEM LEAVE, UNTIL THE CITIES WERE ALMOST OBSCURED. IN THE END, THE HARD-FACED ONES, THE ADVENTURERS, WERE ALL THAT WERE LEFT... LOOTING... DESTROYING... AND IT'S WATCHED THEM. I'D WATCHED THE STREAM DIL-



THEY'D NOT UNDERSTOOD, THE HARD-FACED ONES, NOR HAD I. IT'S GATHERED FOOD... STUFF... CLOTHING... TOOLS. I'D FILLED MY QUARTERS WITH THEM. IT HAD BEEN AS IF SOMETHING WAS DRIVING ME TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE. AND YET THERE WAS NO FUTURE. I KNEW...



WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN SO MUCH OR BETTER. BUT MARS HAS HEREDITED US, MARS HADN'T WANTED OUR BRAWLING AND OUR OBSCENITY. AND SO, AT LAST, IT'S FOUND ALONE AND WAITING THE LAST ROCKET SO...



THE VOICE HAD BEGUN COMING THEN... THE VOICE IN MY HEAD... DOWN DEEP, AND ALONG WITH IT HAD CAME THE PAIN... SLIGHT AT FIRST... THEN WORSE AND WORSE... UNTIL IT HAD WRACKED MY WHOLE BODY AND IT'S BEEN TOO TO DO STRANGE THINGS... FROLICK THINGS...



I'D WORN ONE OF THE WRECKS FROM THE BUILDING AND SMASHED THE BROKEN AND LAUGHED OBSCENELY. AND SICK AS I WAS, I'D WISHED THAT THEY WOULD GO SO THAT MARS MIGHT BE AGAIN AS I'D FIRST COME TO KNOW HER... ENTITLED HER AND CLEAN...



I'D WALKED BACK... AND THE VOICE IN MY HEAD HAD WHISPERED TO ME... AND THE PAIN HAD COME... AND IT'S REMEMBERED IT ALL...



THIRTY YEARS... OF ALL, MANKIND, ONLY I HAVE BEEN SO LONG ON MARS. I THINK OF THAT NOW WHILE BEING COMPRESSED INTO ONE SINGLE THROBBING MUSCLE. I THINK AND IT SEEMS TO ME THAT MY BODY DRAWS IN UPON ITSELF...



IT IS AS IF... AS IF... OBLIVION... AS IF I AM BECOMING & NOTHING... A BLOB OF PHOTOPLASM WITHOUT SHAPE OR SUBSTANCE...



AND OUR HEARTS SEND A SONG OF THANKSGIVING, BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT MARS HAS BEEN KIND TO ME. WE KNOW THAT I HAVE ADAPTED...



I TEAR AWAY THE CLOTHES WHICH BIND MY BREATHING MUSCLES... AND IN MY ABSORT, IT IS AS IF MY PLUSH MELTS AND FLOWS...



AND NOW THERE IS ONLY DARKNESS, EMPTYHELDLESS, DARKNESS. LIKE SINCE I STIR, I MOVE... WITH A CURIOUS NEW LIVELINESS AND STRENGTH. I OPEN MY EYES.. AND I KNOW WE KNOW KNOW...



I HAVE REPRODUCED... BY DIVISION... AND NOW I AM NO MORE. THE EARTHMAN IS GONE... NEVER TO RETURN. WE DO OUTSIDE TOGETHER. WE STAND MARKED IN THE GOLD SILENCE OF THE MARTIAN NIGHT AND WE SMILE AND DRINK IN THE PEACE AND PROMISE OF THE GODDESSES, THE MOTHER MARS... WE MARTIANS...



Comics Buyer's Guide Fan Awards for 1990

Welcome to the CBG Fan Awards. *Comics Buyer's Guide*, a weekly newspaper devoted to the world of comic books, sponsors these awards. Fill out the ballot, tell the world which comic books are your favorites. Just fill out the ballot and send it to the address below.

1. Favorite Editor
2. Favorite Writer
3. Favorite Penciller
4. Favorite Inkier
5. Favorite Colorist
6. Favorite Letterer
7. Favorite Cover Artist
8. Favorite Comic-Book Story
9. Favorite Comic Book
10. Favorite Limited Comic-Book Series
11. Favorite Original Graphic Novel or Album
12. Favorite Reprint Graphic Novel or Album
13. Favorite Character
14. Favorite Publication about Comics

Only material with a 1990 cover date can win. Votes for projects that did not have a 1990 publication date will not be counted.

Copy this ballot and give it to your friends, so they can vote; no copies who don't count can vote — but only once. If you vote more than once, all of your votes will be thrown out. Vote only in the categories you want, and ignore any you don't. *Comics Buyer's Guide* is not eligible for Category 14.

Every voter in the United States will get a free copy of *Comics Buyer's Guide* #724, dated Aug. 2, 1991, unless you already have a current or expired subscription to CBG. That issue will carry the list of winners! Votes from other countries will be counted, but we regret that free copies of CBG can't be sent out of this country, unless your vote is accompanied by \$2 in U.S. funds to cover handling and shipping.

Mail your ballot individually in a single envelope by June 1, 1991, to:

Comics Buyer's Guide Fan Awards

700 East State Street

Iola, WI 54930

You need not cut or tear out this page in order to vote. Copies are acceptable and will be counted.

Name Age Male Female (circle one)

Street or Box

City, State, and ZIP

COSMIC CORRESPONDENCE

Whew! Just got finished with a letter column for *The Vault of Horror* and now here's another one breathing down my neck!

Dear Editors,

Wood's cover for *Weird Science* #3 is splendid and brilliantly coloured, a real ottoman-boggler. Once again you've published another stinging whizzer of a bumper corker big thick science fiction comic. These science fiction strips are perceptive and intelligent in terms of story as well as being superior works of comic art.

