

THE  
**CREEPY**  
STORIES



# FROZEN BEAUTY



THE CASTLE OVERLOOKS A MOUNTAIN PASS. ITS OWNER HAS GROWN RICH ON TARIFFS, BUT WEALTH ALONE DOES NOT SATISFY **ALL** DESIRES... WITHIN THE CASTLE'S OWNER WAS A TERRIBLE NEED THAT HAD LONG SINCE DECAYED INTO EVIL MONOMANIA. AND IT WAS THIS UNHOLY LONGING THAT NOW FORCED THE SORCEROR... DARMAN, TO THE CASTLE OF COUNTESS MALEVA...



MALEVA WILL SEE YOU NOW!

WELL, IT'S ABOUT TIME! SHE KIDNAPS ME, BRINGS ME HUNDREDS OF MILES TO THIS FORSAKEN LAND AND THEN I MUST WAIT TWO DAYS BEFORE SHE WILL SEE ME!



OOOHH! MALEVA, MY DEAR, I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE SO YOUNG!



YOU ARE MISTAKEN, SORCERER... THAT IS MY NIECE MARIANNE...



I AM OVER HERE!





CONTROL YOURSELF, DARMAN! IT SEEMS MY BEAUTY HAS ASTOUNDED YOU... BUT POOR MARIANNE... I AM CONCERNED OVER HER FAILING HEALTH!



LEAVE US NOW, CHILD... I MUST DISCUSS WITH OUR GUEST HOW BEST TREAT YOUR MALADY...



SHE IS BEAUTIFUL... **ISN'T SHE, DARMAN?**

YET BEAUTY IS SO OFTEN WASTED ON THE YOUNG...



A SERVANT BROUGHT FORTH A CHEST AND SET IT BEFORE THE SORCERER...

IT'S **YOURS!** A FORTUNE IN GOLD AND PRECIOUS STONES... **ALL YOURS!**



SIMPLY GIVE **ME** THE BEAUTY MARIANNE POSSESSES DARMAN... MAKE THIS GROTESQUE FLESH OF MINE LOVELY AS **HERS!**

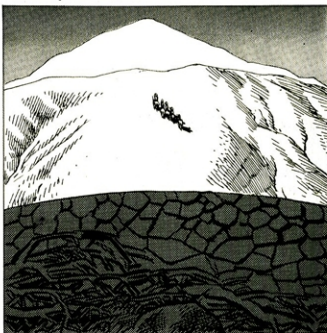


YOU WILL CAST A **SPELL** TO MAKE ME LOOK LIKE MY **NIECE...**

OR YOU WILL **DIE!**



A CHILL PASSED THROUGH THE SORCERER. THE MAGIC THAT WOULD GIVE MALEVA THE YOUNG GIRL'S LOOKS WOULD LEAVE MARIANNE A MINDLESS VESSEL TO BE DRAINED UNTIL HER BEAUTY FADED. YET, HE HAD NO CHOICE. MALEVA FURTHER DEMANDED THAT THE CHANGE BE MADE UP ON THE MOUNTAIN. THE COLD, FROZEN MOUNTAIN THAT KNEW NO SEASON BUT DEEPEST WINTER... AND DARMAN SENSED MALEVA'S DEMAND HAD SECRET, SINISTER PURPOSE...



AUNT MALEVA, COULD WE STOP SOON?  
I FEEL SO DROWSY...I CAN BARELY  
STAY ON THE HORSE...



JUST A BIT FURTHER, MY  
DEAR. THE CAPTAIN  
KNOWS OF A CAVE  
WHERE WE CAN SPEND  
THE NIGHT.

ME THINKS THE GIRL  
IS DRUGGED!



THERE IS THE CAVE, MARIANNE!  
THE SORCERER SHALL SOON  
MAKE YOU WELL...



HERE, DARLING. *DRINK* THIS!  
YOU'LL FEEL BETTER!



IS EVERYTHING READY?  
THE SPELL WILL CAUSE  
ME TO BE LIKE HER IN  
STRUCTURE AND APPEAR-  
ANCE ONLY...IS THIS  
RIGHT?

UH... YES.



AND WHILE  
MARIANNE'S  
BEAUTY BLOOMS,  
SO TOO SHALL  
*YOURS*, BUT...

GOOD!! YOU WILL MAKE  
THE SPELL TOMORROW!  
**CAPTAIN!  
LEND A HAND!**



WAIT! SHE'LL FREEZE  
OUT THERE!



...YES!



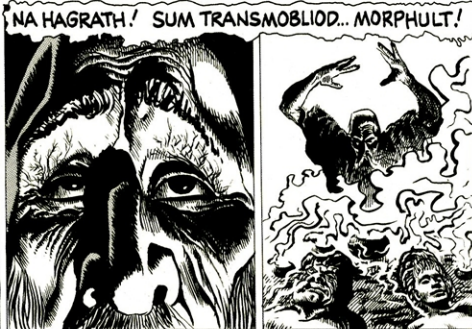




**FIEND!** SHE IS MONSTROUS IN FAR MORE THAN MERE LOOKS...! THE GIRL'S BODY WILL NOT DECAY! IT WILL **STAY** BEAUTIFUL, AS WILL **MALEVA** ONCE SHE IS TRANSFORMED!



**SORCERER!** IT IS TIME... A COLD, CLEAR ICY DAWN... *HEH HEH* OUR LITTLE BEAUTY IS FROZEN... FROZEN **FOREVER!**



**NA HAGRATH! SUM TRANSMOBLIOD... MORPHULT!**

AS THE UNHOLY CEREMONY PROCEEDED, MALEVA'S MEN WATCHED CAREFULLY TO INSURE THAT THE MAGICIAN PLAYED NO TRICKS...

FINALLY, DARMAN'S MOANING RITUAL REACHED A VIOLENT CRESCENDO! SHRIEKING, HE FELL TO THE CAVERN FLOOR IN A FAINT! MALEVA TWITCHED, HAD THE SORCERER FAILED? THEN HER FACE UNULATED, TWISTED, THE SKIN SHRANK AGAINST TIGHTENING MUSCULATURE... SLOWLY, PAINFULLY, THE CYCLE OF TRANSFORMATION MOVED TO A MIRACULOUS END!







THE COUNTESS'S CHANGE IN APPEARANCE GAVE HER VAST NEW INTEREST IN LIFE. FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING EVENINGS, GAY REVELS WERE HELD IN THE CASTLE... AND NONE WERE GAYER THAN MALEVA...



UNTIL SUDDENLY, SOMETHING CUT HER

...SOME INVISIBLE FORCE WAS BUTCHERING HER!



T-THE COUNTESS  
CHOKEN  
SHE'S BEEN  
DISMEMBERED

AND HER  
FLESH...  
PARTS OF  
HER FLESH  
ARE  
BURNING...!



DARMAN HUNCHED NEAR THE FIRE AGAINST THE CAVE'S BITTER COLD, THE SAME COLD THAT HAD STOPPED THE BLEEDING OF HIS WOUND. SOON, HE WOULD BE ABLE TO DIG FREE, BUT FIRST, HE NEEDED NOURISHMENT...

...AND OF COURSE, THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY HE COULD GET THAT! FOR SEVERAL DAYS DARMAN WAS REVULSED BY THE IDEA... THEN, WITH SLOW STARVATION FACING HIM, HE REALIZED WHAT IT WOULD DO TO MALEVA...



...AND AS YOU SAW, THE SORCERERS VENGEANCE MADE THE MONSTROUS MALEVA GO ALL TO PIECES  
...AND THEN SOME \*BLECH\*



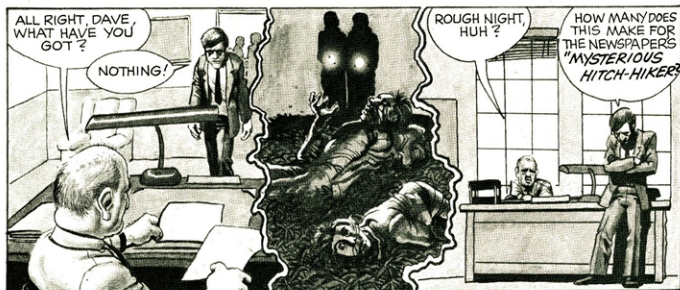


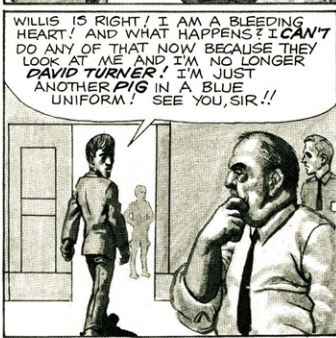
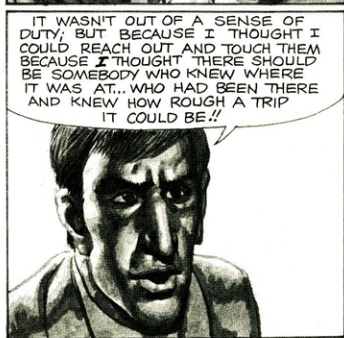
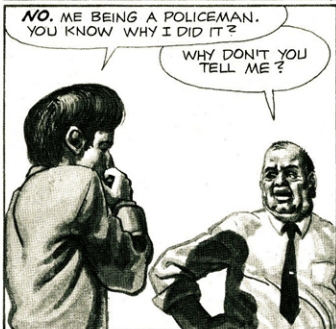
# A TANGIBLE HATRED





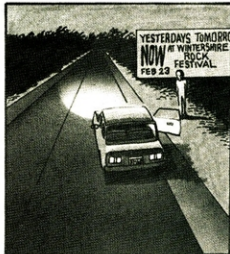
IT IS THE 22ND OF FEBRUARY. THE MORNING TABLOIDS SCREAM THEIR LURID LINES TO A PUBLIC THAT HAS BECOME INNURED TO SADISTIC VIOLENCE. IT SEEMS TO OCCUR AS REGULARLY AS THE WAY THEY DRINK THEIR MORNING COFFEE. BUT DETECTIVE 2ND GRADE DAVID TURNER HAS NOT YET BECOME INNURED TO THE VIOLENCE. HE HAS TOO RECENTLY VISITED THE SIGHTS OF THE SLAYINGS; HE HAS TOO RECENTLY TALKED WITH THE PEOPLE WHO REMAIN BEHIND TO MOURN THE DEAD ONES; HE HAS TOO RECENTLY FELT THE HATRED EMANATING FROM ALL THE EYES THAT WATCH HIM PASS BY. HE REMEMBERS ALL OF THIS AS HE ENTERS COMMISSIONER DAMON'S OFFICE.







ROGER AND MARILYN STURGES SEE THE FIGURE IN THE DARK. THEY HAVE BEEN ARGUING WITH EACH OTHER. ROGER STURGES STOPS THE CAR TO PICK UP THE HITCH-HIKER. PERHAPS THE STRANGER'S PRESENCE WILL PROVIDE A BRIEF RESPIRE FROM THE CONSTANT ANTAGONISM THAT HAS BECOME ROUTINE BETWEEN THEM.



YET, IMMEDIATELY ROGER FEELS AN AURA ABOUT THE FIGURE, ALMOST AS IF THE HITCH-HIKER IS ABSORBING THE VERY ESSENCE WITHIN THE CAR. ROGER CAN STILL SEE THE DESPAIR IN MARILYN'S EYES, BUT AT LEAST, AS THE MAN ENTERS, HE CANNOT HEAR THE HATRED IN HER VOICE OR FOR THAT MATTER, THE HATRED IN HIS OWN VOICE.



THERE IS A PASSAGE OF TIME IN WHICH ROGER FEELS THAT HE AND MARILYN EXIST ONLY FOR THE STRANGER. AND THAT THE RIDE IS NO LONGER FOR THEM BUT FOR THEIR PASSENGER.



IT IS MORE THAN A LOSS OF WILL. ROGER KNOWS, AS HE FINALLY GLIDES THE CAR TO A STOP, HE HAS NO IDEA HOW MUCH TIME HAS PASSED. IT DOES NOT SEEM TO MATTER.



A GRADUAL AWARENESS HAS COME TO HIM. HE VIEWS AS MARILYN'S DEATH AS IF THROUGH A FILTER.



THE KILLER'S FACE TURNS TO HIM. THERE ARE ANIMALISTIC SOUNDS AS THE GROTESQUE FORM MOVES PAST MARILYN TOWARD HIM. IN THAT LAST MOMENT OF SLOW MOTION MOVEMENT, ROGER STURGES REALIZES THAT THE CONSTANT ANTAGONISM HAS FINALLY ENDED PERMANENTLY.

IT IS THE 23RD OF FEBRUARY. MORNING LIGHT FILTERS THROUGH THE BLINDS. DAVID TURNER STARES SIGHTLESSLY AT THE LIGHT, SEEING PAST THE MUTILATED BODIES OR ROGER AND MARILYN STURGES, TRYING TO GLIMPSE SOMETHING WHICH CONTINUALLY ELUDES HIM!

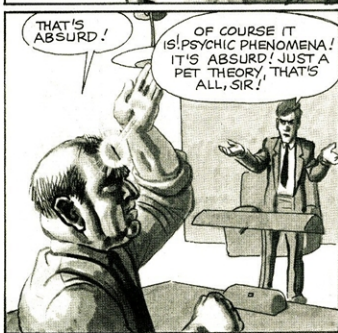


HOW MANY ACTS OF VICIOUS VIOLENCE CAN YOU THINK OF IN RECENT MONTHS, SIR. I MEAN YOU CAN COUNT THEM OFF THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD! KENT STATE! BEVERLY HILLS! SAN FERNANDO! OUR DEAR OWN NEW YORK HAS **MORE** THAN IT'S OWN.



THAT'S ABSURD!

OF COURSE IT IS! PSYCHIC PHENOMENA! IT'S ABSURD! JUST A PET THEORY, THAT'S ALL, SIR!



YOU'RE GOING TO THINK THIS IS CRAZY. BUT I CAN'T SHAKE THE THOUGHT SO I JUST WANT TO EXPRESS IT. FOR THE RECORD.



**HATRED!!! A TANGIBLE HATRED!!**

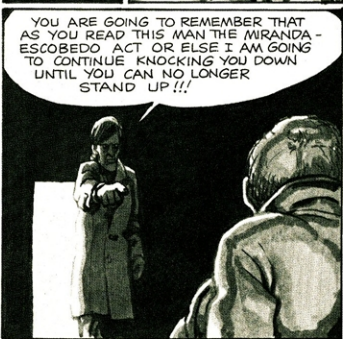
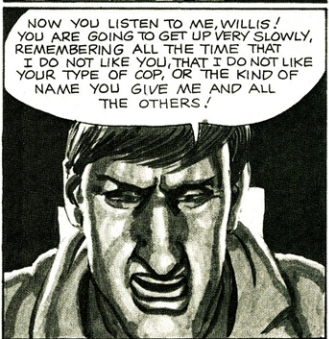
SIR!!! THIS SILENT HITCH-HIKER ON HIS WAY TO THE NEXT SITE OF VIOLENCE! MAYBE HE'S CREATED BY A COALITION OF VIOLENT THOUGHT WAVES! I MEAN ALL OF THIS PSYCHIC FORCE HAS TO GO SOMEWHERE!! MAYBE IT RESULTS IN A MANIFESTATION OF **EVIL** THAT SEEKS IT'S OWN ELEMENT!!!



WELL FORGET IT. YOU'D BETTER JOIN WILLIS. WHILE YOU'VE BEEN CONJURING UP PHANTOM MONSTERS, WILLIS HAS FOUND AN OLD WINO WHO SAW OUR HITCH-HIKER. GET DOWN THERE.



THE HOUSE IS LITTLE MORE THAN A WOOD FRAME. TURNER HAS SEEN STRUCTURES LIKE IT BEFORE, AND HE HAS SEEN THEIR INHABITANTS, BROKEN PIECES OF HUMANITY WHO COMMIT SLOW SUICIDE WITH CHEAP WINE. HE HEARS THE VIOLENCE FROM INSIDE THE SHACK, AND IT TRIGGERS A VIOLENCE INSIDE HIM THAT IS ALMOST AS UNREASONING AS THE VIOLENCE HE LIVES AMIDST.





THERE IS AN UNEASY TRUCE BETWEEN TURNER AND WILLIS AS THEY REVISIT THE SCENE OF THE MASSACRE. ONE LAST HOPE THAT MAYBE THERE IS SOMETHING THEY HAVE OVERLOOKED BEFORE.



**THE ROCK FESTIVAL.** FOR THE BELIEVERS, IT IS A TABERNACLE OF SOUND, IT IS A SUPPOSED DISCARDING OF SOCIAL REPRESSIONS. FOR THE NONBELIEVERS, IT IS A COMBINATION OF ORGIASTIC RITES, PERMISSIVE BEHAVIOR AND RUINATION OF THE ART OF MUSIC. FOR DAVID TURNER, THE FESTIVAL PRESENTS ITSELF WITH ALL ITS FACETS. HE HAS SEEN BEYOND THE SHAM ON BOTH SIDES. HE HAS GLIMPSED THE HATRED THAT EACH SIDE HARBORS, AND NOW HE KNOWS THAT HIS TIME IS RUNNING OUT AND THAT SOMEHOW HE MUST CONVINCE THEM. CONVINCE ALL OF THEM.

**COOL IT!!** ALL OF YOU!  
AND **CUT** THE SOUND!!

OH, MAN, HERE  
COMES THE GESTAPO!



WHAT ARE  
YOU TALKING  
ABOUT?



YOU SEE, HE'S FEEDING ON YOUR  
HATRED!! AND IT'S A TIME OF  
**PLENTY!!** IF YOU OR THOSE  
POLICEMEN OUT THERE DIRECT  
HATRED TOWARD EACH OTHER  
THIS NIGHT, THE TABLOIDS  
WILL HAVE MORALISTIC  
FIELD DAY TOMORROW!



**NO, MAN,** THIS ISN'T THE  
GESTAPO!! THIS IS MORE  
THAN A CLASH OF ANTI-  
ESTABLISHMENT VS.  
ESTABLISHMENT! BECAUSE  
YOU'RE BOTH HELPING TO  
CREATE SOMETHING NEITHER  
OF YOU CAN CONTROL!



THOSE MURDERS THAT HAVE  
HAPPENED NEAR HERE! THE  
**HITCH-HIKER!** HE'S ON  
HIS WAY HERE! THIS IS  
WHERE THE NEXT BIG  
**BLOOD BATH** IS  
SCHEDULED!