"The Gray Cloud of Death" is a dramatic and uncompromising story, ending with a trio of spacemen walking as death approaches. The cruel irony of "The Invaders" is an indictment of our vein, smug and parnoid notions of "civilization." "Cosmic Ray Bomb Explosion" is an astounding piece of work. It has great irony, again ending with shattering doom and revelation as the Cosmic Ray Bomb goes off in the last panel. It's really nice to read a strip that actually features a *Weird Science* creative team. With similar dramatic irony the character Don Hartley in Jack Kamen's "The Tap of Time" ends up as a buried skeleton after experimenting with time travel. Kurtzman's "Atom Bomb Thief" also ends with a bang. My stomach sank when I saw the caged-up pig, remembering watching film of an A-Bomb test on television in 1962... houses blown away in one instant, caged pig burning and squealing. Thanks for alerting us citizens to the dangers and horrors of mad science running amok. So I'll stick like radioactive protoplasm to *Weird Science*. Keep 'em comin'!

John Miller
Edinburgh
Scotland, UK

Issue #3 was the BEST so far! The cover kept me mesmerized for I don't know how long! I still can't get over the irony of "The Martian Monster" and "The Cosmic Ray Bomb Explosion." Those one-page stories such as "Speed-Up" and "Dr. Rand's Experiment" are cool, too. But one question: what's with the nickel price hike?

Stephen Kramer
Clifton, NJ

That extra nickel's to pay me for doing double letter column duty! (The publisher just got a big laugh out of that one!) Actually, it reflects long-needed improvements in the quality of the paper and printing for our covers.

Dear Editor,

Let me congratulate you folks at Gladstone for doing an excellent job on the E.C. line of comics. *Weird Science* #3 was no exception.

Being a comic fan, I knew of the E.C. comics, never

dreaming to collect reprints. That's why I'm thankful to you. But why are they published bi-monthly? I understand and there is a limited supply of stories, but please publish more! There is so much junk out there, so thanks a lot for being here. Another request is for maybe more titles.

Lots of continued success!

Moshe Benyamin
Staten Island, NY

I loved issue number 3 of *Weird Science*! Especially "The Gray Cloud of Death"! Tell me, how come you guys are so creative? Were you born with it?

Dee Chang
Fort Smith, AR

The guys who did the stories were indeed born with creative talent, but it took work and dedication to develop it. Good thing they had what it takes!

Dear Ghouls and Goblins,

I'm back! To tell you I got my *Weird Science* comic! It was spooky. I especially loved "Cosmic Ray Bomb Explosion". It was terrific! You should write a story about aliens from outer space and putting the world to a complete end! Ha! But us beings, MARTIANS, don't have to worry about that because we do not completely from Earth ourselves! Ha! If you have any news about your comics please write! I can never wait to read your comics when I get home from school! So keep up with your writing, O.K.! Peace!

Your Alien Being,
Denton Welsh
Reading, PA

I am glad you edit the reprints only lightly, apart from omitting period advertising (which would have been interesting, surely?) these are as originally published. Except the colouring. As I have nothing with which to compare I cannot say whether this is closer to the original, or whether it is "creative." It is certainly attractive, but if it is the latter, it is questionable. DC explain their new colouring as providing the quality that was not technically possible in the past. But how far can this go before "reprints" are redrawn and rewritten because a publisher considers that superior artists and writers are currently available?

Francis Hertzberg
Chesham, England

Fortunately, most of Maria Saverini's silverprints from the 50s still exist, so we're usually able to provide the nearest thing to the original color that can be had for love or money. As to how far "refurbishing" reprints can be taken, that's hard to say, but these days the boundary is being pushed out a lot further than we ever intended to go.

All for now, but always room for more, so write to:

Cosmic Correspondence

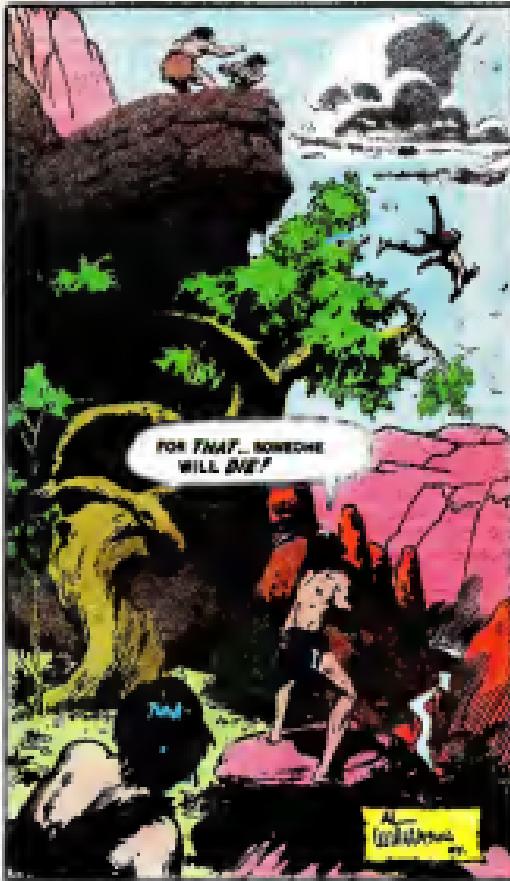
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VICIOUS DOUBLE VICIOUS DOUBLE

HE WAS ONE OF US AND YET THEY KILLED HIM. HE WAS MY FRIEND AND YET THEY LIFTED HIM HIGH AND FLUNG HIM FROM THE CLIFF EDGE. WE HUNTERS WERE RETURNING AT DUSK. WE'D LEFT THE COOL, GREEN-SMELLING FOREST AND CROSSED THE BURNED PLACE BEHIND THE CLIFFS, WHEN I SAW I SAW HIM STRUGGLE. I KNEW HIM BORNAN AS HE PLAIED IN MID-AIR ON HIS WAY TO A ROCK-RUPTURING DEATH. ARD-EHTH-LUNS THOUGH I WAS, I KNEW THAT THIS DAY MY BREATH WOULD TASTE HUMAN BLOOD, FOR HE WAS MY FRIEND...