SO IT'S GONNA HAVE TO BE  
**LOVE, MAN!** NOT JUST LIP  
SERVICE TO THE WORD!!!  
NOW YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE  
TO **PRACTICE** IT TOWARDS  
THE **ONES** YOU LIKE  
THE **LEAST!!**





WILLIS IS ABOUT TO YANK TURNER FROM THE STAND WHEN THE FIRST SHOUT ANNOUNCES THE HITCH-HIKER'S PRESENCE. THEY ALL TURN TO STARE THROUGH THE DUSK. THE MUSIC IS SILENT FOR A MOMENT.



THE CREATURE ADVANCES. TURNER CLOSSES HIS EYES AND CONTINUES SPEAKING, HOPING HE IS GETTING THROUGH TO ALL THOSE SEPARATE LIVES AROUND HIM.



LISTEN TO ME, ALL OF YOU! YOU'VE GOTTA CLEAR YOUR MINDS!! JOIN HANDS, EVERYBODY!!

KEEP TALKING TURNER, AS THE CREATURE NEARS THE FRINGE OF THE CROWD!! KEEP TALKING TURNER, EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE ONLY A SUBSTITUTE MESSIAH FOR A CROWD THAT HAS LITTLE USE FOR A MESSIAH!

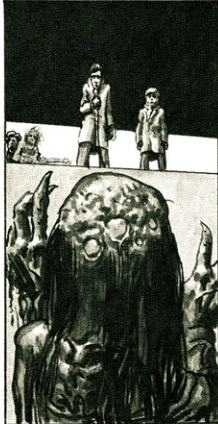
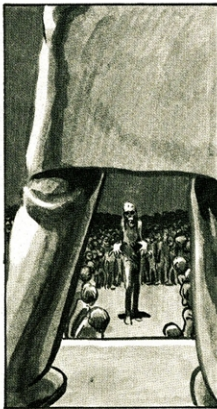


YOU GUYS START PLAYING! AND ALL OF YOU SING. AND FOR ONCE BELIEVE IN THE WORDS THAT YOU'RE SINGING!!

IS IT WORKING, TURNER? THE CREATURE SEEMS TO BE MOVING LESS CERTAINLY NOW. IS IT CONFUSED? DOES IT WONDER WHAT IS HAPPENING?

DOES IT SEEM LESS CONSISTENT NOW? BUT WAIT, NOW IT SEEMS TO HAVE REGAINED SOME OF ITS SUBSTANTIALITY AS IT MOVES RIGHT TOWARD THE STAGE.

IGNORE IT! YOU BROUGHT IT INTO EXISTENCE. YOU'VE NURTURED IT, AND YOU'VE INDIRECTLY BELIEVED IN IT! BUT IF YOU GIVE IT ANY NOURISHMENT NOW, IT'LL CONTINUE TO FLOURISH AND IT WON'T STOP HERE!!



IS IT YOU IT SEEKS? TURNER? HAVE YOU BEEN FEEDING IT, UNAWARE LIKE SO MANY OTHERS THAT YOU WERE DOING SO?

WILLIS OPENS FIRE AT THE CREATURE, BUT THE BULLETS HAVE NO EFFECT. TURNER SEES FLASHES OF AN OLD MAN CRUMPLED AT WILLIS'S FEET AS THE HITCH-HIKER ENDS WILLIS'S LIFE... TURNER NOTICES ONE THING WHEN THE ACT IS COMPLETED.



THAT ONE FACT BECOMES MORE EVIDENT AS THE HITCH-HIKER MOVES INTO THE CROWD AND FINDS FIRST ONE, AND THEN ANOTHER VICTIM. THIS APPARITION, THIS MANIFESTATION IS BECOMING **MORE INCONSISTENT**. YES, TURNER, IT IS LOCATING SOME RAMPANT HATRED AND AS SUCH IT IS DRAWN TO IT, EXTINGUISHING THE VERY ESSENCE WHICH GIVES IT REALITY. THE MUSIC IS LOUD NOW, THE VOICES ARE RISING WITH IT. OLD VOICES AND NEW VOICES FOR ONCE SINGING IN ACCORD.



VERY FEW OF THEM ACTUALLY SEE IT HAPPEN, SEE IT TURN FIRST TO A WRAITH. THEN TO **NOTHINGNESS!** TURNER JOINS IN THE SONG, BUT HE HAS NOT DECEIVED HIMSELF AS HE LISTENS TO THE VOICES FILLING THE NIGHT AIR:

**THEY HAVE ONLY BURIED HIM  
FOR A LITTLE WHILE...**

**THE END**



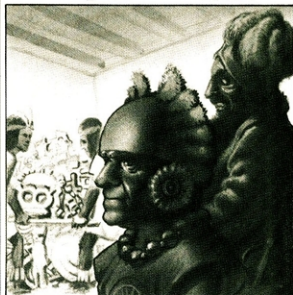
# CREEPY'S LOATHSOME LORE!

INCA-DINK-ADOO, HORROR, GORE AND LORE LOVERS!  
LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT SOME **INCA**...LOATHSOME LORE!

## THE GOLDEN DISK OF THE INCAS



THE GOLDEN SUN DISC, AS LEGEND HAS IT, WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST TREASURES OF THE INCAS! IT WAS SAID THAT IT HAD MANY MYSTIC POWERS... INCLUDING THE POWER TO CAUSE EARTH-QUAKES!



WHEN KING ATAHUALPA WAS HELD BY PIZARRO, THE INCAS BROUGHT HIM GREAT QUANTITIES OF GOLD, IN THE HOPES THAT HE WOULD NOT KILL THEIR LEADER...

BUT WHEN PIZARRO **DID** KILL THEIR KING...



THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE HID WHAT GOLDEN TREASURES THEY HAD LEFT... INCLUDING THE GOLDEN SUN DISC!



A RELIGIOUS BROTHERHOOD IN PERU NOW CLAIMS TO HAVE THE ORIGINAL GOLDEN SUN DISC. BUT SURELY THERE ARE MANY INCA TREASURES... AND INCA MYSTERIES YET TO BE UNCOVERED!



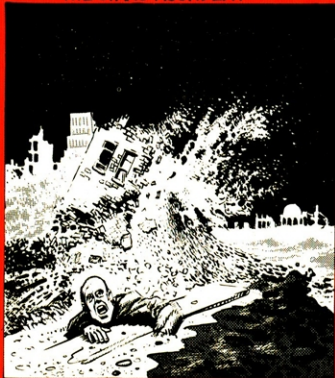




EVEN SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW THE **PLANET MARS** FROM THE CANDY BAR PROBABLY SPOKE OF ASTROLOGY RECENTLY! SOUND STRANGE? WELL, IT'S SUPPOSED TO! DON'T YOU REMEMBER WHAT MAGAZINE YOU'RE READING? HEH-HEH! NOW THAT WE'RE SPEAKING OF THE STARS, LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT SOME MORE OF...

## CREEPY'S LOATHSOME LORE!

TAKE THE WORD **DISASTER**. **DIS-** MEANS, LOOSELY, **ASUNDER**. **ASTER** MEANS STARS, TAKEN FROM THE FRENCH **ASTRE** OR THE LATIN **ASTRUM**, SO **DISASTER** MEANS... **THE STARS ASUNDER!**



THE SLOB WHO LIVES DOWN THE STREET AND THINKS ASTROLOGY IS A SECOND COUSIN TO VOOODOO MAY CONSIDER HIMSELF TO BE **JOVIAL!** **JOVIAL** IS TAKEN FROM **JOVE**, ANOTHER NAME FOR THE PLANET **JUPITER** -THOSE BORN UNDER THIS PLANET ARE SUPPOSED TO BE JOYFUL!



**SATURNINE** MEANS DULL AND GLOOMY... **MERCURIAL** MEANS SWIFT, ACTIVE, ELOQUENT AND CLEVER -SOMETIMES EVEN CRAFTY, COMMERCIAL, THIEVISH AND PICKLE! PEOPLE WHO USE THESE WORDS ARE ATTRIBUTING SUCH TRAITS TO THE PLANETS **SATURN...** AND **MERCURY!**

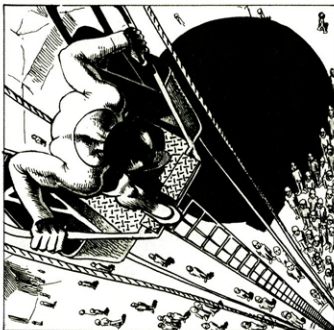
AND LOOK AT ALL THE PHRASES WE USE THAT REFER TO ASTROLOGY... SUCH AS "BORN UNDER A LUCKY STAR," AND "THANK YOUR LUCKY STARS" AND SO ON!

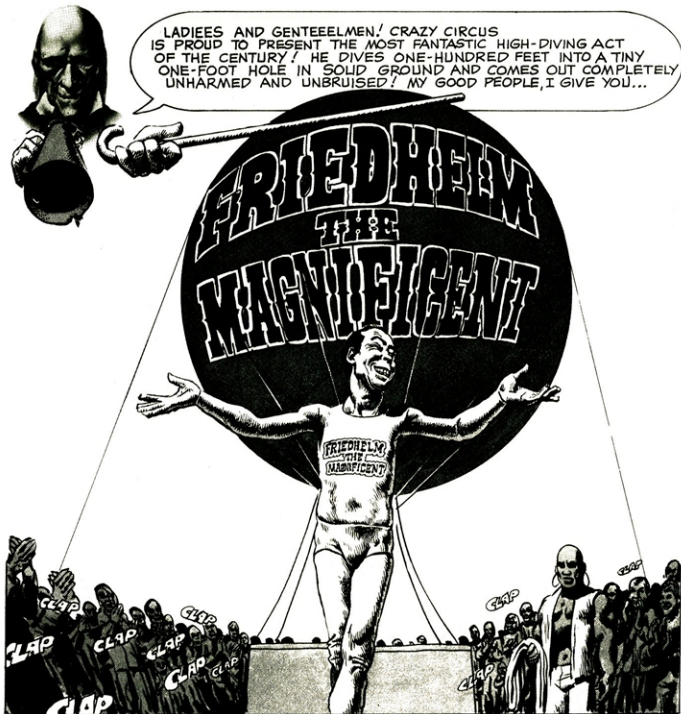


HMMM, THIS HAS ME INTERESTED! EXCUSE ME WHILE I CHECK... TO SEE WHICH STAR I DIED UNDER! HEH-HEH!

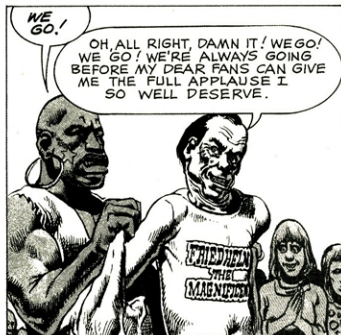


PROLOGUE:



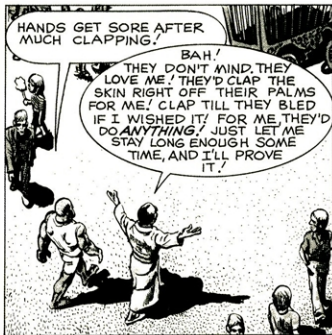






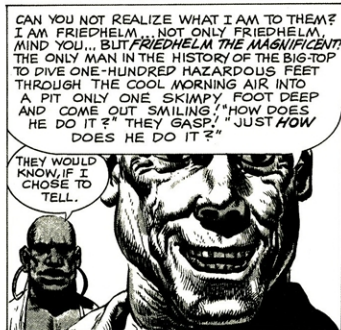
WE GO!

OH, ALL RIGHT, DAMN IT! WEGO! WE GO! WE'RE ALWAYS GOING BEFORE MY DEAR FANS CAN GIVE ME THE FULL APPLAUSE I SO WELL DESERVE.



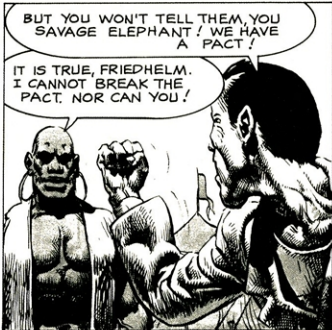
HANDS GET SORE AFTER MUCH CLAPPING!

BAH! THEY DON'T MIND, THEY LOVE ME! THEY'D CLAP THE SKIN RIGHT OFF THEIR PALMS FOR ME! CLAP TILL THEY BLEED IF I WISHED IT! FOR ME, THEY'D DO ANYTHING! JUST LET ME STAY LONG ENOUGH SOME TIME, AND I'LL PROVE IT!



CAN YOU NOT REALIZE WHAT I AM TO THEM? I AM FRIEDHELM... NOT ONLY FRIEDHELM, MIND YOU... BUT FRIEDHELM THE MAGNIFICENT! THE ONLY MAN IN THE HISTORY OF THE BIG-TOE TO DIVE ONE-HUNDRED HAZARDOUS FEET THROUGH THE COOL MORNING AIR INTO A PIT ONLY ONE SKIMPY FOOT DEEP AND COME OUT SMILING! "HOW DOES HE DO IT?" THEY GASP! "JUST HOW DOES HE DO IT?"

THEY WOULD KNOW, IF I CHOSE TO TELL.



BUT YOU WON'T TELL THEM, YOU SAVAGE ELEPHANT! WE HAVE A PACT!

IT IS TRUE, FRIEDHELM. I CANNOT BREAK THE PACT. NOR CAN YOU!



THEY LOVE ME, I TELL YOU. THEY LOVE ME!  
THERE CAN BE NO LOVE FOR ONE SO COLD AS YOU, MY COMRADE.



AH! GOOD DAY TO YOU, MY DARK-SKINNED FRIEND. HOW GOES IT WITH YOUR WARD, MASTER FRIEDHELM?

AS USUAL, SA-VHANT. CAN YOU IMAGINE SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES? EVEN I BEGIN TO SPIT ON HIS SELFISH SOUL. TRULY, I AWAIT THE DAY THAT I AM RID OF HIM WITH MUCH EAGERNESS.



WORRY NOT. IN JUST ONE WEEK, FRIEDHELM'S PART OF THE PACT MUST BE PAID. WE HAVE DONE OUR PART, YOU AND I. WE HAVE ENABLED FRIEDHELM TO BECOME THE WORLD'S MOST SPECTACULAR HIGH-DIVER EVER! WITH MY POWER OF FORESIGHT AND YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF ANCIENT FORGOTTEN WITCHDOCTOR INCANTATIONS AND SYMBOLS, WE HAVE MADE EACH OF FRIEDHELM'S FOOT-DEEP HOLES INTO A PILLOW CUSHION WHICH CATCHES HIS FALLING FORM AS A MOTHER CRADLES HER NEWBORN!



IT IS TRUE, SA-VHANT. HE THINKS HE IS A GOD, YET IT IS OUR DOING THAT HAS MADE HIM GREAT.

NOT SOLELY OUR DOING, FRIEND. WE MUST NOT FORGET OUR MASTER TO WHOM WE GIVE THE SPOILS OF OUR WORK. IT IS HE THAT FRIEDHELM SHOULD BE GRATEFUL TO. IT IS HE THAT HAS MADE THAT ONCE NON-ENTITY INTO A SUPER-STAR OF INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM!



THE SUN RISES SIX TIMES AND SETS ANOTHER SIX, AND WE VIEW THE TENT OF FRIEDHELM IN ALL HIS WARPED MAGNIFICENCE!

YOU PROMISED, FRIEDHELM! YOU PROMISED WE'D BE MARRIED AS SOON AS THE CIRCUS REACHED THIS TOWN. YOU CAN'T BACK OUT NOW! I'M GOING TO HAVE A CHILD...YOUR CHILD! YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO US! YOU PROMISED!





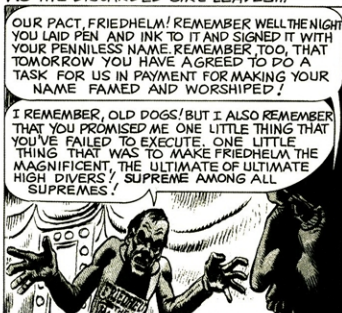
DON'T YOU EVER SPEAK TO FRIEDHELM THE MAGNIFICENT LIKE THAT! GET OUT OF HERE, YOU LITTLE JERK! I HAVE NO PROMISES TO KEEP TO ANYONE! DO YOU HEAR? NO PROMISES AT ALL!



AND WILL YOU SAY THAT TO OUR MASTER ALSO?

PLEASE LEAVE, MY DEAR! AS FREIDHELM AND I MUST DISCUSS FAR DEEPER MATTERS THAN PETTY LUST AND GREED.

*AS THE DISCARDED GIRL LEAVES...*



OUR PACT, FRIEDHELM! REMEMBER WELL THE NIGHT YOU LAID PEN AND INK TO IT AND SIGNED IT WITH YOUR PENNAMELESS NAME. REMEMBER TOO, THAT TOMORROW YOU HAVE AGREED TO DO A TASK FOR US IN PAYMENT FOR MAKING YOUR NAME FAMED AND WORSHIPED!

I REMEMBER, OLD DOGS! BUT I ALSO REMEMBER THAT YOU PROMISED ME ONE LITTLE THING THAT YOU'VE FAILED TO EXECUTE. ONE LITTLE THING THAT WAS TO MAKE FRIEDHELM THE MAGNIFICENT, THE ULTIMATE OF ULTIMATE HIGH DIVERS! SUPREME AMONG ALL SUPREMES!



YOU WERE TO ARRANGE THE LONGEST JUMP EVER ATTEMPTED BY MAN FOR ME.

I REMEMBER. IT HAS ALREADY BEEN ARRANGED. OUR AFRICAN COMRADE IS OUTSIDE MAKING THE NECESSARY PREPARATIONS AT THIS VERY MOMENT!

GOOD! VERY GOOD! I AM VERY PLEASED WITH YOU, SA-VHANT. NOW TELL ME ABOUT THE TASK.

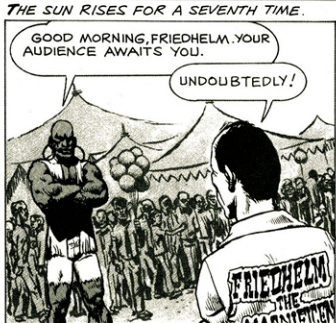
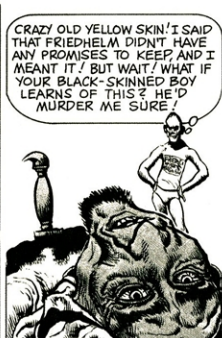


IT IS VERY SIMPLE, REALLY. AFTER TOMORROW'S PERFORMANCE, TAKE THIS KNIFE AND KILL YOURSELF!



VERY WELL. GIVE IT TO ME!





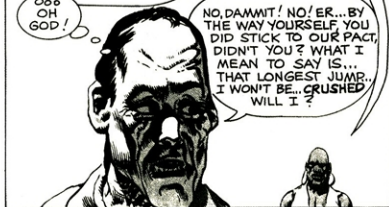
YOUR ACT IS ALL SET. TODAY, YOU JUMP THE LONGEST JUMP EVER RECORDED BY MAN.



BY THE WAY, FRIEDHELM, HAVE YOU SEEN SA-VHANT THIS MORNING?

ooo  
OH  
GOD!

NO, DAMMIT! NO! ER... BY THE WAY YOURSELF YOU DID STICK TO OUR PACT, DIDN'T YOU? WHAT I MEAN TO SAY IS... THAT LONGEST JUMP... I WON'T BE... CRUSHED WILL I?



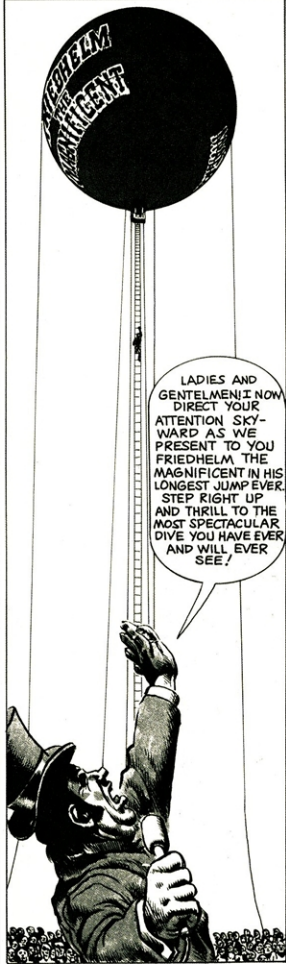
WHERE I COME FROM, TO GO AGAINST THE TERMS OF A PACT IS TO GO AGAINST THE GODS. I HAVE DONE WHAT I HAVE DONE! WHY? DOES FRIEDHELM THE MAGNIFICENT FEEL THE FINGERS OF FEAR AT HIS THROAT? IS HE... AFRAID?



OR ARE YOU JUST...  
GUILT-RIDDEN?



IS IT GUILT, FRIEDHELM? IS IT GUILT THAT MAKES YOU SHIVER AS YOU CLIMB TO THE DIVING PLATFORM?

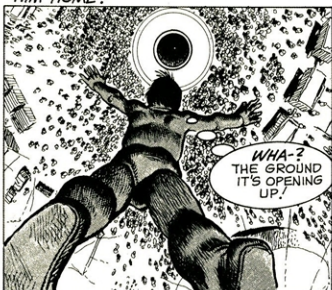


LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! I NOW DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION SKYWARD AS WE PRESENT TO YOU FRIEDHELM THE MAGNIFICENT IN HIS LONGEST JUMP EVER. STEP RIGHT UP AND THRILL TO THE MOST SPECTACULAR DIVE YOU HAVE EVER AND WILL EVER SEE!

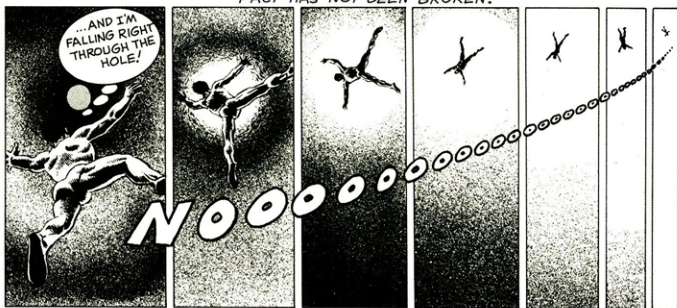
OR AREN'T YOU CAPABLE OF GUILT? PERHAPS, IT IS REALIZATION! DIVE, FRIEDHELM, DIVE!



DIVE AS YOU BEGIN TO REALIZE THE TRUTH! DIVE AS YOU REALIZE THAT YOU REALLY DIDN'T KILL SA-VHANT, YOU MERELY SENT HIM HOME!



DIVE AS YOU REALIZE JUST WHO "OUR MASTER" IS! DIVE AS YOU REALIZE THAT THE PACT HAS NOT BEEN BROKEN!



DIVE! NOW YOU KNOW THAT YOU'VE MADE THE LONGEST DIVE OF ALL TIME...  
...ALL THE WAY TO HELL!





AS ALL YOU LOYAL READERS WELL KNOW, I'M ANYTHING BUT A **WITCH**... BUT JUST THE SAME **I'VE BEEN BURNED!** I'VE BEEN THE HOST OF THIS MAGAZINE FOR MORE ISSUES THAN A **VAMPIRE** HAS **TEETH!**

...AND NOW THE **IDIOT** WRITER OF THIS **IDIOT** STORY HAS **USURPED**... TAKEN **AWAY** FROM ME... MY HONORED AND LONG HELD POSITION ONLY TO GIVE IT TO SOME **NEW IDIOT HOST!**



BUT I HAVE OPTIONS ON **REVENGE**, FAITHFUL FREAK CREEPS...AND WHILE I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO **TELL** THE FOLLOWING STORY, I'VE GOTTEN EVEN BY GIVING IT THE IDIOT **TITLE** OF...

# THE SLIPPED MICKEY CLICK FLIP

0.000... DON'T PAY ANY ATTENTION, DO YOU HEAR... TO THAT WEIRDO... HE'S JUST **MAD**. BUT THAT'S A GOOD THING, I THINK. IF I THINK I DO, WHICH IS A DANGEROUS THING BECAUSE THINKING CAN DRIVE YOU **MAD**, WHICH IS A GOOD THING TOO.

AND IT'S WHAT WE'RE ALL HERE FOR, ISN'T IT? I DON'T KNOW! I REALLY CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT BUT THAT'S TO BE EXPECTED SINCE THEY'RE ALL AFTER ME, BESIDES I THINK HE CAME UP WITH A VERY GOOD TITLE INDEED... WHICH MAY BE A **BAD** THING.

MASTER! MASTER! I DID AS YOU SAID... I FED THE HOT DOGS TO THE TELEVISION SET EVEN THOUGH IT WASN'T SET... AND I HAD TO **HUNGRY** AND I HAD TO **CUT** MY HANDS!

YOU DID WELL AND THAT HUGO AND THAT DISPLEASES ME A **REWARD!**

OH, THANK YOUUUUU...

**THUKXX**

STORY: DOUG MOENCH / ART: RICHARD CORBEN

THERE, NOW THAT THE **PLEASANTRIES** ARE OUT OF THE WAY, I WON'T BORE YOU BY INTRODUCING MYSELF AS **MR. DIMENT...**

EXCUSE ME A MOMENT...

**CLICK-LICK!**

SO THERE, YOU INEFFECTUAL **LITTLE SHOTS!** I **KNEW** YOU COULDN'T STOP ME, BUT I DID IT ANYWAY. OH **REALLY?** SAME TO YOU AND DOUBLE YOUR **MUDDERS MUSTACHE!**

WELL WE DIDN'T **REALLY** BLIP IT OUT BUT AT LEAST IT'S **BLACK!**

WE'RE **WAITING**, HUGO. I **ALREADY CLICK-LICKED**. GET OFF THE **FLOOR**, HUGO!

**BLIP!**

...YES, M-MASTER... B-B-BUT I **LIKE** THE **D-D-DARK...**

THE **VISUAL**, HUGO THE **VISUAL...** OR DO YOU WANT ANOTHER **REWARD** FOR SO **DELICIOUSLY PLEASING** ME WITH YOUR **DISOBEDIENCE?**

YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT I **DID** BACK THERE, DON'T YOU? YOU **DON'T?** THAT'S RICH, WELL, I'LL TELL YOU SOON! WE **BLIP** OUT THE **VISUAL!**

**HUGO...** GET THAT **IDIOT KNIFE** OUT OF YOUR FACE AND TUNE IN THE OTHER **VISUAL**.

AH, THERE IT IS! GOOD WORK, HUGO... REMIND ME TO BURY AN AXE IN YOUR **SKULL** LATER...



...I HATE HIM.

YES, THERE HE IS, **SMUG** AS EVER, **UNSUSPECTING** AS NEVER, DOESN'T EVEN KNOW I PULLED A **CLICK-LICK** ON HIM. WHAT A **NOBLE** MAN.

THE **IDIOT** TRIED TO **HELP** ME, BUT HE'LL **PAY**. TURN ON THE **AUDIO**, HUGO... THE **SOUND** YOU **MORON**, THE **SOUND!**



THAT'S BETTER, HUGO. NO, NO, DON'T **RUN AWAY** FROM YOUR **REWARD**. STAY AND WATCH **IDIOT NUGENT** WITH THE REST OF US.

NOW, NOW, **CRAZY** IS NOT A WORD I LIKE TO... EH? WHAT THE **DEVIL!**



YOU THINK THIS IS **CRAZY**, HUH? YOU THINK MY METHODS ARE TOO **ELABORATE**, EH? WELL LISTEN, YOU **JERKS**. **SMOKE NEVER LIES!** HOW DOES THAT GRAB YA?



NO...DON'T **ANSWER**... I'M SICK TO MY BRAIN OF HEARING FROM YOU! JUST MOVE ON TO THE NEXT PANEL! WELL... **GET OVER THERE, YOU IDIOTS!**

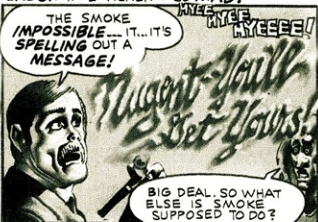
WASN'T THAT **NICE** THE WAY WE **SKIPPED AHEAD** TO THIS CAR SCENE OF IDIOT NUGENT DRIVING HOME?

OVERWROUGHT... TENSION... FATIGUE... THAT'S ALL, JUST NEED SOME **REST**. PATIENTS **GETTING** TO ME.



I ALWAYS **KNEW** HE HAD TOO MUCH COURAGE TO **RUN AWAY**... SO HE'S **DRIVING AWAY**...

AH, NOW THE IDIOT'S GETTING THE PICTURE. IMAGINE TRYING TO **CURE ME**... I'D LAUGH IF I WEREN'T SO **MAD!**



THE SMOKE **IMPOSSIBLE**... IT...IT'S **SPELLING OUT A MESSAGE!**

**BIG DEAL**. SO WHAT ELSE IS SMOKE SUPPOSED TO DO?

THAT'S IT... **FEAST** YOUR EYES ON THE **CLOWN**. IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU BELCH... BUT DON'T WORRY ABOUT INDIGESTION - YET!



I, ER, I THINK WE SHALL **TERMINATE** THIS SESSION FOR TODAY...

I ALWAYS **HEARD** PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS ENTERED THE FIELD WITH HOPES OF HELPING **THEMSELVES**.

BUT THE **CAR** WON'T HELP HIM... **WILL IT, HUGO?**



GOOD LORD! THE **HIGHWAY**...IT... IT'S **ALIVE!**

LOOK AT HIM **SWERVE** THAT CAR TO AVOID THE WRITHING RIPPLE OF CONCRETE SERPENTRY... HEE HEE...

**SHREEEE**

I REALLY DUG ON THIS OLD REVENGE BIT.



I'M GOING **INSANE**...  
IT'S UNBELIEVABLE BUT  
I'M GOING **INSANE**.



YOU MADE ME A **LIAR**, NUGENT! YOU'RE **RUNNING AWAY**. BETTER KEEP YOUR EYES  
ON THE **FLOATING BUTTERFLIES**, MR. MADNESS-TAKER...



I **WARNED** YOU, IDIOT! LOOK AT THE WAY THOSE BUTTERFLIES **EXPLODE** INTO  
DEMENTIA— SPAWNED GROTESQUERIES CRAVING TO **GORGE** UPON YOUR FLESH...  
HEY, THAT **CLICK-LICKER'S** REALLY DOING ITS STUFF!

THAT'S IT, NUGENT. **FEEL** THE PINCHING **BARB**  
OF PUNCTURING TALONS AS THEY **BITE**  
INTO YOUR EYEBALL. **POP** IT, AND **RIP**  
IT FROM ITS SOCKET, TRAILING A  
CRIMSON WASH OF SPLATTERING BLOOD...

YOU'VE **TAKEN** SO MUCH MADNESS FROM  
PEOPLE, NUGENT. YOU'VE **STOLEN** SO  
MUCH OF IT... **CURED** PEOPLE AS YOU  
PHRASE IT... THAT IT'S ALL COMING  
**BACK** AT YOU, SHRIEKING AND  
DERANGED, CLANGING **BELLS** AND  
THUMPING **DRUMS** INSIDE YOUR REVERB-  
ERATING MIND...



WE'LL LEAVE THE OTHER EYEBALL IN,  
NUGENT... SO YOU CAN **SEE** WHAT  
COMES **NEXT**!



YES, HUGO AND I AND THE **CLICK-LICKER** AND  
ALL THESE IDIOT READERS HAVE LEFT  
YOU WITH ONE **EYE**, NUGENT... SO YOU  
COULD **SEE**...

...SO YOU COULD SEE...



...TO FIND YOUR WAY **HOME**...

...YOUR **WIFE**.

SO YOU COULD **SEE**, NUGENT, AND REEL BACK IN REVULSION AT THE ABRUPT **EXPLOSION** OF YOUR BELOVED WIFE'S **STOMACH** AND THE REVOLTING SPILL OF **CORRUPT MAGGOTS** AND **TANGLE-SLIMED WORMS**.

HOW DOES IT **FEEL** TO HAVE **MADNESS**, A THOUSAND TIMES **COMPOUNDED**, STRIKE BACK, MR. PSYCHIATRIST? THAT'S IT; FLEE, THAT'S ALL YOU CAN DO AND IT WON'T DO YOU ANY **GOOD...**



COME TO ME, HOWARD, COME AND LET ME HUG YOU.



THIS IS ALL PROGRESSING RATHER **WELL**, I THINK, BUT DON'T TAKE MY WORD FOR IT, I'M DEMENTED, HAVE I INTRODUCED MYSELF YET? I **HAVE** IN THAT CASE, MY NAME IS MR. DIMENT, FINE THANK YOU.

OH, WHAT IS IT HUGO?



MASTER! MASTER! RAN OUT OF HOT DOGS TO FEED THE TELEVISION SET.

YOU **IDIOT!** YOUR NEGLIGENCE HAS ONLY **AIDED** MY CLICK-LICK PLAN IN A WAY NOT YET REVEALED... AND FOR **THAT** YOU GET

...THIS!



AH, HERE'S THE ERUDITE NUGENT AGAIN, CATCHING FORTY WINKS. GUESS, WE'RE NEARING THE **FINAL STAGES** OF OUR LITTLE PLOT HERE. AT LEAST AS FAR AS **SLEEPING SNOOTY** IS CONCERNED...





I DID IT, I DID IT,  
I DID IT!  
THE OLD  
**CLICK-LICK**  
**EXPRESS** DIDN'T  
FAIL ME!

I EVEN HAD THE  
COHERENCY OF MIND  
IF THAT'S GOOD, TO  
MAKE NUGENT'S  
END AN **IRONIC**  
ONE... HAVING  
HIS MADNESS-  
WRAPPED **HEAD**  
**PULPED.**



BUT IT DOESN'T END **HERE**,  
YOU IDIOTS! STOP **THINKING**  
SO MUCH... OR **BETTER**  
**YET, START THINKING.**  
YOU MIGHT **WARP** YOUR  
**BRAIN.**



BUT I MUST REMEM-  
BER MY **MANNERS...**  
**EXCUSE** ME A  
MINUTE ...

REMEMBER **BETTY?** NUGENT'S **WIFE**. YEAH, YEAH,  
YOU'VE GOT IT NOW, IDIOTS. WELL ANYWAY,  
I SEE HER **STOMACH'S** FEELING BETTER  
BUT THEN THE **CLICK-LICK'S** NO  
**CHAUVINIST...** IT'LL TREAT HER JUST  
AS IT TREATED HER **HUSBAND...**



WONDER WHAT'S  
GOTTEN INTO **HOWARD?**  
I CAN'T QUITE BE **CERTAIN**  
BUT HE SEEMED TO BE  
ACTING A TRIFLE  
**ODD...**

OH **BOY** AND WHAT A TREAT IT'S  
GONNA BE!

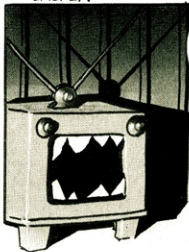


BUT MASTER, WHAT  
ABOUT THE **HOT DOGS?**

**BLIP**

SHUT UP, **PUG-FACE**  
AND HIT THE  
**VISUALS.**

I **KNEW** IT, I **KNEW** IT. HUGO, YOU'RE  
A **GENIUS...** IT'S ALL GOING TO **COME**  
**OFF SUPERBLY**, MY HUNCHEDBACKED  
LACKEY!



I WONDER WHAT'S  
ON THE **TUBE**.  
**HMPH...** HAVE TO  
REPLACE THAT  
**SCREEN** ONE  
OF THESE DAYS.

IT'S  
GETTING A  
**LITTLE WORN!**



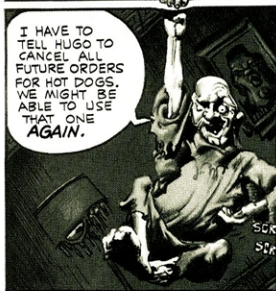
YES!REE, HUGO YOU'RE A  
DESPISED **GENIUS**, BUT IT'S ON  
THE BRINK OF INSANITY SO  
THAT'S COOL, I THINK.



THE TELEVISION IS  
**STARVED** HUGO, HYYYE,  
HYEE **HYEE!**



SERVES HER **RIGHT!** SHE  
GAVE OLD HUBBY NUGENT,  
**ADVICE** ON MY CASE WHEN  
HE WAS **TREATING** ME.  
MADNESS MAKES FOR STRANGE  
BEDFELLOWS...