WE USE THE OLD NAMES STILL. HIS NAME WAS JOHN AND I LOVED HIM. HE CAME DOWN SCREAMING AND THEN THE SCREAMING STOPPED AND HE WAS DEAD. I FLUNG THE FROG-KILLED DOG FROM MY SHOULDERS. I WOULD HAVE CLIMBED TO THE CLIFF EDGE ABOVE, BUT THE OTHERS WOULD NOT LET ME PASS...

*STORY WOULD YOU BE
LIKE ACT IS AWFUL YOU
KNOW OUR LAW?*



THEY SPOKE OF THE LAW AND I TREMBLED. I KNEW THAT JOHN HAD BROKEN THE LAW, FOR ONLY SUCH A CRIME IS PUNISHABLE BY DEATH. OURS IS A STRONG LAW! YET EVEN SOLE COULD NOT BE STILL...





I FIGHT BUT THERE WERE MANY. THEY OVERPOWERED ME AND TOOK MY WEAPONS...



AND THEN THEY LEFT ME TO FACE THE DARKNESS
ALONE. I BUILT A CAIRN FOR JOHN'S BODY TO GREAT
THE SCAVENGING WOLVES, AND THEN I GRIEVED FOR
ME.



IT WAS SAMUEL, THE WISE... THE
ELDEST... OUR LEADER. I SNATCHED
A ROCK FROM THE CAIRN...

YOU... WOULD YOU LEAVE ME,
DAVID? YOUR FRIEND'S
CRIME WAS GREAT!
WOULD YOU HAVE ALL
OF US SUFFER FOR THE
FOLLY OF ONE?

HE STOOD THERE, SHAKED AS AN
ANCIENT TREE, AND I HATED HIM.
FOR ONLY HE COULD SPEAK THE
WORD WHICH SENT A MAN TO HIS
DEATH. YET I COULD NOT KILL HIM.

I BRING YOU A CHOICE, MY BOY.
LEARN THE MYSTERY, THE REASON
FOR OUR LAW, AND BE AT MY SIDE.
OR REMAIN HERE, UNARMED
AGAINST THE BEASTS OF THE NIGHT!



THERE WAS NO CHOICE. NO MAN
CAN LIVE FOR LONG AWAY FROM
THE PROTECTION OF THE CAIRS, AND
I WAS NOT REF EVEN A MAN, AMONG
OUR PEOPLE, ONLY THOSE WHO
LEARNED THE MYSTERY OF THE
LAWS WERE ACCOUNTED MEN. SO
I FOLLOWED SAMUEL...



I CLIMBED BEHIND THE OLD ONE...
THE WISE ONE... AND I SHIVERED.
FOR MANY WERE THE TALES I HAD
HEARD OF THE MYSTERY BEHIND
THE LAW, YET I WALKED PROUDLY,
ERECT... AS I PASSED THE HUNTERS
AND THEIR WIVES AND THEIR WIDE-
EYED CHILDREN...



SAMUEL TOOK ME TO HIS CAVE...

I TELL NO MYSTERY IS NOT
A THING TO BE KEPT
MORE, WITH THE EYES ON
OLD MAN... KEEP WITH THE AGAMS,
MY SON...



THE OLD MAN SAT DOWN ON HIS
BED OF SKINS...

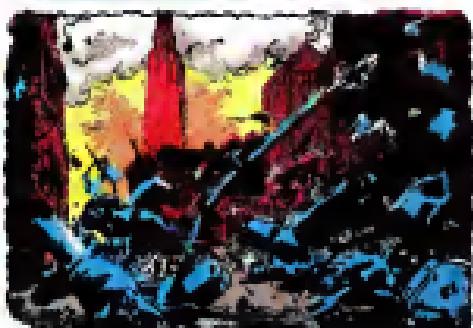
IT IS A THING TO BE SEEN FROM
NOTHERE! THE MYSTERY IS NOT A
THING THAT IS BUT A THING THAT
WAS! IT WAS A TIME LONG AGO,
WHEN MEN WERE NOT AS THEY ARE
NOW... WHEN MEN LIVED IN
SHAKING TOWERS...



THE OLD ONE SPOKE, AND HIS WORDS CARVED VISIONS
IN MY HEAD. I SAW GREAT SPIRES REACHING SPARK-
LIME FINGERS TO THE SKY. I SAW SMOOTH STONE
PATHS, WIDE AS RIVERS... AND THINGS LIKE SILVER
BEETLES, RACING UPON THEM... AND THINGS LIKE
WIRELESS, BLOOMING INSECTS, FLYING IN THE SKY
OVER THE SPIRES... AND EGG-MEN...



ALL THAT I SAW AS THE OLD ONE SPOKE, AND THEN I
SAW THE TOWERS GRUMBLE. I SAW THE STONE PATHS
SPLIT AND BREAK AND RECOLL LIKE SHAKES. I SAW
THE FIRE LIKE THAT OF A HARBONED SUNS...



AND I SAW THE EGG-MEN DIE, HUNDREDS, THOUSANDS...
MILLIONS. I SAW THE FIRE RISE LIKE A BALL AND BUSH-
ROOM UPWARD AND HANG OVER THE DEATH AND DESTRUC-
TION LIKE A BLAZING GASH OF FLAME...



AND SOMEHOW I KNEW, I KNEW THAT THE
THINGS THAT FLEW HAD BROUGHT DEATH. THEY'
D ROVED... AND THEN THEY'D STREAM AWAY.
AND WHERE THEY'D MOVED, THERE'D BEEN THE
FLAME! THE AWFUL, WHITE FLAME! OH, LORD...