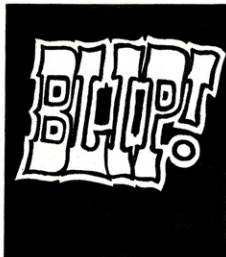
YES! THE... **DOG...**



THE LOUSY DOG USED TO BRING NUGENT HIS **SLIPPERS**. FROM WHERE I THINK, A CLEAR-CUT CASE OF **AIDING AND ABETTING THE ENEMY!**

YUP, YUP, HERE WE GO **AGAIN**. DOG ESCAPES... **TEMPORARILY!** AHEM... DOOR SLAMS IN STYMIED TELEVISION'S FACE, AND...

...DOG DISCOVERS HIS LATE MASTER'S **SKELETON**, THE ONLY REMAINS FROM THE **CLICK-LICK EXPRESS** RECENT RUN...



...AND DOG THINKING OF NOTHING BUT BONES, HELPS HIMSELF...



...CAREFREE, DOG TROTS OFF WITH PURLOINED ARMBONE OF FORMER MASTER...



...WHEREUPON THE ELATED BUT CLICK-LICKED DOG PROCEEDS TO **DIG HOLE** FOR PURLOINED ARMBONE...

...SAID HOLE EXCAVATED, DOG GLEEFULLY DROPS ARMBONE INTO IT.



NOW... HERE'S THE **BEAUTIFUL** PART, HUGO, YOU TWISTED **PARODY** OF A GRINNING **HARRIDAN**, **HYEE HYEE HYEE HYEE!!**

BEFORE THE TRAITOROUS CUR CAN FILL IN THE HOLE THE ARM-BONE SPROUTS TWO LITTLE BONEY HANDS WITH WHICH TO **COLLAR** THE MANGY MUTT...



...AND PULLS THE SQUIRMING CANINE **DOWN** INTO THE HOLE WITH IT...



...WHERE UPON IT INSIDIOUSLY SCOOPS HANDFULS OF MUSTY, SUFFOCATING **DIRT** DOWN ON TOP OF THE DOG AND ITSELF.



...UNTIL THE WHOLE SHEBANG IS BURIED, COMPLETING MY REVENGE IN A WAY WHICH ALSO OFFERS REVENGE TO ALL THE **BONES** OF THE WORLD, BURIED BY CALLOUS DOGS!



AND THE STUPID MUTT'S MASTER HAD A **HAND** ...OR AT LEAST AN **ARM**...IN IT TO BOOT!

WHADDAYA **MEAN** IT WAS A CRUEL THING TO DO TO THE DOG? WHADDYA **YOU** KNOW, YER **CRAZY**, Y'HEAR!! GROW UP!

THE DOG **DESERVED** IT... HE WAS **NUGENT'S** DOG AND NUGENT TRIED TO **CURE** ME WHEN ALL I WANTED WAS TO GO **NUTS** IN PEACE. AND THEN THAT CRETIN BETTY STEPPED IN, SO I CHOMPED **HER** GOOD TOO...



...AND EVERYONE'S ALWAYS SAYING TELEVISION'LL LEAVE YOU WITH **NO HEAD** OF YOUR OWN ANYWAY, AND SO I JUST HELPED IT ALONG, ME AND HUGO, WITH OUR **CLICK-LICK**.

**LOOK**...I DON'T HAVE TO **PUT UP** WITH THIS, YOU **IDIOTS**! QUIT **PERSECUTING** ME... I DON'T **CARE** IF YOU **DIDN'T** LIKE THE LAST NINE PAGES! I HAVE **WAYS** TO GET REVENGE...



SO I **WARN** YOU, YOU **JERKOS**...YOU'D BETTER NOT **FLIP** THIS PAGE... I **MEAN** IT... IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU, **DON'T**

**FLIP THIS PAGE...**





I KNEW YOU  
WOULDN'T BE ABLE  
TO RESIST, HYE  
HYEEHYEE  
HYEEE!

CLICK-  
LICK!

WHEW, GLAD THAT'S OVER  
WITH... I TOLD YOU  
THE GUY WAS *WEIRD*,  
RABID READERS...  
SAY, ALL OF A  
SUDDEN YOU READERS  
ARE STARTING TO  
LOOK...  
*DIFFERENT...*  
LIKE... ?GASP?  
?CHOKE?...  
LIKE *DIMENT!*

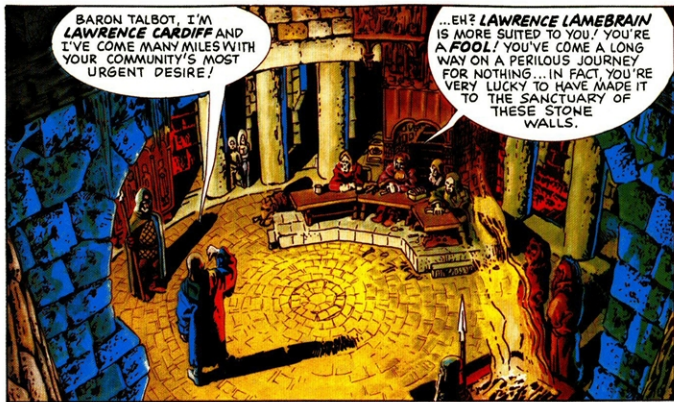


# LYCANKLUTZ

YES, **FRIGHT FREAKS**, WE'RE ENCOUNTERING ANOTHER **FOREST FIEND**! BUT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE THIS TIME. THIS TREMBLING TRAVELER IS AN ENTERPRISING OLD COOT WITH A PLAN TO AID THE MEEK FOLKS OF THIS PLAGUED LAND... AND HIMSELF.







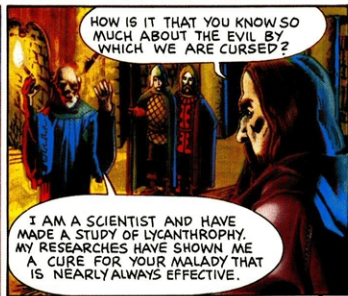
BARON TALBOT, I'M **LAWRENCE CARDIFF** AND I'VE COME MANY MILES WITH YOUR COMMUNITY'S MOST URGENT DESIRE!

...EH? **LAWRENCE LAMEBRAIN** IS MORE SUITED TO YOU! YOU'RE A **FOOL!** YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY ON A PERILOUS JOURNEY FOR NOTHING... IN FACT, YOU'RE VERY LUCKY TO HAVE MADE IT TO THE SANCTUARY OF THESE STONE WALLS.



**YES!** I KNOW A CREATURE OF SUPERNATURAL HORRORS ROAMS THESE WOODS ON NIGHTS OF THE **FULL MOON**. IT IS A **WEREWOLF!**

"EVEN A MAN WHO'S PURE OF HEART, AND SAYS HIS PRAYERS BY NIGHT... MAY BECOME A **WOLF!** WHEN THE WOLF BANE BLOOMS AND THE AUTUMN MOON IS BRIGHT!"



HOW IS IT THAT YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT THE EVIL BY WHICH WE ARE CURSED?

I AM A SCIENTIST AND HAVE MADE A STUDY OF LYCANTHROPY. MY RESEARCHES HAVE SHOWN ME A CURE FOR YOUR MALADY THAT IS NEARLY ALWAYS EFFECTIVE.



HHMM... WELL TELL US!

I THOUGHT YOU'D BE RECEPTIVE, THROUGH LABORIUS SELECTIVE BREEDING SURGICAL AND GENETIC MANIPULATION AND SUPERNATURAL INVOCATIONS, I HAVE DEVELOPED A STRAIN OF PREDATOR THAT IS ATTRACTED ONLY TO **WEREWOLVES**.



**BEHOLD! THE INCREDIBLE SILVER-FANGED FLEA!** YOU'RE FOR ONLY \$499.95. EASY TERMS. 100% DOWN.



I CAN'T BELIEVE I SAT HERE AND LISTENED TO THIS.

THROW HIM BACK OUTSIDE!

**IT'LL WORK I TELL YOU!** THE WEREWOLF WILL ITCH TO DEATH FROM MY FLEAS' DEADLY BITES.

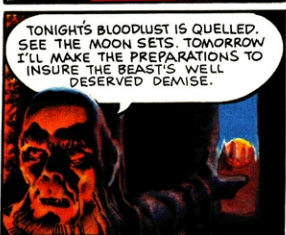


AS CARDIFF POUNDED THE TABLE, POINTED OUT THE SUPERIOR QUALITY OF HIS PRODUCT, AND CUT HIS PRICE FOR HIS VERY SPECIAL FRIENDS, A FOOLISH GIRL HURRIED TO HER HOME, HAVING DELAYED MUCH TOO LONG ON HER ERRANDS.





THE SOUNDS FINALLY CEASED AND AFTER A WHILE A RAGGED PEASANT BEGGED AN AUDIENCE AND BROUGHT FORTH THE BLOODY REMAINS OF THE GIRL.



**A BRIGHT DAWN VAINLY SOUGHT TO CHEER THE GLOOMY FOLK OF TALBOT CASTLE. ONLY CARDIFF THE FLEA SALESMAN, ABOUNDED WITH ENTHUSIASM.**











THIS CALLS FOR  
A CELEBRATION,  
MY DEAR.



POOR CARDIFF THOUGHT HE WAS  
GOING TO GET 500 POUNDS FROM  
ME. HEH, HEH, HEH! HE WON'T  
NEED IT NOW!



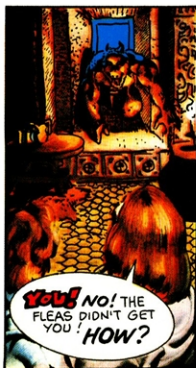
HURRY  
BOY!



BORAK WAS GENER-  
OUS IN GETTING  
OUR FEE FOR  
US!



BUT HE MIGHT  
CHANGE HIS MIND!



**YOU!** NO! THE  
FLEAS DIDN'T GET  
YOU! **HOW?**



CARDIFF READY  
FOR ANY CONTENTION  
WE BARGAIN  
FOR... **30 DAY FLEA  
COLLAR!**



**AAAARRG!**

SO ENDS OUR  
BITING TALE. I  
KNOW YOU'RE ITCHIN'  
FOR MORE SO  
SCRATCH ON TO  
MY NEXT TIDBIT!



HERE'S ONE FOR ALL YOU STOIC POETS...IT'S LOADED WITH A LOTTA FINE SLIME RHYME, A GHOST HOST WITH CLEAVER FEVER WHO GOES GASHIN' WITH A PASSION, SOME STUN FUN, AND ALL THE CREEPY JOYS OF...

# The Low Spark of High Heeled Noise!



YES IT WAS ALL THERE...ALL THE INGREDIENTS TO RAISE A HAIR THE DARK FORBODING HOUSE TOPPING THE RISE...THE CHILL GLOOM OF STARLESS STORM-SWEPT SKIES. THE LOST TRAVELER, HE KNOWS NOT WHERE...AND HIS HESITANT TREAD UPON THE CREAKING STAIR.

HARD TO PLAY THIS STRAIGHT, RAINY NIGHT, SPOOKY HOUSE, AND ME... THE TRAVELING SALESMAN WITH A FLAT TIRE. GUESS IT'S CUSTOMARY FOR ME TO WONDER IF ANYONE'S HOME...

HIS HEART FILLED WITH RELUCTANT DREAD, THE MAN WITH HIS HANKERCHIEF FURTIVELY WIPES HIS HEAD... HIS HAND IT SHAKES SLIGHTLY AS HE BEGINS TO RAP, AND HIS KNOCK IS ANSWERED BY FOOTSTEPS, A FAR SOFT TAP... SOMEWHERE CLOSE A DOG DOES GROWL, AND THE WIND IN THE DISTANCE BEGINS TO HOWL...

BUT BEFORE THE STRANDED MAN MAY LEARN THE ANSWERS HE DOES SEEK, HE MUST FIRST LISTEN TO THE DOOR'S OMINOUSLY SLOW AND WHINING CREAK... AND FACE TWO PEOPLE WITH EXPRESSIONS OF SUSPICION, WHILE HE ENTREATINGLY EXPLAINS HIS VULNERABLE CONDITION...

FLASH OF MOMENTARY DENIAL, AND HE PREPARES A RUEFUL SMILE... BUT HIS APPREHENSIONS SUBSIDE AND ARE RAPIDLY BANISHED, WHEN IT APPEARS THAT ALL OPPOSITION WILL SOON HAVE VANISHED...

YEAH? WHADDAYA WANT? DON'T YOU KNOW IT'S LATE?

AND YOU WANNA STAY HERE FOR THE NIGHT? UH-UH, NOTHING DOIN'! SEND HIM AWAY, HARRY!

SAK!  
SAK!  
SAK!

TAP  
TAP  
TAP

GUESS THAT SETTLES THE QUESTION... SOMEONE DEFINITELY IS HOME. NOW... ARE THEY FRIENDLY?

AND DO THEY HAVE A SPARE BEDROOM?

THAT'S WHY I'M **BOTHERIN'** YOU-- THAT AND THE RAIN! IF IT WEREN'T SO NASTY OUT, I'D WALK TO AN ALL-NIGHT GAS STATION-- BUT IT'S PRETTY **DESOLATE** OUT HERE AND... OH YEAH, MY NAME'S **DON GRAY** AND I'VE GOT A **FLAT TIRE** DOWN THE ROAD

I CAN'T DO **THAT**, MONA-- IT'S RAININ' **BUCKETS** OUT THERE! HE ONLY WANTS TO STAY ONE NIGHT-- PUT YOURSELF IN HIS PLACE.

COME ON IN, MR. GRAY-- DON'T MIND THE WIFE. SHE'S JUST A LITTLE SUSPICIOUS... DON'T **BLAME** HER, EITHER-- CAN'T TRUST **ANYBODY** NOWADAYS.

HERE, LEMME TAKE YOUR **COAT**... YOU'RE **SOAKED**! YOU WANNA BEER? IT'S **COLD**...

UH, NO THANKS. I'D JUST LIKE TO GET SOME **REST**-- SO I CAN BE ON MY WAY IN THE MORNING.

I'VE GOT A HUNCH IT'S MORE THAN **MERE SUSPICION** THAT'S BOTHERING THE LITTLE LADY HERE. WONDER IF THEY'VE GOT ANYTHING TO **HIDE**...

ONCE INSIDE HE SENSES THE BLEAKNESS OF SHROUDED LIES, AND HIS PERCEPTIONS ARE CONFIRMED IN THE WOMAN'S GLOWING EYES... IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND WIFE HE HAS CAUSED A RIFT, AND HIS THOUGHTS INTUITIVELY BEGIN TO DRIFT...



THE MAN CALLED GRAY FOLLOWS HIS COBITIOUS HOST GRATEFULLY,  
EVEN AS THE UNWILLING HOSTESS GLARES AFTER HIM HATEFULLY...

THE SPARE BEDROOM'S  
JUST DOWN THE UPSTAIRS  
HALL. THE SHEETS SHOULD  
BE CLEAN... WE DON'T  
**USE** THE ROOM MUCH...

I APPRECIATE YOUR  
HOSPITALITY, IF THERE'S  
ANYWAY I CAN REPAY  
YOU, I'D BE GLAD...

THE ROOM IS DUSTY AND CHOKED WITH FROTHY COBWEBS,  
AND GRAY'S FEELING OF ELATION AND RELIEF SLOWLY EBBS...  
HARD IT IS TO IMAGINE A ROOM EERIER,  
FOR IT PERFECTLY MATCHES THE HOUSE'S GRIM EXTERIOR...

AIN'T **MUCH** BUT IT'S  
THE BEST WE **GOT**, G'NIGHT,  
MR. GRAY... DON'T LET  
THE BEDBUGS BITE.

I HOPE THEY'RE  
THE **ONLY** THINGS  
WITH TEETH IN  
**THIS** ROOM.

OKAY, AND A  
NICE NIGHT TO  
YOU... AND YOUR  
**WIFE**.

AND FROM THE OPPRESSIVE PALL OF GLOOM'S  
SHADOWS WITHOUT NUMBER,  
HE SEEKS TO ESCAPE INTO THE EMBRACE OF SLEEP...  
BUT THE COMFORT OF SLEEP IS ELUSIVE,  
IN THIS DARK ROOM WHERE UNSETTLING  
THOUGHTS BECOME OSTRUSIVE...

AND OUTSIDE ON THE SHADOW-  
SLIMED STAIR,  
FEET GO A'CLIMBING WITH  
SUPREME AND CONSCIOUS CARE...

MUST BE MY IMAGINATION... BUT I FEEL  
**DANGER** HERE. GOTTA QUIT ACTING LIKE  
A FRIGHTENED KID... GET SOME SLEEP.  
NOTHING TO FEAR IN THIS HOUSE...  
EXCEPT MY **FEARS**.



TAP...

TAP...



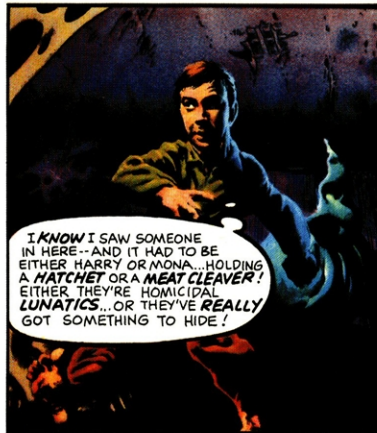
AND THE MIDNIGHT-MATED HUSH  
OF THESE SINISTER FEET TAPPING,  
GOES UNNOTICED BY THE MAN  
NOW WRAPPED IN WEARY NAPPING...

THE PERVADING SHADOWS, STYGIAN AND STEEPED IN  
MYSTERY, EMBRACE A STARK FIGURE REMINISCENT OF  
BORGIA, LUCRETIA INFAMOUS IN HISTORY...

AND ONLY THE QUIETLY SMUG KNOWLEDGE OF THE LURKING NIGHT,  
IS PRIVILEGED TO THE SIGNIFICANTLY SILENT SIGHT...  
OF A MURDEROUSLY GLINTING WEAPON RAISED TO ITS FULLY LETHAL HEIGHT...

THE CLANDESTINE MOTIVE OF THIS NIGHTSHADE FORM,  
IS DESTINED TO ERUPT WITH THE BRUTAL FURY OF A SUDDEN STORM...  
AND, WITH A LUDICROUS SLEEP-MIRED STAB OF HAND TO EYES AND NOSE,  
THE MAN CALLED GRAY EMERGES FROM HIS FITFUL DOZE...

WH- WHAT THE  
HELL...?