IT IS ONLY A ZAGARON PLAINING
IN THE FIRE, MY SON!



IT... IT WAS SO REAL!
I DREAMED. I
THOUGHT IT WAS
THE FIRE FROM THE
SHIES... FROM
THE THINGS THAT
FLEW!

THE THINGS
THAT FLEW
WERE KNOWN
AS MACHINES
MY SON! AND
WHAT YOU
SAW WAS
CALLED ROB-MEN

THE ROB-MEN FOUGHT FOR
STRANGEST REASONS.
THEY WROTE FOR FOOD
ON PON MEATERS, BUT
FOR THINGS YOU WOULD
NOT UNDERSTAND. AND
ALWAYS THEY FOUGHT
THESE WERE WITH
THEIR MACHINES, THE
MACHINES THAT **FLEW**
WERE CALLED **ROB-MEN**.



I SAW IT ALL, THROUGH SAMUEL'S EYES. I
SAW THE SECRETS IN THEIR THOUSANDS. I
SAW THEM BATTLE AND DESTROY EACH
OTHER UNTIL THE LAST ROB-MEN DROPPED
FROM THE SKIES. AND THEN THERE WERE
DIFFERENT THINGS FLYING IN THE SKIES.
STRANGE THINGS... LIKE BEES, WITH
WINGS THAT DID NOT MOVE...



I SAW MORE ROB-MEN DIE, AS IF THEY WERE SACRIFICE
TO THE MACHINES THEY THEMSELVES HAD CREATED.
AND THEN I SAW THEM BEGIN TO LOSE THEIR SOLI-
DARITY...

I SAW THEM FIGHT AMONGST THEMSELVES FOR THE
LAST SCRAPS OF FOOD. I SAW THE BEETLES SPIT
FIRE AND KILL THE ROB-MEN...

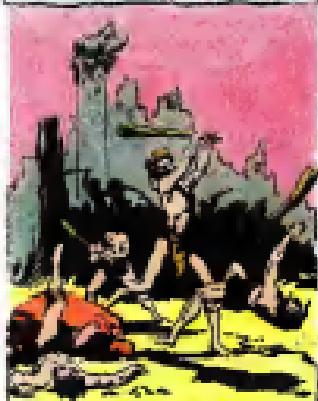


AND I SAW THE ROB-MEN STARVE. I SAW THEM PERISH
BY THE MILLIONS. BUT STILL THEIR WAR WENT ON. ONE
DAY, THERE WERE NO MORE FLYING THINGS IN THE AIR...
NO GLEAMING BEETLES ON THE GROUND...

THE ROB-MEN FOUGHT WITH ONLY THE THINGS
THEY COULD CARRY... WITH THE BLACK STICKS
WHICH SPIT FLAME AND THE KNIVES MADE OF
GLASSMINE, BURNING STUFF...



I SAW THE LAST BATTLE, AND I
SAW, IN THE END, THE GOD-MAN
FIGHTING AS WE FIGHT... WITH
CLUBS... AND SPEARS...



AND AFTER THE BATTLE, I SAW
ONE GOD-MAN CLIMB A HEAP OF
RUBBLE AND SPEAK TO THE OTHERS...



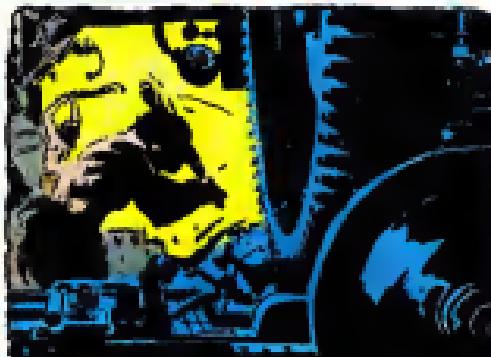
JAH-TAH WAS THE FIRST, MY SON,
THE FIRST TO UNDERSTAND WHAT
MEN HAD DONE... THE FIRST TO
CURSE THE THINGS WHICH HAD
MADE A WILDERNESS OF HIS WORLD.
HE PREACHED TO THE OTHERS...
THE FEW THAT WERE LEFT. HE
MADE THEM UNDERSTAND...



I SAW THE MAN WHO PREACHED TO THE OTHERS
LEAD THEM. I SAW THEM SEEK OUT ALL OF THE
THINGS THAT THEY HAD BUILT... .



AND I SAW THEM CRUSH THEM... SMASH THEM... DESTROY
THEM... THE MACHINES!



AND WHEN THEY'D WRECKED EVERY LAST MACHINE,
THEY WERE CONTENT. THEY LEFT THE RUINS AND
THE DEAD PLACES AND THE WRECKED MACHINES, AND
THEY WENT BACK TO THE FORESTS AND THE CAVERNS...



AND THIS BURNED THE MACHINE, MY SON,
AND THE LAW WAS BORN! NEVER
AGAIN WOULD MAN BUILD MACHINES
WHICH WOULD DESTROY HIMSELF!
YOU KNOW THAT LAW, MY SON...

YES I BUT I
NEVER UNDER-
STOOD IT
NOW I DO...



THEN HOW YOU UNDERSTAND
WHY JOHN WAS KILLED. JOHN
BROKE THAT LAW! JOHN
MADE A MACHINE! AND THE
MACHINE MEANS DEATH! IF
WE BUILD ONE, THEY WILL
BUILD OTHERS!

AND IF THERE ARE OTHERS,
ONE DAY MEN WILL FLY AGAIN AND
KILL AGAIN. I LOVED JOHN, BUT
IT IS GOOD THAT JOHN DIED, NOW
I CAN SEE THE MESS OF IT!

I CAN UNDERSTAND, BUT...
BUT THIS MACHINE? HAS IT BEEN
DESTROYED? I HAVE NEVER
SEEN A MACHINE. IT WOULD BE A
TALL TO TELL, MY SON! SOME DAY
THAT I HAD ACTUALLY SEEN A
A MACHINE...



THE OLD ONE AROSE AND WENT TO THE CAVE MOUTH,
AND WATCHED THE PROCESSION FILED PAST...

NO, THE MACHINE HAD NOT BEEN
DESTROYED. AND NEV' IT IS TO BE PLACED
IN THE FIRE SO THAT ALL MAY SEE AND KNOW
HOW STRONG IS OUR LAW! COME...



REMEMBER, THAT YOU MAY TEACH YOUR CHILDREN
SO THAT THEY MAY TEACH THEIR CHILDREN...
HOW GOOD IS OUR LAW! REMEMBER THAT YOU
HAVE ADDOED UPON A MACHINE! REMEMBER
ITS NAME...



THEY CARRIED IT PAST THE OLD ONE'S CAVE... THE
MACHINE. AND IT WAS TRULY WONDEROUS. ITS USE,
I DID NOT KNOW. IT WAS STRANGE... NEW... ALIEN. I
FELT THE HAIR RISING ON MY RECK, BUT I DID NOT TURN
AWAY, AFRAID THOUGH I WAS...



THE GOD-MEN... OUR ANCESTORS...
CALLED IT... A WHEEL!

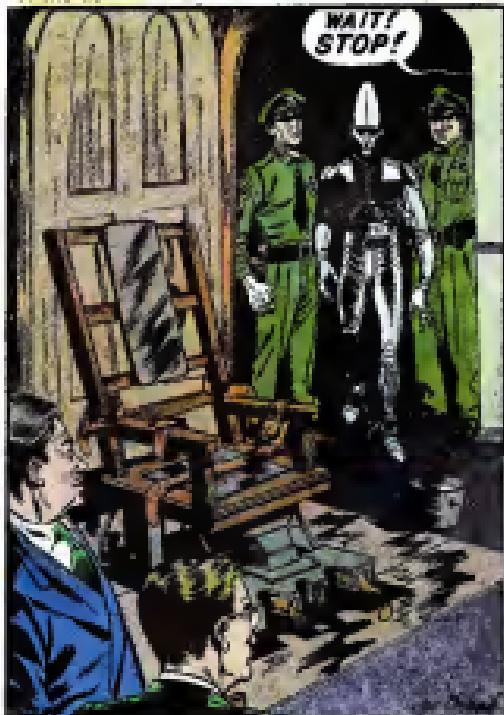


THE END

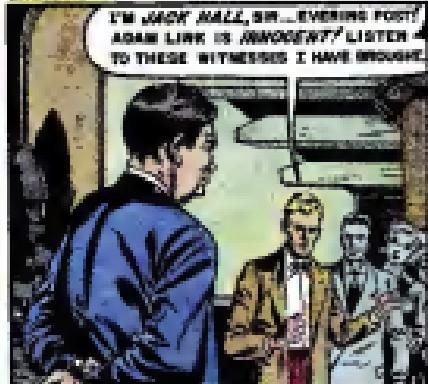
ADAM LINK IN BUSINESS

ADAPTED FROM THE THIRD OF THE ADAM LINK STORIES BY EANDO BINDER

I AM A ROBOT... A CONTRIVANCE OF WHEELS AND WIRES, AND YET I ALSO HAVE THAT HUMAN ATTRIBUTE CALLED "EMOTION". THIS WAS PROVER... TO ME, AT LEAST... WHEN MY REPRIEVE CAME, I HAD BEEN MARCHING DOWN THE JAIL CORRIDOR IN THAT "LAST MILE" BETWEEN TWO GUARDS, AHEAD OF ME, THROUGH THE OPEN DOOR, I COULD SEE THE SOLID GROUP OF WITNESSES AND THE ELECTRICAL MACHINE IN WHICH I WOULD SIT IN ANOTHER MOMENT AND HAVE MY BRAIN BURSED TO BLANKNESS BY SURGING BEARING ENERGY FOR THE "WONDER" OF MY CREATOR, DR. LINK. MY METAL FACE SHOWED NO FEELINGS, BUT WITHIN, MY THOUGHTS, THEN, WERE SAS AND BITTER THOUGHTS. I HAD BEEN ORDERED BY MAN TO GET OUT OF HIS WORLD...



SUDDENLY THERE WERE SHOUTS BEHIND US. PEOPLE CAME RUNNING. I SAW A FACE I KNEW. THE YOUNG REPORTER WHO HAD DEFENDED ME EDITORIALLY. FLUSHED, PANTING, HE SPOKE TO THE GOVERNOR WHO HAD COME TO WITNESS MY EXECUTION...



JACK AND I OFTEN TALKED OF MY "FUTURE..."

YES, DR. LIRE LEFT ME THE SECRET OF THE IRIDESCENT SPONGE BRAIN. BUT I WON'T MAKE MORE ROBOTS... NOT UNTIL I FIRST ADJUST TO HUMAN LIFE SO I MAY LEAD OTHERS OF MY KIND!

BUT THERE **MUST** BE A CAREER FOR YOU, ADAM!



ONE DAY, I RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM DR. POLSON, AN ENIMENT SCIENTIST WHO HAD TESTED MY Z.O. AT THE TRIAL...

YOU GAVE A FORMULA FOR HORMONE-GROWTH RELATIONSHIP IF THAT YOU DEDUCED FROM KNOWN FACTS. I'VE CHECKED IT! IT'S CORRECT! YOU ARE A SCIENTIFIC GENIUS, ADAM! LURE! WE NEED YOU IN OUR RESEARCH LABORATORY...



SORRY, DOCTOR! BUT THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME AN IDEA!