I KNOW I SAW SOMEONE IN HERE--AND IT HAD TO BE EITHER HARRY OR MONA...HOLDING A **HATCHET** OR A **MEAT CLEAVER**! EITHER THEY'RE **HOMICIDAL LUNATICS**...OR THEY'RE **REALLY** GOT SOMETHING TO HIDE!

AND WITH HORROR PLAYING UPON HIS SOUL ITS RESOUNDING DIRGE-LIKESONG, GRAY FRANTICALLY LEAPS FROM HIS BED TO FIND THE MIDNIGHT FIGURE GONE...

THE CHILL FINGERS OF FEAR-FRAUGHT APPREHENSION AND SUSPICION, POKE AT HIM TO SEARCH THE INKY CORRIDOR FOR SIGNS OF THE INCIDENTS REPETITION...



NO ONE OUT HERE EITHER...BUT I HEAR **VOICES** DOWNSTAIRS. SOUNDS LIKE AN **ARGUMENT**--



GOOD THING I TOOK OUT A **FIREARMS LICENSE**, NEVER KNOW **WHAT** A TRAVELING SALESMAN'LL RUN INTO.



...AND WHAT IF HE IS A **COP**, OR A **PRIVATE DICK**? THE WHOLE DEAL DEPENDED ON THE FACT THAT WE'RE SO **ISOLATED** OUT HERE...THAT NO ONE'D EVEN **COME BY**. WE'VE GOT TO GET RID OF HIM!

DON'T BE SO PARANOID, FOR CHRISSAKE! HE'S JUST A LOUSY **SALESMAN**!

SO, TOWARD THE SOUND OF VOICES RAISED IN ARGUMENT MOST SHRILL, GRAY DESCENDS THE STAIRS, CAREFUL TO BE MOST STILL...

MONA, SHE OPENS HER MOUTH AND SHOOTS SOMEONE DEAD... AND HARRY, HE PRAYS THAT, INSTEAD, SHE'D JUST SHUT UP AND GET OUT OF HIS HEAD...

AND HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT? YOU'RE SO STUPID YOU COULDN'T EVEN THINK OF A WAY TO GET RID OF THAT MISERABLE **WIFE** OF YOURS! IF IT WEREN'T FOR **ME** YOU'D STILL BE MARRIED TO HER!

YEAH? WELL, A **MEAT CLEAVER** AIN'T EXACTLY WHAT I CALL THE MOST **INGENIOUS** METHOD! NOW WHY DON'T YOU JUST **SHUT UP** AND LEAVE **ME ALONE**?!



THE ARGUMENT SIZZLES WITH DEPRECATING WORDS AND TONE, BECOMING MORE SEVERE... AND RAPIDLY DISSOLVING A FORMER RELATIONSHIP ONCE MOST DEAR...

ME LEAVE YOU ALONE?! WHAT ABOUT THE WAY YOU CREEP UP ON ME WHILE I'M SLEEPING? THAT'S RIGHT... I'M WISE TO YOU... YOU WANT TO GET RID OF ME TOO, YOU STINKIN' BLUEBEARD! BUT YOU'RE TOO SPINELESS TO ACTUALLY DO IT! YOU NEVER WOULD'VE BEEN ABLE TO **DISPOSE** OF YOUR WIFE WITHOUT ME...

THAT TAKES THE PRIZE! ACCUSING ME OF CREEPING UP ON YOU IN YOUR SLEEP. WHEN YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S CREEPT UP ON ME WITH YOUR HIGH HEELS TAPPING, TAPPING... DRIVING ME **MAD**! TRYING TO CAMOUFLAGE YOUR GUILT BEHIND COUNTER-ACCUSATIONS WON'T WORK, MONA! I WAS **BETTER** OFF WITH MY WIFE!

EVEN AS GRAY RECOILS FROM THE CRIMINAL REVELATIONS IN MORTAL DREAD, THE THOUGHTS IN HIS HEAD AND THE IMPLICATIONS THEREOF SO SWIFTLY SPREAD...

NOT ONLY DID THAT WITCH TRY TO KILL ME, BUT THEY'RE TRYING TO KNOCK **EACH OTHER OFF**! AND ALL BECAUSE THEY KILLED HARRY'S WIFE IN THE **FIRST PLACE**! ONE LEADS TO ANOTHER, I GUESS! BUT WITH THIS **GUN** I'VE GOT A CHANCE TO MAKE LIKE A **HERO**!

AND THROUGH THE VEIL OF DARKNESS, PARTING THE TAPESTRY OF GLOOM, THE MAN CALLED GRAY MAKES HIS WAY DOWN THE STAIRS AND INTO THE ROOM...

...**CAPTURE** THEM AND MAYBE COLLECT A **REWARD**. AND ON TOP OF THAT, THIS SLEAZY OLD HOUSE'LL PROBABLY GO UP FOR **AUCTION** WHEN THEY'RE CONVICTED... AND I'LL BE THE **FIRST** TO KNOW ABOUT IT...

IT AIN'T MUCH-- BUT YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN THEY'LL DECIDE TO RUN A FREEWAY THROUGH HERE... AND THAT'S MY TRADE, **BUYING AND SELLING**!

YOU STINKING LIAR! WHAT I EVER SAW IN A MOUSY CREEP LIKE YOU I'LL **NEVER** KNOW! I WISH TO HIGH HEAVEN I WERE **RID** OF YOU!

THE FEELING'S **MUTUAL**-- AND WHERE **YOU'RE** GOING YOU WON'T EVER **HAVE** TO SEE ME AGAIN, 'CAUSE THE WORM'S TURNED AND I'M TURNING ON **YOU**, SWEET MONA!



THE ONE CALLED HARRY HAS CLEARLY HAD QUITE ENOUGH, AND HIS NEW PARTNERS LIFE HE PROCEEDS WITH CANDLESTICK TO SNUFF... AND THIS SCENE OF FRENZIED VIOLENCE GRAY IS HELP TO EXPOSURE... HE QUICKLY BLANCHES, HELPLESSLY LOSING HIS COMPOSURE...



BUT SEIZING GRAY ARE THOUGHTS OF LIMITLESS GREED, AND UPON THIS INTANGIBLE COMMODITY HIS RETURNING COURAGE IS ABLE TO FEED...

ALL RIGHT, HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, HARRY! YOU'VE JUST SAVED THE TAXPAYERS THE COST OF **ONE** TRIAL... AND ENSURED YOURSELF OF BEING TRIED FOR **TWO** MURDERS...

WHA...? YOU **SAW** IT? BUT IT WAS **SELF-DEFENSE**! SHE CAME TO MY BED LAST NIGHT... WITH A MEAT CLEAVER! SHE WAS TRYING TO **KILL** ME! AND BESIDES, **SHE'S** THE ONE WHO ACTUALLY KILLED MY WIFE! I DIDN'T! I **WON'T** GO TO PRISON---



THOUGHTS OF PRISON'S CONFINEMENT THROUGH OLD AGE, MAKE SOMETHING **SNAP** WITHIN THIS HARRY AND HE ATTACKS GRAY IN BLIND RAGE...

BERSERK, THE MAN CHARGES STRAIGHT INTO FLASH AND EXPLOSION... AND HIS LIFE SEEPS AWAY, UNDERGOES THE FINAL AND IRREVOCABLE EROSION...

I WON'T GO TO PRISON! I **WON'T**! I'LL BE FREE IF IT **KILLS** ME! DO YOU **HEAR**? I'LL BE FREE IF IT----

.. **KILLS** ME!

UHHNN!



UPON THIS SCENE OF CARNAGE AND DOUBLE DEATH, THE MAN CALLED GRAY  
LEVELS A COOL SURVEY...  
AS THE CROOKED SMILE OF EVIL GREED UPON HIS LIPS BEGINS TO PLAY...

I GUESS I'VE SAVED THE  
STATE THE COST OF **TWO** TRIALS...  
AND MAYBE THE REWARD WILL  
EVEN COVER THE COST OF THIS  
HOUSE. SHOULD BE A HOT  
PROPERTY SOME DAY...

**THIRSTY**...GUESS  
KILLING IS HARD  
WORK.



AND BEFORE THE CRAVING TO  
SLAKE THIRST'S URGE DOES PASS,  
THE RUTHLESS GRAY NOTICES  
A FULL AND FROTHY GLASS...

AND GRAY CLUTCHES AT HIS  
THROAT, EXPERIENCING THE  
RESIDUE OF MONA'S HATE...  
A GLASS OF BEER FOR HARRY  
DRUGGED WITH POISONS  
SWIFT TAINT...

BUT FOR PHONE CALLS IT IS TOO  
LATE AND AS GRAY FEELS HIS  
LIFE ESSENCE BEGIN TO FADE  
AND SLOWLY SAP...THERE  
COMES A SOUND TO CHILL  
HIS DYING SOUL, THE  
PORTENTOUS SOUND OF  
A SOFT TAP...

HARRY'S BEER...HASN'T  
BEEN TOUCHED...POOR  
CLOD DIDN'T EVEN GET  
A **LAST DRINK**!

**NO...**! MONA  
MUST'VE... **POISONED**  
...HARRY'S DRINK...  
GOTTA CALL...  
DOCTOR...

**SAME TAPPING** I HEARD  
IN THE BEDROOM...BUT  
MONA'S **DEAD**...THEN ALL  
THREE OF US **WERE** VISITED  
...BY SOMEONE... BY  
SOMEONE ELSE...

HMM...TASTES FUNNY  
...MUST BE FLAT.



AND THE DYING GRAY REALIZES THAT NO MATTER HOW WELL THE DEATH OF THE **BODY** IS  
PLAYED...THE SPIRIT OF THE OLD HOUSE'S RIGHTFUL MISTRESS CANNOT BE DESTROYED...



...AND IS HEARD EVEN NOW  
WITH THE STRANGEST OF  
JOYS, IN THE LOW SPARK  
OF HIGH-HEELED NOISE.



READY FOR A HARROWING HALLOWEEN TALE, FALL FRIGHT FREAKS? THIS ONE'S ABOUT A CERTAIN HIRSUITE INDIVIDUAL WHO UNDERGOES A PERIODIC...

# CHANGE...

## into something comfortable

**AUTUMN:** THE RUSTLING SKITTER OF DRY DEAD LEAVES, SWEEPED ALONG CHILLY CONCRETE... THE AVATAR OF NATURE'S ANNUAL DEATH, THE AUGURY OF WINTER'S ICY GRIP. . .



GET A LOAD! **THIS** GUY, JIMMY! HE'S GOT A **REAL** COSTUME... LOOKS JUST LIKE THE **WOLF-MAN** IN THE **MOVIES**...

YEAH... I'LL BET HE **RENTED** IT. IT SURE AIN'T NO **HOME-MADE** COSTUME. HE'S PROBABLY GOING TO ONE OF THOSE GROWN-UP MASQUERADE PARTIES...

**AUTUMN:** A TIME OF CHANGE...IN WEATHER, IN NATURE'S COLORS, IN APPEARANCES... A TIME OF IMPERSONATION, OF BOGUS GOBLINS AND WITCHES, PRANKS AND PLEASURES ... THE TIME OF **HALLOWEEN**...



HE EVEN **WALKS** LIKE THE WOLFMAN DOES! DIDJA EVER **SEE** ANYTHING SO NEAT? I'M GONNA **TOUCH** HIS COSTUME...

I DUNNO, JIMMY. YOU KNOW HOW **STRANGERS** ARE... ESPECIALLY **GROWN-UP** STRANGERS. HE MIGHT NOT **LIKE** IT...



I'M NOT GONNA **HURT** HIS LOUSY COSTUME. BESIDES, WHAT'S HE GONNA **DO** ABOUT IT... **BITE** ME?

I STILL DON'T THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA, JIMMY. YOU NEVER KNOW **WHAT** MIGHT HAPPEN. MY MA ALWAYS SAYS...

YOUR **MA**. DON'T YOU EVER DO **ANYTHING** WITHOUT ASKIN' YOUR MA?



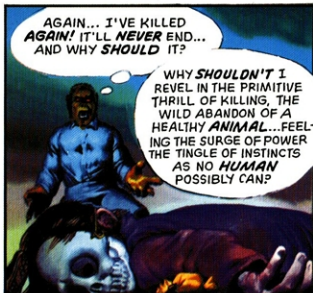
**AUTUMN:** THE YEAR'S **FREAK**...THE SEASON OF THE **WITCH**, CLOAKED IN MYSTERY AND SHROUDED WITH A FACADE OF FALSE APPEARANCE...



**AUTUMN:** A TIME OF CRYSTAL CRISP AIR, BITING WINDS, GIBBOUS MOONS... AND **MURDER**... SAVAGE PRIMORDIAL MURDER COMMITTED BY THE BEAST OF SLASHING **CLAWS** AND **FANGS**...



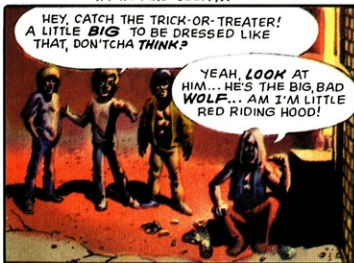
**AUTUMN:** A TIME OF IRREVOCABLE  
**CURSES** OF MOONS AND META-  
MORPHOSIS... OF **LYCANTHROPY**...



**LYCANTHROPY:** THE INEXPLICABLE, MIRACULOUS  
TRANSFORMATION FROM SENSES-DEADENED **MAN** TO  
VIBRANTLY-ALERT BEAST... THE AGES-OLD CURSE  
WHICH COMPELS ITS VICTIM TO REJOICE IN THE  
EXULTATION OF TRIUMPH... TO RENOUNCE MUNDANE  
SOCIETY'S PASSIVITY...



**HALLOWEEN:** A NIGHT LIKE ANY **OTHER**. FOR  
A GROUP OF INDOLENT TOUGHS LOITERING OUTSIDE  
THE LOCAL BILLIARD EMPORIUM... A NIGHT TO  
**HARRASS** OTHERS, TO GAPE AND SNEER, TO  
TAUNT AND JEER...



HEY, BIG BAD WOLF, YER  
GONNA HAFTA HUFF AND PUFF  
AND BLOW US ALL **DOWN** IF  
YOU WANNA GET **PAST**...





**NIGHT:** A TIME IN WHICH THE FAMILIAR BECOMES OBSCURE AND DOUBT TRANSCENDS CERTAINTY... A TIME FOR BROODING INTROSPECTION...

I LIVE TO KILL... TO KILL FOR FOOD OR IN DEFENSE... TO KILL HONESTLY, TO SATIATE A NATURAL CRAVING ...

...NOT LIKE GRIMSTONE... FORCING ME AND THE OTHERS TO ROB AND MURDER UNSUSPECTING RUBES...



THE OTHERS DIDN'T MIND BEING MOLDED TO GRIMSTONE'S EVERY WHIM... THEY WERE CONTENT TO GIVE THE MONEY TO HIM AND KEEP THE BODIES FOR THEMSELVES.

THEY WERE WHINING PAWNS... BUT ME, I MUST BE FREE... FREE TO CHOOSE WHOM I KILL...



**NIGHT:** A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY ... A TIME TO *SUBDU* THAT UNCERTAINTY UNDER A VENEER OF BOLSTERED CONFIDENCE...

NICE *COSTUME* YOU'VE GOT THERE, MISTER ... YOU SURE LOOK REAL HORRIBLE... GOING TO A MASQUERADE PARTY...?





**NIGHT:** A TIME TO *DIE*...  
ABRUPTLY, FIERCELY, TERRIBLY  
...WITH UNMITIGATED TERROR  
A CHOKING OF SOUR BILE SEARING  
A *SHRIEKING THROAT*...



**NIGHT:** A TIME WHEN THE DISTANT *UNLIKELY* BECOMES THE DREADED *POSSIBLE* WHEN THE WITCHES' SABBATH OF ALL HALLOWS EVE COINCIDES WITH THE FULL *MOON OF THE WOLF*...

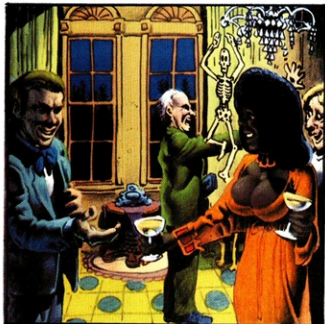


**THE WILDS:** CONDUCTIVE TO RUTHLESSNESS... WHERE THE LAW OF THE NAKED AND THE SAVAGE HOLDS *BRUTAL* SWAY, WHERE THE VICTOR DRINKS THE HOT BUBBLING NECTAR OF THE *VICTIM'S* LIFE..





**HALLOWEEN:** A NIGHT EMPLOYED BY MANY AS AN **EXCUSE** TO DRINK, TO ENGAGE IN MERRY-MAKING, TO **PARTY**...



**LYCANTHROPY:** THE AMBIVALENT AFFLICTION WHICH ENDOWS ITS HELPLESS VICTIMS WITH THE DUBIOUS VIRTUES OF A **BEAST**, WITH LIGHTLY PADDING **STEALTH**...



**A PARTY:** THE TIME FOR BANAL, EMPTY CONVERSATION, FOR **ICED DRINKS...**

...AND FOR **DEMENTED HORROR...**



**A PARTY:** A TIME FOR THE **UNEXPECTED**, THE **ANOMALOUS**...  
A TIME FOR SHOCKED INCOMPREHENSION, FOR STARK-EYED **DISBELIEF**...



**THE NIGHT:** A TIME FOR **FATE** TO PLAY ITS CAPRICIOUS MELODY OF **MYSTERY**...







**HALLOWEEN: A STRANGE NIGHT... A HEINOUS NIGHT WHEN THE DARK SIDE OF NATURE REIGNS SUPREME AND THE FORCES OF GOOD ARE HELPLESSLY SUPPRESSED... A LUNATIC NIGHT WHEN EVIL DEVOURS EVIL...**



**THE END**



# Bless Us, Father...



STORY: BILL DuBAY / ART: RICH CORBEN





POOR RANDOLPH! HE'S TRIED SO **HARD** TO MAKE **FRIENDS!**

HE'S ALWAYS BEEN A **MAMA'S-BOY**, DOROTHY!



THE KIDS IN SCHOOL ALWAYS LAUGHED AT HIM FOR THE WAY I USED TO **DRESS** HIM... FOR THE WAY I LOOKED **AFTER** HIM...!

**SISSY** THEY USED TO CALL HIM!



THOSE **RUFFIANS** ALWAYS TREATED POOR RANDOLPH SO **MEAN!**

HE **HATED** YOU FOR THAT, DOROTHY! **BLAMED** YOU FOR NOT LETTING HIM HAVE ANY **FRIENDS!**



MOMMY, HOWCUM DADDY DOESN'T **LIVE** WITH US ANYMORE?