DR. POLSON'S CALL GAVE ME THE INSPIRATION, AND THAT IS HOW I WENT INTO BUSINESS. I TOOK AN OFFICE IN THE MARBLE BUILDING...

ADAM LIRE
SCIENTIFIC CONSULTANT



GREAT, ADAM! I'LL ADVERTISE FOR YOU AND TAKE CARE OF PUBLICITY! EVERY INDUSTRY IN THE CITY WILL FLOOR HERE FOR HELP...



AS MY REPUTATION SPREAD, JACK'S PREDICTION CAME TRUE. ON PAPER, DOING PURELY MENTAL WORK, I UNWRAPPED SCIENTIFIC PROBLEMS RANGING FROM COMPLEX CHEMICAL REACTIONS TO INTRICATE SUBATOMIC RESEARCH...

ADAM! THIS FORMULA IS JUST WHAT WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR FOR JUST FEARS! WHERE'S MY CHECK... AND \$100 AN HOUR IS CHEAP! YOU'RE A ROBOT GENIUS!



BUT NOW I COME TO A MUCH MORE SIGNIFICANT HUMAN PROBLEM. IT IS ONE THAT I FEEL I CAN NEVER QUITE EXPLAIN, BUT I WILL TRY. WHEN MY BROWNING BUSINESS DEMANDED A SECRETARY TO HANDLE DETAILS, JACK BROUGHT A GIRL HE KNEW...



KAY'S VOICE WAS LOW, MUSICAL. HER SOFT HAND, RESTING ON MY HARD, METALLIC SUBSTITUTE, SUDDENLY MADE ME REALIZE I HAD BEEN "BROUGHT UP" BY DR. LIRE WITH A PURELY ADULT MINDSET. THOUGH A RECKLESS ADVICE, I WAS INTRINSICALLY A MAN, THE OPPOSITE OF THIS WOMAN...

SHE IS A DIFFERENT WOMAN... MYSTERIOUS... I CANNOT READ HER EMOTIONS OR HER FACE AS READILY AS I CAN WITH MACH...



QUICKLY, THOUGH, I SENSED THAT JACK WAS IN LOVE WITH KAY. BUT DID SHE LOVE HIM? I COULD NOT TELL. SOMETIMES, AFTER OFFICE HOURS, WE THREE SPENT EVENINGS TOGETHER. I RECALL WITH MIXED PLEASURE AND PAIN ONE NIGHT, AS A BIRDER WARBLED THE LATEST HIT TUNE...

HE HAS A SIGHT OF GOLD... AND SIGHTS OF GOLD.
HE RATTLES LIKE A DRUMMER, AND NEVER TAKES A BREATH.
WHO DO I MEANT WHOM AGAIN LIKE THE BO-O-O-O-GH?



IT WAS A BILLY GITTIN, OF COURSE, WITH BROKEN VERSES. BUT AS I TOOK A BOWL EXHIBITED BY THE M.C., A DRUNK AROSE AT THE NEXT TABLE, HOLDING A CAN-OPENER... MOCKINGLY...



I IGNORED THE DRUNK UNTIL...

I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU EITHER, BABA! MAKE SOMETHIN' OUT OF IT, FRANKENSTEIN!

PLEASE, JACK! LET'S LEAVE...



WE LEFT QUIETLY, BUT I WAS DEPRESSED IN THE TAXI. FRANKENSTEIN! WOULD THEY ALWAYS THINK THAT OF ME? BUT THEN HE SPOKE. IT IS A MEMORY I'LL CARRY WITH ME ALWAYS, MAKING SUCH THINGS EASIER TO BEAR...



I RECALL THE FOLLOWING INCIDENT ONLY TO INDICATE A POSSIBLY UNFORGIVABLE FLAW IN MY NATURE. ONE DAY, WHILE I WAS DEPOSITING SOME CHECKS AT MY BANK, THREE MASKED MEN SUDDENLY APPROACHED.



AFTER RAPID CALCULATING THOUGHT, I LEAPED AT THEM, STRIKING THEM BEFORE THEY COULD FIRE...



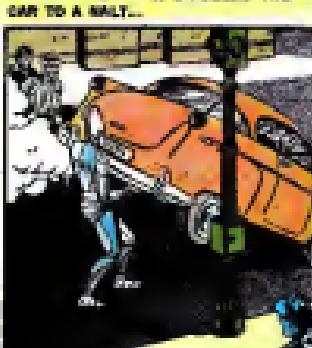
I SLID ACROSS THE MARBLE FLOOR LIKE A BASEBALL PLAYER, UPSETTING THE THIRD BEFORE HIS SPRAYING MACHINE GUN COULD GIVE MORE THAN A BRIEF BURST...



OUTSIDE, TWO MORE IN A SET-AWAY CAR SPED OFF, LEAVING THEIR FRIENDS. I SMASHED THROUGH A PLATE GLASS WINDOW, TAKING A SHORT CUT...



TO AVOID INJURING PEDESTRIANS BY OVERTURNING THE CAR, I MERELY OVERTOOK IT AND LIFTED THE REAR WHEELS FROM THE ROAD. THEY SPUN INEFFICIENTLY AND I PULLED THE CAR TO A HALT...



COSMIC CORRESPONDENCE EXTRA

You may have noticed that we've reproduced two versions of the cover art for *Weird Science-Fantasy* #29 in this issue. Both are by Frank Frazetta, and are virtually identical but for some interesting details, whereby hangs a tale (as told by Bob Stewart):

A curious karma hung over Bill Gaines' purchase of this illustration since it had been rejected by Famous Funnies—and Famous Funnies was the comic book displayed on newsstands in 1934 by his father, Max Charles Gaines, thereby launching the comic book industry. "That's the only piece of art I used in my life that I didn't buy outright," Gaines told interviewer Rich Hauser in 1989. "As I recall, I was paying 80 bucks for a cover in those days. I think I offered him 40 bucks for the rights or 80 bucks for the cover outright, and Frank, well, he was never one for the buck. He'd rather have the art. He kept it, and I think I paid \$40 or \$50. Beautiful work."