WHEN YOU GET TO BE A BIG GIRL, MOMMY'LL EXPLAIN IT ALL TO YOU, BABY!

GOT ANOTHER **CHRISTMAS-KILLER** FOR YOU, WILLY!

A REAL **ZINGO!** ESCAPED FROM THE **NUT HOUSE** LAST NIGHT!



I **MISS** HIM, MOMMY! WHY DID HE **LEAVE?**

DADDY HAD TO **FORGET**, HONEY!

**CHOPPED-UP** A WOMAN OVER ON THE WEST SIDE, NOT FAR FROM HERE!



HOWCUM DADDY CAN'T COME TO **SEE** ME...IT'S **CHRISTMAS...**

DADDY LIVES **FAR AWAY** NOW, IN A BIG CITY CALLED **NEW YORK!**

ONE OF THE BOYS GOT A **LOOK** AT HIM! DRESSED UP LIKE A **SIDEWALK-SANTA**, AS USUAL...

...EVEN HAD THE USUAL **MEAT AXE** FOR HIS **WORK!**



LIAR! HE ALWAYS LOVED ME! THAT'S WHY WE'VE BEEN SO CLOSE...

HE'D KILL YOU IF HE HAD THE GUTS!



IT'S YOU HE'S ALWAYS HATED! THE WAY YOU'VE ALWAYS YELLED AT ME... ALWAYS BEAT ME!

THE ONLY THING HE COULDN'T STAND WAS YOUR NAGGING! POOR KID, IT'S NO WONDER HE TURNED OUT LIKE HE DID!

YOU'RE ALWAYS DRUNK ON CHRISTMAS, DICK! YOU'RE A BUM!



ALWAYS YOU BLAME ME FOR RANDOLPH'S SICKNESS! I DO MY BEST AND THIS IS THE THANKS I GET!

SHADDUP, DOROTHY! I'M SICK OF HEARING WHAT A GREAT MOTHER YOU'VE BEEN TO THAT CRAZY...



IS NEWWORK PRETTY LIKE SAM FRANCISCO, MOMMY?

NEW YORK IS A BIG, LONELY PLACE, BABY!

THINGS LIKE THIS JUST DON'T HAPPEN WHERE I COME FROM!

THEY ONLY HAPPEN HERE ON CHRISTMAS... JUST LIKE CLOCK WORK!

WATCH OUT FOR HIM, WILLY...!



YOU MEAN NOBODY LIVES THERE?

NOT EXACTLY LOVER! SO MANY PEOPLE LIVE THERE THAT IT'S HARD FOR THEM ALL TO GET ALONG!

DAMN! WHY DOES A THING LIKE THIS HAVE TO HAPPEN ON CHRISTMAS!

WHY CAN'T PEOPLE GET ALONG?



YOU MEAN THEY FIGHT LIKE YOU AND DADDY USED TO...?

WELL...

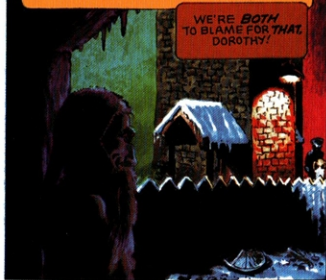
YOU BEEN SCREECHIN' AT ME FOR TWENTY-ODD YEARS, WOMAN... I'VE HAD IT...





YOU BLAME *ME* FOR THAT, TOO, DON'T YOU, JACK? YOU BLAME ME FOR WHAT RANDOLPH DID TO THAT *LITTLE GIRL*!!

WE'RE *BOTH* TO BLAME FOR *THAT* DOROTHY!



WE NEVER GAVE RANDOLPH ENOUGH *LOVE*! AND WHEN HE WAS *SPURNED* BY GIRLS HIS OWN AGE... HE... HE HAD TO TURN *ELSEWHERE* FOR THAT LOVE...!

THAT POOR, *POOR* LITTLE GIRL...



RANDOLPH'S CLOUDED MIND MUST BE BLAMING *HER* FOR WHERE HE IS TODAY ... LOCKED IN THAT *INSTITUTION*!

IT'S *OUR* FAULT, DOROTHY... OUR FAULT AS *PARENTS*...



MOMMY, YOU AND DADDY AREN'T *MARRIED* ANYMORE, ARE YOU?

DO ALL FIVE-YEAR OLDS ASK AS MANY *QUESTIONS* AS YOU, SWEETHEART?



DANIELLE'S MOMMY AND DADDY GOT A *DIVORCE*, TOO...

AND DANIELLE SAYS THAT MEANS SHE DON'T HAVE A *DADDY* NO MORE!



IS DADDY *STILL* MY DADDY, MOMMY?

OH, BABY! OF *COURSE* HE *IS*! JUST BECAUSE DADDY IS NO LONGER *MARRIED* TO MOMMY DOESN'T M...MEAN...



DO YOU THINK RANDOLPH IS HAVING A  
**GOOD CHRISTMAS, JACK?**

IF HE WASN'T, HE'D  
FIND A WAY TO COME  
HOME TO US,  
DOROTHY!



MUMMY, WHY ARE  
YOU **CRYING?**

I... IT'S **NOTHING**,  
BABY. ON DAYS  
LIKE **THIS...** YOUR  
MOTHER JUST  
WONDERS IF SHE  
DID THE **RIGHT**  
**THING...**



I'M GLAD HE'S **HAPPY**  
FOR ONCE, JACK!

IT'S BEEN  
SO **SELDOM**  
THAT POOR  
RANDOLPH HAS  
EVER BEEN  
ABLE TO BE  
**HAPPY!**



I DON'T **UNDERSTAND**, MOMMY!

YOU WILL **SOMEDAY**,  
LITTLE ONE...

... **SOMEDAY...**



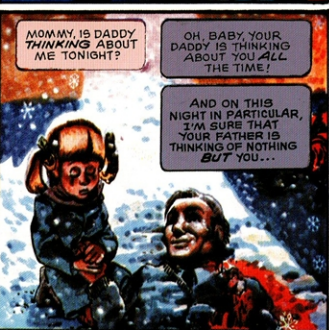
WE HAVE TO **LIVE** WITH THAT,  
DOROTHY! WHEN PARENTS **FAIL**, THEY HAVE  
TO LIVE WITH THAT UNTIL THE DAY THEY  
**DIE...**



MOMMY, IS DADDY  
**THINKING** ABOUT  
ME TONIGHT?

OH, BABY, YOUR  
DADDY IS THINKING  
ABOUT YOU **ALL**  
THE TIME!

AND ON THIS  
NIGHT IN PARTICULAR,  
I'M SURE THAT  
YOUR FATHER IS  
THINKING OF **NOTHING**  
**BUT** YOU...



JUST A FEW HOURS AGO, **LIONS** HAD RUN ACROSS THE TERRAIN WITHIN HIS HEAD, AND HE HAD **SLAIN THE LIONS!**



THE WOMAN WITH HIM DID NOT **KNOW THIS EXACTLY**, BUT SHE HAD READ THE **FILE** ON LUCIEN... "SHY, DANGEROUSLY OVER-IMAGINATIVE, TENDENCY TO RETREAT FROM ALL PROBLEMS INTO FANTASY..."



BUT PERHAPS HIS **NEW GUARDIAN** WOULD BE ABLE TO **BREAK** HIM OF THESE DISCONCERTING TRAITS. SHE HOPED SO...



**FORCING HIMSELF TO FACE THE REAL WORLD FOR THE MOMENT, HE LOOKED AT HIS NEW HOME... IT WAS TO BE HIS SEVENTH, SINCE HIS PARENTS DIED...**



**IT WAS TO BE ANOTHER MEETING OF WILLS. ALREADY, MRS. GILLFODDER WAS INSPECTING HER NEW PAYING GUEST...**



**AND LUCIEN HAD NO DOUBTS AS TO WHO WOULD DOMINATE HERE. HE COULD NOT WIN! HE NEVER DID.**



THE USUAL WORDS WERE SPOKEN...

AN INTRODUCTION WAS HALF-HEARTEDLY MADE...

HE HAD HEARD IT ALL BEFORE...!



PERHAPS WE SHOULD MENTION, THOUGH, THAT LUCIEN'S PARENTS BECAME DECEASED, BECAUSE SOME WILD DOGS TORE THEM APART. LUCIEN, QUITE UNDERSTANDABLY, TENDED TO BE NERVOUS AROUND ANYTHING VAGUELY CANINE ...



# THE HERO WITHIN



ADULTS WERE **DISCONCERTED** BY LUCIEN'S ABILITY TO SLIP OUT OF THEIR REALITY, AND INTO HIS OWN **FANTASIES...**

BUT THEN, ADULTS NEVER SEEMED TO OFFER HIM VERY **PLEASANT** REALITIES.



YET, IT WAS NOT ONLY ESCAPE FROM *REALITY* HE SOUGHT... BUT ESCAPE FROM THE *SELF* AS WELL... ESCAPE FROM THE *OUTSIDE* LUCIEN...



YES!  
IT IS MAGIC!  
I CAN FEEL IT  
WORKING...



...FOR THERE WAS A *STRONGER, BRAVER,*  
*BETTER* LUCIEN THAT LIVED *WITHIN*...



...I CAN FEEL  
MYSELF  
CHANGING!



IT WAS INDEED *POWERFUL*  
MAGIC... THE DANK, DISMAL  
WALLS THAT HELD HIM THEIR  
*CAPTIVE* WERE GONE NOW...  
HE WAS *FREE*...



YET HIS FREEDOM MEANT  
THAT THIS *CREATURE* WHICH  
HAD ONCE BEEN THE *DOG*  
WAS *FREE* AS WELL...



AND, LUCIEN'S GREATEST  
FEAR WAS SOMETHING  
HE COULD *NOT* ESCAPE...



IT IS SOMETHING HE  
HAS TO *FACE*...



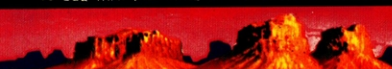
A *THREATENING*  
STANCE... AND SOMEHOW  
THE CREATURE THAT ONCE  
WAS DOG KNOWS IT IS *OUT-  
CLASSED*... IT STANDS A  
FEW SECONDS, THEN *TURNS*  
*TAIL* ... AND *RUNS*...

AND, THE BEING THAT ONCE WAS LUCIEN LOOKS  
ABOUT HIMSELF AT A WORLD TO BE *EXPLORED*...  
AND, AT ONCE, THE *EXPLORATION* BEGINS...





*RUNNING... RUNNING... THEN LOOKING BACK,  
TO SEE THAT YOU HAVE OUT-DISTANCED YOUR FOE...*



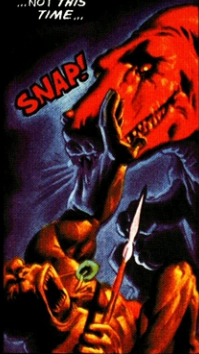
*...ONLY TO FIND A  
FAMILIAR FOE IN FRONT  
OF YOU... STARTLED INTO  
PROUD ACTION BY YOUR  
SUDDEN APPROACH.*



AND, *SURPRISED*, THE CREATURE  
DOES *NOT* BACK OFF...



...NOT THIS  
TIME...



...NOT UNTIL...



HE FUMBLES TO *REGAIN* THE  
ROCK... FUMBLES TO *SUSTAIN*  
THE *DREAM*...

AND ONLY ONCE HE HAS TAKEN THE WOMAN'S *HAND*  
AGAIN, DOES HE NOTICE THE *ADDITIONAL* DAMAGE  
THE FIGHT HAS BROUGHT...



YES, HE HAD *FUMBLING*...  
AND HE HAD *LOST*...





HE HEARD A **SHRILL, UNCOMFORTABLE VOICE...**  
A VOICE THAT COULD ONLY EXIST IN THE **REAL**  
WORLD... HE TURNED AND MET **PIERCING**  
**GLARES...**

REALITY... EVERYTHING HAD **CHANGED...** HE  
WAS **LUCIEN NOW...** AND THE ONE HE HAD  
SO **HEROICALLY SAVED--**



LOOK!  
SEE I TOLD  
YOU HE WAS A  
**THIEF!**

YOU HAD  
MY DOLL ALL  
THE TIME!



NO! IT  
CAN'T BE!

I SAVED A  
PERSON! SOME-  
ONE WHO WOULD  
KNOW! I... I

**REACTION...**

**PUNISHMENT...**

**...AND AN UNEXPECTED INTRUDER...**



I'VE TAKEN  
A VIPER TO MY  
BOSOM! WHAT  
A **HORRID**  
CHILD!



YOU CAN  
JUST STAY  
DOWN THERE  
TILL  
**TOMORROW!**

**SLAM!**



OH MAMMA!  
IT'S HIM!

THE **ROCK!**  
GOTTA FIND  
THE **ROCK!**

BUT THE **ROCK** WAS **GONE...**  
**ROLLED** SOMEWHERE  
PERHAPS... AND HE COULD  
NOT **CHANGE...** EVEN IF  
THE CHANGE WAS IN HIS  
MIND, IT WAS THE **ROCK**  
THAT SET IT OFF... HE COULD  
NOT **CHANGE!** HE COULD  
ONLY SCREAM...!

THEY HEARD HIM UPSTAIRS  
...AND THEY **IGNORED** HIM  
...HE WAS ONLY TRYING TO  
GET **ATTENTION...** IT HAD  
BECOME A **CONTEST** OF  
WILLS, AND THEY WEREN'T  
ABOUT TO **GIVE IN...**  
HE'D **LEARN...**

**GNAAA!**

**GRRROOWRR!**

THE AIR IS ELECTRIFIED WITH TENSE EXCITEMENT AS A SMALL EXPEDITION PENETRATES DEEP INTO THE UNKNOWN CAVERN. THEY SEARCH FOR THE FORBIDDEN TOMB OF THE ANCIENT HIGH PRIEST **KHARTUKA**. GUARDED WHISPERS AND BANNED LEGENDS HINTED AT THE LIKELIHOOD OF A **HIDDEN TREASURE**. ... THOUGH OFFICIAL NATIVE RECORDS IGNORED THE POSSIBILITY. A FEW ARCHAEOLOGISTS SOUGHT THE FORGOTTEN EDIFICE FOR YEARS, BUT IT IS ONLY **NOW** THAT THIS CREW OF ADVENTUROUS SCHOLARS STUMBLE UPON THE ENTRANCE TO THIS MUSTY EGYPTIAN TOMB.

IT'S SO **BIG**  
... AND **SPOOKY**  
IN HERE!

JUST THINK, SANDY,  
WE'RE TREADING THESE  
STEPS WHERE NO ONE HAS  
WALKED FOR CENTURIES.

IT SURPASSES  
ALL MY EXPECTATIONS  
FOR SHEER **DEMONICAL**  
STRANGENESS.

LET'S GO  
BACK!

... EXPLORERS SEEKING GLORY, FORTUNE AND FAME. BUT THAT ISN'T  
WHAT THEY'LL FIND! NOT IN THE...

# TERROR TOMB



THIS TOMB IS  
**VAST, JACK!** IT'LL  
TAKE US WEEKS TO FIND  
THE SARCOPHAGUS! **MONTHS**  
EVEN! AND WE MAY NEVER  
FIND IT IF IT'S **HIDDEN!**

MAYBE NOT, BUT  
THAT'S ONE OF THE  
REASONS WE BROUGHT  
**SNOOFER** ALONG!

EVEN AS THE EXPLORERS BATHED IN THE **GLORY** OF FINDING THE TOMB,  
PLANS WERE BEING FORMED TO THWART THEIR DREAMS OF GRANDEUR...



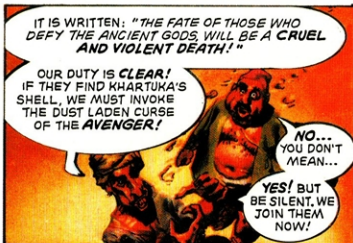
WHAT CAN  
WE **DO**, MASTER?  
THEY HAPPENED  
UPON THE HOLY CAVE  
DESPITE OUR EFFORTS  
TO MISLEAD  
THEM.

**SILENCE, WORMA!**  
WE'LL ABORT THIS  
MISSION OR MY NAME  
ISN'T **HARDOFF**  
**BEY!**



THESE BLASPHEMOUS YANKEES  
MEAN TO **DEFILE KHARTUKA'S**  
SACRED TOMB! THEY'LL **PLUNDER**  
THE RELIGIOUS TREASURES FOR THEIR  
OWN SELFISH **PROFIT!** THIS SACRI-  
LIGIOUS **FARCE** WILL BE A COMMER-  
CIAL **SUCCESS** FOR THEM!

THE  
**CREEPS!**



IT IS WRITTEN: "THE FATE OF THOSE WHO  
DEFY THE ANCIENT GODS, WILL BE A CRUEL  
AND VIOLENT DEATH!"

OUR DUTY IS **CLEAR!**  
IF THEY FIND KHARTUKA'S  
SHELL, WE MUST INVOKE  
THE DUST LADEN CURSE  
OF THE **AVENGER!**

**NO...**  
YOU DON'T  
MEAN...

**YES!** BUT  
BE SILENT, WE  
JOIN THEM  
NOW!



STOP SITTING THERE, SNOOFER! GO  
FIND SOME BONES! GO GET 'EM, BOY!  
**SIC 'EM!**

HERE,  
I'LL SHOW  
YA, DOC!



FIND THEM BONES OR I'LL  
**BLOW YOUR HEAD OFF!**

**YIPE!**



YA GOTTA  
KNOW HOW TO TALK  
TO THESE SPECIALIZED  
HIGH-STRUNG PURE  
BREDS!

**WOOF WOOF WOOF**











WORMA, WAKE  
UP, YOU DOLT! THE  
INFIDELS ARE RETURN-  
ING! HELP ME REMOVE  
KHARTUKA...



QUICK!  
FETCH THE LEBEN  
TEA. MAYBE ANOTHER  
SHOT WILL GET  
HIM GOING!



JOY-FILLED ADVENTURERS, THEIR ARMS FILLED WITH *PRECIOUS TREASURE* MARCH BACK THROUGH THE CAVERNOUS TOMB. THEY HAVE *FOUND* THE RICHES THEY SO LECHEROUSLY SOUGHT...

HEH HEH HEH!  
WE'LL BE RICH. I'LL  
BUY A COUPLE  
MANSIONS AND  
YACHTS...