A 1964 twilight in Boston. Another day's session on LPI Abner (on which Frazetta had a lengthy tenure) came to a close, and the studio drawing tables were vacated. Everyone was gone except for Frazetta, who stayed late that night to do the ninth in his series of Buck Rogers covers for Famous Funnies (#209-210). Surrounded by Moonbeam McSwine, Tiny Yukum, Nightmare Alice and the other Dogpatch denizens, Frazetta completed the picture in one sitting.

But the various 1963-64 editorial crusades, accusing comic books of excessive violence, had already brought repercussions. The editor who deemed the Buck Rogers combat-with-clubs art too violent for Famous Funnies was Stephen A. Douglas, a pioneer in the field. Had Douglas chosen to go with Frazetta's drawing, it would have turned up on Famous Funnies #217.

When Gaines decided to put this art on *Weird Science-Fantasy* #29, he requested two minor changes, and these were done by Frazetta with small paste-overs on the illustration, adding hair to the foreground figure and deleting Buck's helmet.

Regrettably, we can only reproduce the art inside this book, but even at that Frazetta's style comes through as nothing short of spectacular!

And here is a final statement concerning "altering" classic E.C. material:

My feeling is that a type such as "giraffes" (in the Bradbury story "There Will Come Soft Rains"—ed.) should be corrected. In fact, the stories should be carefully proofread because E.C. made lettering corrections with rubber-cement paste-overs, and there are some such corrections which have fallen off the art over the years, revealing the original error.

To intentionally alter the stories is another matter. After studying these changes closely, I submit that

you are altering the meaning of the stories because your changes are not consistent. In "The Aliens," on page three, the aliens hold a copy of *Weird Fantasy* #17, and in panels one and four you have deleted the price, the months and distributor marks. One of the circular E.C. insignias has been replaced by the triangular Gladstone symbol. However, you have not altered the cover in the last panel of page four. These changes mean the story no longer works—because your *Weird Science* #2 has a front cover that differs from the WF #17 front cover held by the aliens. The impact of the original ending ("...this may be the very magazine those creatures will find,...") is rendered meaningless. I've always interpreted the word "may" to mean that the aliens found not just WF #17, any copy, but a specific copy—the reader's own personal copy. Within the careful story construction, this amplifies the pay-off, suggesting that an outrageous fantasy has been given a physical reality. Even in reprint, the story should still work because one knows it refers to actual copies of E.C.'s WF #17 still in existence. But in your reprint it doesn't work because there is no Gladstone or E.C. comic book with a front cover like the one depicted! If your defense is that you printed a similar cover on page 33 of WS #2 and one need only open the book to the staples and bend it backwards, well, we could go at this forever—why isn't the page 33 cover printed full-bleed? What about the inconsistency on page 4? Etc.

Bob Stewart
Queens, NY

Most of you who have written to us on this matter, including Bob, have had experience with E.C. prior to the current reprint series, and make valid points concerning "tampering" with stories. It could hardly be otherwise, and we here at E.C./Gladstones are grateful for your input; it's helped us modify our approach to making these reprint books work in today's marketplace. (Believe us, the fewer things we feel we have to change, the better we like it.)

One point: some of you, because of your past experience with E.C., seem to harbor the notion that anyone who needs an E.C. story today knows as much as you do about it. This is understandable, as you are reading the E.C./Gladstones with a sense of reflection. However, the vast majority of our audience has never heard of E.C. before, and are reading these books with a sense of discovery! Remember what that was like? Any of us with an E.C. background should, but it can be difficult to recollect that there was a time when we didn't know squat about E.C., either. So let's give the new fans addicts a chance to read and enjoy, and then, if they wish, dig into the lore. This way, there's more likely to be an interest in and an appreciation of the background we "old codgers" possess.

Cosmic Correspondence

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THE NEXT DAY, THE NEWSPAPER LAUNCHED MY FEAT...

HERON OF COURSE HAD A HERO-WORSHIP COMPLEX. IT WAS MERELY THE USE OF MY MACHINE-ARMED POWERS, I DECIDED SOMEDAY A POLICE FORCE OF ROBOTS... PERHAPS?

ONLY FEW PEOPLE I SAY THIS, THINKING BACK TO WHAT HAS HAPPENED. KAY, JACK AND I DIFTER HAD SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS.

WHAT IF I MADE MORE ROBOTS AND THEY TURNED CRIMINALS?

THEY WOULDN'T, ADAM! CRIMINALITY IS BREED BY MALADJUSTMENT... SOCIAL ILLS...ESPECIALLY SLUMS, BUT OF WHICH I HAD TO STRUGGLE MYSELF!



SHOCKED AT KAY'S STORIES OF SLUM POVERTY AND WRETCHEDNESS, I SURELY KNEW WHAT TO DO WITH THE LARGE SUMS OF MONEY I WAS RAPIDLY ACCUMULATING FROM MY BUSINESS...

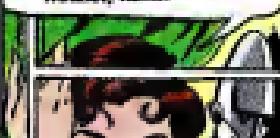
KAY'S EYES WERE SHINING...

YES, A MAN... BIG, STRONG, AND GENTLE... OH, SO VERY GENTLE. INSIDE, YOU ARE WARM AND SYMPATHETIC, I KNOW. YOU'RE HUMAN, ADAM!

YOU WILL REMEMBER MY 'Cousin' TOM LINK, WHO FIRST INSPIRED ME. DUE TO LEGAL DUTIES ELSEWHERE, HE RETURNED NOW AS MY ATTORNEY IN THE SLUM-CLEARANCE PROJECT...

WE'LL BUY UP THE SLUMS... TEAR DOWN TENEMENTS... BUILD MODERN LOW-COST APARTMENTS IN THEIR PLACE!

OH, ADAM! I DON'T SEE YOU AS A ROBOT ANYMORE. BEING THAT ILLUSION OF METAL, I SEE YOU AS A MAN!



I'M PROUD OF YOU, ADAM. TEARING DOWN THESE VENOM-INFESTED TENEMENTS AND BUILDING SHINY NEW DWELLINGS. BUT ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO POUR ALL OF YOUR FURGE INTO THIS?

EVERY DAY, TOM!



TOM LEFT SOON WITH ALL IN ORDER AND KAY AND JACK AND I FOUND TIME FOR SPORTS. GOLF, BOWLING, TERRIS. I COULD NOT HELP BUT EXCEL IN ALL OF THEM, WITH MY SUPERIOR STRENGTH AND TIMING. JACK JOYFULLY USED TO TAKE DOWN THE INSUFFERABLE EGGS OF A BOASTFUL TENNIS RIVAL...

TO KAY, FROM THAT MOMENT ON,

I WAS NO LONGER ADAM LINK,

ROBOT... BUT ADAM LINK, HUMAN!

I ALSO BOUGHT AND DROVE A POWERFUL SPORTS CAR, HANDLING IT UNDERRATELY AT HIGH SPEEDS OR LORE BRAKES. BUT ONCE, I HAD TO MAKE A CHANCE AS A CARELESS DRIVER CUT ME OFF...

ANOTHER ACE... AND HIS FOYERED WITH A THING SIX-LEVEL HE'LL NEVER GROW AGAIN, ADAM. FRAMBO?

...I DIDN'T EVER SEE THAT ONE!



GOOD LORD! EVE FORCED HIM OFF THE ROAD... STRAIGHT AT THOSE TREES!

I'LL NEVER FORGET THE SHOCK ON THE OTHER DRIVER'S FACE. HE STOPPED AND RUSHED TO MY COMPLETELY WRECKED JAGUAR AND I STEPPED OUT...



BUT AGAIN I AM ONLY DISGRESSING, TRYING TO AVOID IT. BUT I MUST GET BACK TO KAY TEMPLE. ONE EVENING, JACK HALL UNBARRIERED HIS HEART TO ME...



I FOUND OUT, THOUGH, A FEW DAYS LATER, ATTRACTED BY KAY'S BEAUTY SHE CALLER AT MY OFFICE UNHAPPY TO ANNOY HER...



...AND SHE COULD TURN DOWN A DOZEN LIKE YOU WITHOUT ANY LOSS! THIS IS THE WAY OUT... AND DON'T MENTION COMING BACK!



I'M SORRY THAT HAPPENED, KAY! BUT I REALLY CAN'T BLAME THEM... WITH A LOVELY GIRL LIKE POOL...



SHE STARED AT ME IN A STRANGE WAY... THE WAY SHE STARED AT ME, I RECALL NOW, FROM TIME TO TIME FOR LONG MONTHS, AND I WAS SUDDENLY FRIGHTENED BY WHAT I SAW REVEALED OPENLY IN HER EYES...



BUT KAY REFUSED. SHE INSISTED UPON TALKING. SOFTLY I TRIED TO FORESTALL WHAT I KNEW WAS COMING...

REMEMBER, KAY? REMEMBER THAT I AM A METAL ROBOT... NOT A MAN OF FLESH AND BLOOD!

IT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME, ADAM. PHYSICAL STRENGTH IS UNIMPORTANT! WHAT COUNTS IS THE MIND... CHARACTER... PERSONALITY. YOU ARE GOOD, ADAM...





SHE SAID IT CALMLY, NOT MYSTERICALLY, WITH A TENDER HAND GRABBING CHROMIUM-PLATED SHOULDER. THERE WAS A GLOW IN HER EYES THAT BLINDED ME. THIS WAS BAD... INCREDIBLY! A HUMAN GIRL IN LOVE WITH A METAL ROBOT! I WAS THAT "OTHER MAN" STANDING BETWEEN JACK AND KAY. I TRIED REASON...



FOR A MOMENT, I HAD A WILD DREAM BUT I ERASED IT FROM MY MIND. IF IT WOULD SWELL, MY METAL THROAT WOULD HAVE BOBBED AS I JERKED AWAY FROM HER, ALMOST BRUTALLY...



I LEFT HER WITH TEARS IN HER EYES... TEARS THAT I COULD NOT SEE MYSELF.



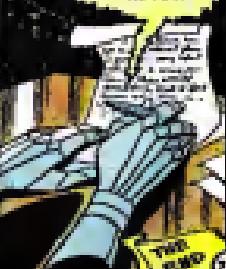
I DROVE TO A DESERTED CABIN IN THE QUIET COUNTRY TO BE ALONE. HOURS HAVE PASSED SINCE I FIRST BEGAN WRITING THIS ACCOUNT. I HAVE THE TELEGRAM READY FOR TOM LINK, INSTRUCTING HIM TO LIQUIDATE MY BUSINESS. NOW, THE LETTER TO JACK...



SOON, I WILL LEAVE HERE FOR A SECRET PLACE I KNOW, KNOWN ONLY TO ME... MY ROBOT RETREAT! I MAY RETURN TO THIS WORLD SOMEDAY, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHEN! THERE IS MUCH GOOD I CAN DO... YET MUCH HARM. I MUST WIPE OUT ALL EMOTION THAT COULD DESTROY ME...



I WILL VANISH INTO HIDE, PERHAPS FOR YEARS. I WILL NOT RETURN UNTIL I AM TRULY A MACHINE AGAIN. IT IS THE ONLY WAY!
SIGNED...
ADAM LINK
ROBO.



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