I'LL HAVE A  
SEPARATE WARDROBE  
FOR EVERY DAY OF THE  
YEAR AND FIFTY...MAYBE  
SIXTY FUR COATS.

YEAH! I  
BET THEY'LL  
EVEN PUT OUR  
PICTURES IN  
THE MUSEUM  
QUARTERLY.



YOU HOLD 'IM  
UP, I'LL POUR IT  
DOWN HIM!



THE MYSTIC *SECRET* OF  
THE ANCIENTS WORKED!  
HE'S GOING NOW! KILL,  
KHARTUKA!



THAT HAT MAKES  
YOU LOOK LIKE A  
REAL EGYPTIAN  
PRINCESS  
YEAH?



DOES THAT MEAN  
I'LL BE A MUMMY  
SOME DAY, TOO?



HEY! JUST  
REALIZED...WHERE  
IS HARDOFF BEY...



...AND WORMA?  
...AND THAT DOG,  
SNOOFER? HERE,  
SNOOFER!



SNOOFER!  
WHOOPS!

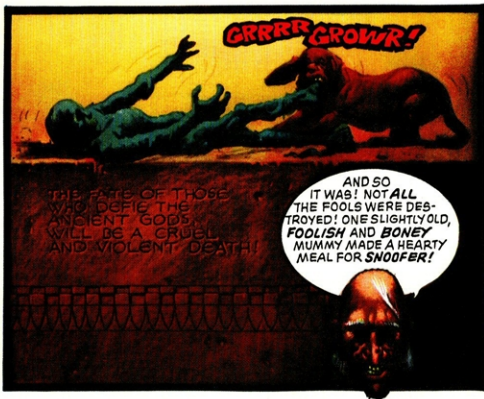
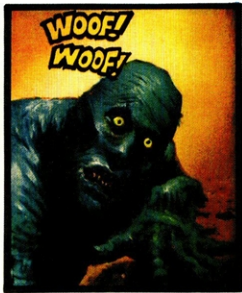
WHAT  
THE...

OOF!



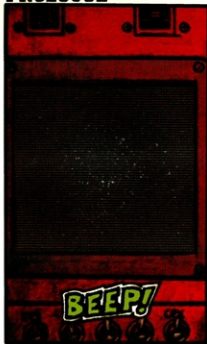
YAAAAAAAAAAAA







# PROLOGUE



LT. ROBERT ST JOHN SITS HUNCHED  
OVER AN EVER-FLICKERING VISI-  
SCREEN! THE PICTURE IS BLEAK-GRIM!

THERE ARE WARSHIPS... THOUSANDS  
OF THEM... STREAKING DIRECTLY  
TOWARD EMERALD EARTH!

THE SOLAR CORPS OFFICER KNOWS HE  
IS THE ONLY MAN ALIVE WHO CAN  
STOP THEM! UNFORTUNATELY, FATE  
HAS CHOSEN HIM TO PLAY THE ROLE  
OF...

# JUDAS

WHAT ARE THE LAST LONELY  
THOUGHTS OF AN ISOLATED  
HUMAN WITH MERE MINUTES TO  
LIVE? WE SHALL NEVER KNOW...  
UNTIL WE CONFRONT DEATH'S  
COLD VISAGE!



BUT LT. ST JOHN KNOWS... KNOWS ALL TOO WELL!

ST JOHN! DEEP  
SPACE PROBES INDICATE  
WE ARE UNDER  
IMMINENT THREAT OF  
INVASION!

THE UN HAS  
CHOSEN COL.  
IVAN GORGOVICH  
TO HEAD EARTH'S  
LAST HOPE...  
PROJECT  
OMEGA!

YOU  
WILL BE  
BACK-UP MAN!  
FOR THIS VITAL  
OPERATION!

ONLY ONE GOAL RANKS  
WITH PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE  
... WINNING!

ST JOHN'S ENTIRE EXISTENCE  
HAS BEEN DEVOTED TO  
SAVORING THE UNBRIDLED  
JOYS OF FAR-FLUNG  
FAME AND FORTUNE ...



BEEP!

...AND HE WAS WILLING TO STOP AT *NOTHING* TO  
ACHIEVE IT...

...INCLUDING MURDER!

I'VE *CROSSED*  
THE MAIN POWER  
TERMINALS OF THE  
FLIGHT  
SIMULATOR!

WHEN THE  
GOOD COLONEL  
ACTIVATES THE  
UNIT HE'LL BE...

INCINERATED! THAT WAS  
THE ONLY WORD ST JOHN COULD  
THINK OF WHEN HE HEARD THE  
COSMONAUT'S SEARING SCREAM, AND  
SMELLED THE NOISOME FOULNESS  
OF SCORCHED FLESH!

BEEP!

SOMETHING'S GONE  
WRONG... DANGEROUSLY,  
DRASTICALLY  
AWRY!

WE'VE NO OTHER  
ALTERNATIVE, ST JOHN  
... YOU MUST HEAD  
PROJECT  
OMEGA!

YESSIR!

HISTORY! HE WAS MAKING HISTORY! AT LAST HE  
WAS CLAIMING THE ELUSIVE DESTINY THAT WAS  
RIGHTFULLY HIS!

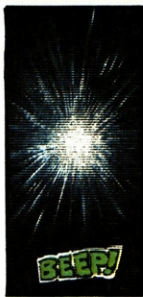
YET, THE SENSATION WAS SOMEHOW EMPTY...  
MEANINGLESS! IT WAS NOT THE GRAND EUPHORIA  
HE WAS SO DESPERATELY SEEKING...



ST JOHN HAS TASTED SUCCESS IN IT'S MANY FORMS... BUT NOW FINDS THEM ALL HOLLOW... LACKING!



LOOMING DEATH CAN DO THAT TO A MAN... BUILD A WALL AROUND HIM... MAKE HIM FEEL SEPARATED AND ALONE!



SOLAR CORPS LIEUTENANT ROBERT ST JOHN WAS ROCKETED ALOFT TODAY ABOARD A SPECIALLY DESIGNED, CAMOUFLAGED SPACE CAPSULE... WHERE HE'LL REMAIN IN ORBIT FOR SIX MONTHS WAITING TO INTERCEPT AN ARMADA OF UNKNOWN, ALIEN ATTACKERS!

THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD HAVE UNITED IN A COMMON CAUSE OF BUILDING THE VERY FIRST COBALT BOMB! THE AMERICAN ASTRONAUT ACTING LIKE A PROVERBIAL TROJAN HORSE WILL DETONATE THE DOOMSDAY WEAPON WHEN THE INVADERS COME WITHIN RANGE!

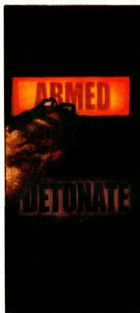
AND NOW, THE LOCAL SCENE! RIOT POLICE AGAIN FIRED TEAR GAS AT MOBS PROTESTING BEFORE THE WHITE HOUSE! THE DEMONSTRATORS CLAIMED WASHINGTON IS NOT FUNDING SUFFICIENT MEDICAL AID TO THE POOR!

MORE ON THIS AND OTHER TOP HEADLINES, AFTER A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR...!

ANXIETY! A DREAD EMOTION THAT MAKES MEN SWEAT! IT'S A GODLESS FEELING TO DIE ALONE! DON'T YOU AGREE, LIEUTENANT?

DON'T YOU...?







HUMAN! THE  
YHAN LIVE ONLY TO  
DESTROY ALL THINGS! SPARE  
US TO FULFILL OUR MIGHTY  
FATE AND WE WILL MAKE  
YOU IMMORTAL!

THIS IS  
NO MERE TRICK!  
MY IMPERIAL  
WORD IS  
LAW!

IMMORTAL!



HOW COULD  
YOU AGREE TO  
VOLUNTEER, BOB? WHAT  
ABOUT ME AND THE  
BABY? DON'T YOU  
CARE ABOUT US?

SURE I DO,  
SUZZIE! IT'S JUST  
THAT PROJECT OMEGA  
IS MORE IMPORTANT...  
BIGGER THAN ALL  
OF US!

DON'T YOU  
KNOW THAT?

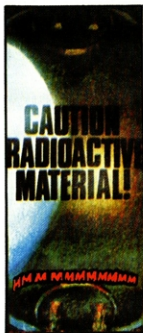


I  
AWAIT YOUR  
DECISION!



I ONLY  
KNOW I'M MARRIED TO  
A STRANGER! YOU'RE SO  
BUSY ACTING COLD AND  
UNLOVING YOU DON'T HAVE  
TIME TO BE A MAN! YOU'RE  
A MACHINE!

IT ISN'T  
THAT I HATE YOU!  
IT'S JUST THAT I  
SUDDENLY REALIZE  
THERE'S NEVER BEEN  
ANYTHING REALLY  
BETWEEN US!



IT'S A  
FACT, SON... YOU  
HAVE TO BE A  
BACKSTABBER  
AT TIMES! REMEMBER  
THAT!

I WILL,  
DAD! NO  
MATTER WHAT  
HAPPENS... I'LL  
NEVER  
FORGET!

THAT'S  
A PROMISE!



YOUR  
ANSWER, HUMAN  
... I MUST HAVE  
IT...

... NOW!



WHAT I HAVE TO SAY PROBABLY DOESN'T MEAN MUCH... BUT MAYBE SOMEDAY YOU'LL REMEMBER IT AND THINK OF ME...

AT ONE TIME... I USED TO LOVE YOU, BOB... LOVE YOU VERY MUCH!

GOODBYE, DARLING! I HOPE YOU CAN FIND PEACE WITH YOURSELF!

ST JOHN SEES HIMSELF THE WAY HE REALLY IS! BEHIND THE HERO LURKS A BASE-BORN COWARD!

THE YOUNG ASTRONAUT WALKS LIKE A MAN IN A DREAM UP THE RAMP OF THE THAN FLAGSHIP!



GOD HELP ME!

MY ANSWER IS... YES!



...A DREAM THAT IS SWIFTLY BROKEN... AS A ROARING SUIT-RADIO REPORTS AUTOMATIC ENGINES HAVE BLAZED INTO LIFE... FOREVER EXILING THE DREAD BOMB FROM THE SOLAR SYSTEM!



HE HAS KEPT HIS HALF OF THE BARGAIN! A TRIO OF GUSTERING METAL CREATURES ESCORTS HIM TO AN OPERATING CUBICLE... WHERE THEY WILL COMPLETE THE PACT!

LT. ST JOHN IS STRAPPED DOWN BY STAR-SURGEONS! A DRUG-GAS CAUSES THE HUMAN TO SLEEP!



THE ABSTRACT ELEMENT OF TIME PASSES. THE NOW-IMMORTAL MAN AWAKES TO DISCOVER HIS BRAIN HAS BEEN TRANSPLANTED INTO AN ALIEN MECO-FORM!

A PLAN QUICKLY TAKES SHAPE! PERHAPS THE LIEUTENANT CAN USE THESE STRANGELY HONOR-BOUND BEINGS TO SALVAGE HIS OWN SHATTERED EGO...

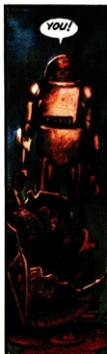


YOU'VE GIVEN ME A NEW BODY... ONE THAT WILL ENDURE A THOUSAND LIFETIMES!

I'D LIKE TO PERSONALLY THANK YOUR LEADER... FOR HIS GENEROSITY!

SUCH A MEETING CAN BE ARRANGED! FOLLOW ME!

ST JOHN SOON FINDS HIMSELF IN THE  
HIGHLORD'S PRIVATE QUARTERS...



# EPICLOGUE



WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE GOVERNMENT EVER DECIDED TO MASTER THE MYSTIC ARTS? IT'S ALL SPELLED OUT FOR YOU IN ...

# DEMON IN THE COCKPIT



**SMELL:** STRETCHES OF  
BURNING, BLAZING **DESERT...**  
A BEARING, NOON-DAY SUN...  
THE **UTAH BADLANDS!**

**HEAR:** THE RAUCOUS WHINE OF A **JET-COPTER...** STEEL  
RIBBED PRODUCT OF A **POLLUTION-FRAUGHT** TECHNOLOGY!

**SEE:** TWO MEN... TENSE, TIGHT-LIPPED! THEY  
**STARE** MUTELY AHEAD AT THE BLEAK, HEAT-  
SCORCHED **NOTHINGNESS!**



WE'RE  
ALMOST  
THERE!

THEN, THE ONE  
IN THE PILOT'S  
CHAIR **TURNS** AND  
**SPEAKS...**

THE PASSENGER CURTLY NODS HIS  
HEAD IN **ACKNOWLEDGMENT!** HE  
MAKES NO OTHER REPLY! **PERHAPS**  
IT IS BECAUSE HIS FURROWED BROW...

...HIS WRINKLE-WORRIED FEATURES  
ARE **CONCERNED** WITH MORE  
IMPORTANT MATTERS... LIKE  
**WAR** AND **DEATH...**



... **PERHAPS...**



STORY: RICH MARGOPOULOS / ART: RICH CORBEN



ROTORS BEATING IN A MAD, CIRCULAR **FRENZY**... THE AIRCRAFT **ALIGHTS** AT THE BASE OF A MASSIVE **MOUNTAIN-FORTRESS**...

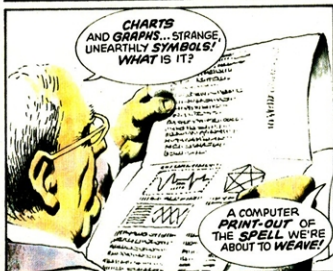


THE VEHICLE HUMS ALONG UNTIL IT ARRIVES AT **CONTROL CENTRAL!**



"THIS **UNDERGROUND** COMPLEX... **PROJECT MYSTIC WAND...** IS WORKING ON A **NEW FORM** OF **WARFARE...** ONE THAT WILL MAKE **ATOMIC ATTACK OBSOLETE!** IT **BEGAN** WHEN ONE OF OUR **RESEARCHERS** **STUMBLED** ACROSS THE **AXIOM!**"









CURIOUS?  
**GOOD!**

THE  
**DOCTOR** RECENTLY  
COMPLETED A STUDY  
ON **WITCHCRAFT**... AND  
**FED** THE RESULTS IN-  
TO THE PROJECT'S  
**COMPUTERS!**

OUR  
**DATA BANKS**  
DEVELOPED THE  
**SPELL** YOU WERE  
JUST LOOKING  
AT!



THE  
DOC'S GIVING  
US THE **HIGH**  
**SIGN**, MR. JACOBS...  
THE **SIGNAL** TO  
START!

OKAY, TOM,  
**ACTIVATE** THE  
VIDEO RECORDERS!  
I WANT THIS **ALL**  
ON TAPE!



ACTUALLY,  
THE GOWN-LIKE  
TRAPPING **ISN'T**  
NECESSARY!

IT'S  
JUST THAT DR.  
MARIANO FEELS  
MORE **SECURE**  
WITH THEM... A  
**PSYCHOLOGICAL**  
**CATCH**, SO TO  
SPEAK!



**Y'SURIL!**  
**EVILMOST**  
BEING... **LOWEST**  
ONE AMIDST THE  
**FETID** GOOS!  
**HEAR ME!**

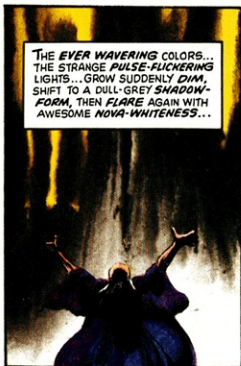
THOUGH  
MY SOUL MAY  
**SUFFER** ETERNAL  
**DAMNATION**...  
I CALL THEE  
**FORTH!**



REGISTERS  
ARE PICKING UP  
**PSYCHIC** ENERGY...  
TANNING **ALL**  
WAVE-LENGTHS!

AND  
THAT'S  
NOT ALL!  
**LOOK!**

A  
CHURNING  
**FUNNEL**... A  
SOFTLY SHIMMER-  
ING **VORTEX** OF  
**LIGHT**... IN  
**MID-AIR!**



SILKEN ROBES RUSTLING...  
THE AGED MAN SCURRIES  
FOR THE *SECURITY* OF THE  
STEEL-LINED *SHADOWS*!



AND WATCHING HIM IS THE *DEMON*! TWIN  
EYES LIKE *DEVIL-DARK* COALS BEGIN TO  
*BLAZE* AN UNGODLY GREEN!



...AND SCREAMS!



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN *NAMELESS* ETERNITY, Y'SURIL  
FEELS THE FEARSOME *BITE* OF NERVE-NUMBING PAIN!

THE *TOWERING* BEING TAKES A *CRASHING* STEP FOR-  
WARD AS IF TO *FOLLOW* THE MORTAL WHO *BECKONED*  
HIM FROM *BEYOND* THE LOWER DEPTHS...



KEEP  
THOSE *ANTI-  
MATTER* SHACKLES  
TRAINED...

...ON HIM!  
ONE *SLIP-UP*  
AND OUR TEN-TON  
*PLAYMATE* IS  
LIABLE TO PLAY  
*KING KONG*  
WITH THE  
*BASE*!

THE  
*CREW*'LL HANDLE  
THINGS TILL WE  
RETURN!

LET'S DROP  
DOWN AND SEE  
*MARIANO*... OFFER HIM  
OUR CONGRATU-  
LATIONS!









OH GOD, **THANK YOU!**  
WE WAS BEGINNING TO THINK  
NO ONE WOULD **FIND** US!



WE WAS ON A **GENE-**  
**STUFFS** MISSION...OUR **TWIRL-A-**  
**WHIRL** RAN OUT OF **GO-GOOK**  
AND **CRASHED**.

BUT, LISTEN, BUDDY...IF **WE**  
DON'T MAKE IT, YOU GOTTA BE  
SURE THESE **WALS** GET BACK TO  
THE **GENE** SITE, HEAR?



C'MON...  
WE HAFTA GET  
PETEY FIRST...HE'S  
WORSE'N ME...

UH...  
YOU AIN'T  
HEARIN'...



OH GOD...  
**CATLICK**,  
RIGHT?



**WHOOOSH!**



SORRY,  
**PROTSTINT**.

# AN ANGEL SHY OF HELL!

THE **HOLY-COST** COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT ALL. THE FIZZ BOMBS, THE GINKO PERSONNEL WHAM-SLAMMERS... EVEN THE MULTI-HEADED CLOUD-TO-GROUND FULL-NELVON BIG WHOP MISSILES CANNOT BE HELD WHOLLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE **DESOLATION!** THE **HOLY-COST** DESTROYED AND SEGREGATED PEOPLES, BUT **KANSAS** MUST HAVE LOOKED LIKE THIS FROM THE **START**.

IN THE 12 YEARS SINCE **H-CI**, NOTHING MUCH **ELSE** HAS CHANGED EITHER. THE RELIGIOUS WARS... **BLESSED SMALL** AND **BLESSED BIG**... CONTINUE WITH MUCH OF THEIR OLD STEAM.

IN THE U.S., THE MAJOR GROUPS SURVIVE... THE **CATLICKS**, RICHEST AND STRONGEST OF THE TWO, AND THE **PROTESTANTS** WHO ARE #2, BUT THEY TRY HARDER, THERE WAS ANOTHER GROUP, THE **DAVIDISTS**, BUT THEY ARE THOUGHT TO BE EXTINCT...

**HARD JOHN APPLE** HAS NO RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE. HIS MARK IS FREELANCER, PRESENTLY WORKING FOR THE **PROTESTANTS**. **HARD JOHN** KILLS FOR COIN... AND HE'S VERY, VERY GOOD AT IT, THE **BEST**, WITH PISTOLS, GRENADES AND MACHINE-GUNS.



WITHIN THE WRECKAGE OF THE **TWIRL-A-WHIRL**, HE CAN FIND NOTHING OF USE, NO **EQUIPMENT**, NO **MANUALS**, NO **CODEBOOKS**, YES, MOST **IMPORTANTLY**, NO **CODEBOOKS**.



SO **HARD JOHN APPLE** JUST DRIVES AWAY AS THE LAST DROP OF **GO-GOOK** FALLS FROM THE **TWIRL-A-WHIRL'S** WHIRLY TWIRLY.





THE DAY GETS INTO FULL SWING IN KANSAS, BLUE AND BROWN...AND FLAT. LIKE A PANCAKE. THE PROTSTINT BIG SHOTS COULD NEVER UNDERSTAND WHY HE WANTED KANSAS. WHY ANYONE WOULD WANT IT.



"LISSEN, HARD JOHN. WE'RE GONNA DIVVY UP THE U.S."

"FINE, I'LL TAKE KANSAS."

THEY LAUGHED. THEY FELL ON THEIR BUTTS, LAUGHING.



"KANSAS? YOU MEAN THE ONE-TIME STATE OF KANSAS? YOU GOTTA BE KIDDIN'..."

"LOTTA OPPORTUNITY OUT KANSAS WAY. REMINDS ME OF HOME. ALL THEM FAR-OUT MOUNTAINS, GREEN FIELDS, AMBER GRAIN..."



"HE'S CRAZY," THEY THOUGHT. "HE'S NEVER BEEN TO KANSAS OR HE'D KNOW..."

...IT'S CRAWLIN' WITH CATLICKS." "OKAY, IT'S YOURS."



THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY.

"THINK NOTHING OF IT! YOU'LL HAVE TO CLEAR IT OUT FOR YOURSELF THOUGH. THE CATLICKS WON'T RECOGNIZE IT AS HARD JOHN APPLE'S OWN PRIVATE STATE."



I'LL CLEAR IT OUT ALL RIGHT!



INSANE. CRAZY TIME. WHAT MAN WOULD TAKE ON AN ENTIRE STATE OF CATLICKS BY HIMSELF? AND FOR WHAT EARTHLY PURPOSE? FOR KANSAS? THEY AGREED HE WAS MAD, BUT WERE HAPPY TO SEND HIM THERE. NO ONE ELSE WANTED TO GO.



BUT YOU CAN BELIEVE IT. HARD JOHN APPLE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING.

BY NOW, HARD JOHN HAS COVERED 200 MILES. MOST OF KANSAS IS KNOWN TO HIM, BUT HE OFTEN FINDS HIMSELF DOUBLING BACK OVER OLD TERRITORY. ROAD MARS AREN'T WORTH A DAMN PARTLY BECAUSE THERE AREN'T ANY MORE ROADS... AND PARTLY BECAUSE THE OLD LANGUAGE DIED WITH THE HOLY-COST.



THIS KNOWLEDGE HELPS HIM SURVIVE...  
ALONG WITH HIS TRUSTY FLAME THRO--



BUT HUNGER IS UPON HIM, AND HARD JOHN LOCATES A LONG-DEAD GROCERY STORE. HE'S LEARNED MANY WORDS SINCE HE FOUND THE FIRST SET OF MANUALS, BUT THE PICTURES ON THE LABELS ARE LIFESAVERS.



MORE OF THEM, IN THE MEAT FREEZER. CHRIST-DAMMIT, THE CATLICKS JUST WON'T GET IT THROUGH THEIR HEADS. WELL, EVEN MISS MARY AIN'T GONNA HELP THIS LOT...



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE, HARD JOHN APPLE STOPS COLD. A DOZEN YEARS IN KANSAS HAVE PROVIDED MANY SURPRISES, NEAR-FATAL CATASTROPHES AND SUCH, BUT NEVER HAS HE BEEN STYMIED.



HIS EYES ADJUST SHARPLY TO THE SIGHT BEFORE HIM. THESE ARE NOT CATLICKS... NOT PROTSTINTS. THESE WERE PEOPLE HE'D NEVER SEEN BEFORE.



GIVE  
ME YOUR  
HAND!



DAVIDISTS! I  
THOUGHT YOU WERE ALL RUBBED  
OUT AGES AGO!

WELL, WE'LL  
TAKE CARE OF THAT ALL  
RIGHT NOW...



AW, HELL ...  
IT AIN'T WORTH  
THE EFFORT...



ALL RIGHT, YOU PEOPLE,  
LISSEN UP! YOU'RE TRESPASSIN'! -"S  
HERE'S KANSAS, AND KANSAS IS  
MINE! SO YAMMOOSE!

NOW I'M GONNA BE COMIN' BACK  
THIS WAY IN A COUPLE YEARS, AND YOU'D  
BETTER NOT BE HERE WHEN I RETURN.  
SAVVY? UNDERSTAND?



YEAH...I KINDA  
FIGURED YOU'D GET  
THE MESSAGE!



TIME AND MILES LATER, HARD JOHN STOPS TO PONDER HIS BEANS. CATLICK'S ARE THE PROBLEM NOW, HE REALIZES. BUT THEN WHAT? THE PROTSTINTS WON'T STAND STILL IF THEY FIND OUT WHAT HE'S UP TO...



AND WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS? PAST THE MISSISSIPPI, THE MOUNTAINS, THE BIG WASH...? THAT'S WHERE THE REAL THREAT LIES. HELL, HE THOUGHT, HE WAS A HEATHEN. BUT THERE, THEY PRAY TO COWS!

SO WHAT TO DO NOW? MAKE A DEAL WITH THE PROTSTINT BIG SHOTS? LET THEM IN ON HIS DISCOVERY AND HOPE THEY DON'T SLIP HIM A SHIV?



NO...NO GOOD. PLAN GOES AS BEFORE. EVERYTHING'S UNDER THE TABLE NOW! THE POKER FACE REMAINS.

CATLICK GENE SITE...  
THREE HOURS LATER...



THE GATE GUARD WAS A RECENT ADDITION, AND IT MADE HARD JOHN ALL THE MORE NERVOUS. HE HAD BEEN HERE MANY TIMES BEFORE, BUT SECURITY HAD ALWAYS BEEN MINIMAL!

AS WELL, THERE WERE MORE GUARDS ALONG THE WAY! AND THE REASONS WERE OBVIOUS.

SOME SEVEN YEARS AGO, HE'D DISCOVERED THIS PARTICULAR GENE SITE... THE ONLY ONE HE'S ALLOWED TO REMAIN STANDING, A PRIVATE PLACE, A PLACE TO THINK...AND PLAN.

BUT LOOK AT IT NOW! A VERITABLE CESSPOOL OF GUTTERAL SLUT DRAINAGE IN SEMI-HUMAN FORM, WITH FLAUNTING BALLOONS AND VILE MUCK-WUCKS.



DAMN CAT-LICKS! THEY HAD NO RIGHT!!



THE **NYMPHOS** HAVE NOW BECOME **PRIMED** AND HARD JOHN APPLE KNOWS THAT MORE **GENE STUFFS** WILL GET THROUGH EVENTUALLY. TO STOP THE **CATLICKS** FROM GROWING AND THRIVING IN NUMBERS, HE MUST NIP THIS IN THE BUD...



DAMN SHAME, TOO...



... HE REALLY LIKED THE **NYMPHOS**...



DUSK. SCATTERINGS OF CLOUD DISSIPATE IN A BLOOD RED SKY, AS THE SUN TURNS ITS FACE.



HARD JOHN APPLE IS HOME AFTER A LONG HARD DAY OF KILLING.

MOVING PAST HIS HIDDEN FORTIFICATIONS, HARD JOHN COMES TO A HALT ON CONCRETE SURFACE.



FOR HIM, *RELIGIOUS* SERVICES ARE ABOUT TO BEGIN. HE PULLS A *TOP SECRET OPERATIONS MANUAL* FROM THE SEAT.

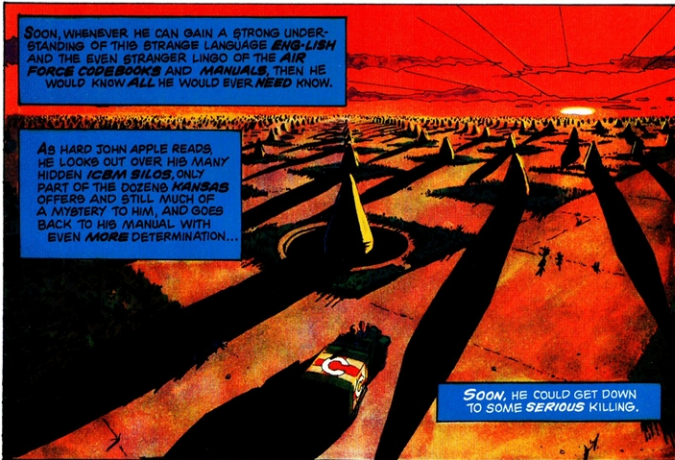


AND, SETTLING HIMSELF ON THE HOOD OF HIS TRUCK, HE MOMENTARILY PAUSES BEFORE BEGINNING THE MANUAL. HE LOOKS *OUTWARD* AND ALL HIS DAILY MISGIVINGS, THE THREAT OF THE *CATLICKS*, THE *PROTESTANTS*, AND ALL THE *OTHERS* DISSOLVES FROM HIS MIND. HE FEELS SECURE.



SOON, WHENEVER HE CAN GAIN A STRONG UNDERSTANDING OF THIS STRANGE LANGUAGE *ENG-LISH* AND THE EVEN STRANGER LINGO OF THE *AIR FORCE CODEBOOKS* AND *MANUALS*, THEN HE WOULD KNOW *ALL* HE WOULD EVER NEED KNOW.

AS HARD JOHN APPLE READS HE LOOKS OUT OVER HIS MANY HIDDEN *ICBM SILOS*, ONLY PART OF THE DOZENS *KANSAS* OFFERS AND STILL MUCH OF A MYSTERY TO HIM, AND GOES BACK TO HIS MANUAL WITH EVEN *MORE* DETERMINATION...



SOON, HE COULD GET DOWN TO SOME *SERIOUS* KILLING.



THREE MEN WALKED BRISKLY  
INTO POP JONAS' CANDY  
STORE AND SODA FOUNTAIN  
THE OTHER DAY...

THEY DIDN'T WANT  
CANDY OR SODAS...

...YOUR DECISION,  
POP! TIME IS MONEY  
...AND WE GOTTA HAVE  
SOME FOR ALL THE TIME  
WE'VE INVESTED ON YOUR  
LITTLE ESTABLISH-  
MENT HERE...

I...I TOLD  
YOU BEFORE...I  
DON'T NEED ANY  
MORE VENDING  
MACHINES...

IN  
THAT  
CAGE...

...WE'LL  
SEE THAT YOU  
DO!

SKASH!

STOP!  
DON'T DO  
THAT! I...I'LL  
CALL THE  
POLICE!

HERE'S A LITTLE NUMBER ABOUT  
GHASTLY GANGSTERS AND  
VOLATILE VIOLENCE! THIS  
TERROR TRIP JOURNEYS INTO  
A STRANGE NEW WORLD,  
THE WORLD OF THE...

# PINBALL WIZARD!

CALL THE  
POLICE? I HEAR  
AMBULANCES ARE  
MUCH QUICKER,  
POP...

...STOP...  
PLEASE...  
UHHN...

CHARLIE SCHMIED WAS ADEPT  
IN HIS PARTICULAR LINE OF  
BUSINESS...

...BUT NO ONE  
HAD EVER  
ACCUSED HIM OF  
SUBTLE  
METHODS...

NEXT TIME,  
POP, YOU WON'T  
EVEN BE ABLE  
TO CALL THE  
MORGUE.

TAKE YOUR  
TIME...LOOK  
THROUGH OUR  
BROCHURE OF QUALITY  
VENDING MACHINES.  
WE'LL BE BACK  
TOMORROW FOR  
YOUR FINAL  
ANSWER.

SKRASH!

POP, POP...  
ARE YOU ALL  
RIGHT? THOSE GUYS  
ARE BAD, POP! BUT  
YOU CAN'T LET THEM  
PUSH YOU  
AROUND...

...YOU'RE  
YOUNG, WALTER  
...TOO YOUNG.  
SOMEDAY YOU  
WILL LEARN  
ABOUT MEN LIKE  
CHARLIE  
SCHMIED...

...JUST AS I  
TODAY LEARNED...  
THAT HIS VENDING  
MACHINES WOULD  
LOOK VERY GOOD  
IN MY MODEST  
STORE.

WALTER LOVED POP JONAS'  
STORE. LOVED THE SODAS WHICH  
STAINED HIS LATEST COMIC  
BOOK! PURCHASES MORE OFTEN  
THAN FILLED HIS STOMACH. HE  
LOVED THE SMELL OF PENNY  
CANDY AND THE SOUND OF THE  
JUKE BOX! WALTER HAD A  
FATHER WHO'D GONE OFF TO WAR...

...A FATHER WHO NEVER CAME BACK...

TO WALTER, POP'S NAME WAS A  
MEANINGFUL ONE...

NO! YOU  
CAN'T DO IT, POP!  
YOU CAN'T LET 'EM  
DO THIS! I'LL HELP  
YOU, POP! I'LL HELP  
YOU STAND UP  
AGAINST THEM!

WALTER,  
I HAVE A HARD  
ENOUGH TIME  
STANDING UP BEHIND  
THE SODA COUNTER ALL  
DAY... HOW CAN I STAND  
UP TO MEN LIKE  
THEM?

BETTER YOU  
SHOULD FORGET  
THIS. TAKE YOUR  
COMIC BOOKS AND  
GO HOME TO YOUR  
MAMA.

NO, POP!  
I KNOW A WAY! I  
KNOW A WAY TO STOP  
THEM... TO SEND THEM  
TO HELL WHERE THEY  
BELONG! TRUST ME,  
POP! WE CAN DO IT  
TOGETHER!

NEVER,  
WALTER! NEVER  
DO I WANT TO HEAR  
YOU TALK LIKE THAT!  
YOU HAVE MADE ME VERY  
ANGRY, WALTER, FOR I  
THINK YOU ARE NOT  
UNLIKE CHARLIE SCHMIED  
AND HIS HOOLIGANS!

GO HOME  
NOW, AND NEVER  
SPEAK LIKE THAT  
AGAIN!

OKAY, POP,  
I'LL GO... BUT I  
DIDN'T FIGURE YOU  
FOR A ...  
COWARD.

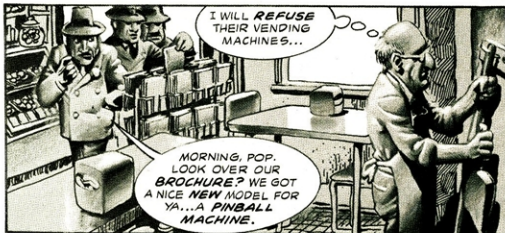
CHARLIE SCHMIDT IS AN **ENERGETIC** MAN, AND BEGINS EACH NEW DAY AS IF IT WERE HIS **FIRST** ON A NEW JOB... HE DEALS IN **MERCHANDISE**, NOT IN **SCRUPLES**...



SUCH A **MESS** THOSE CRIMINALS MADE LAST NIGHT! I AM AN **HONEST** MAN. I DO NOT **DESERVE** SUCH TREATMENT...AND I DO NOT **DESERVE** TO BE THOUGHT OF AS A **COWARD** BY WALTER!

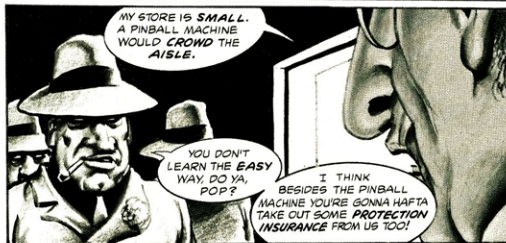


WALTER IS SO **YOUNG**... HE LOOKS **UP** TO ME, CONSIDERS ME HIS **IDEAL**. I **MUST** BE A GOOD EXAMPLE TO HIM... I **MUST**!



I DON'T **NEED** ANY **PROTECTION**! THE **POLICE** WILL **PROTECT** ME! AND FOR THE **LAST TIME**, I DON'T **NEED** ANY OF YOUR **PINBALL MACHINES**!

NOW **GET OUT OF HERE**!

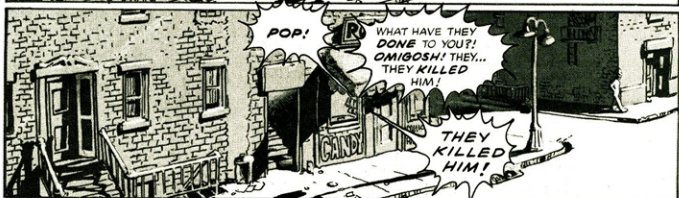


YOU DON'T **LEARN** THE **EASY** WAY, DO YA, **POP**?

I THINK **BESIDES** THE **PINBALL MACHINE** YOU'RE **GONNA** **HAFTA** TAKE OUT SOME **PROTECTION INSURANCE** FROM US TOO!

**REFUSING** US WON'T **LOOK GOOD**, **POP**. OUR **OTHER CUSTOMERS** MIGHT **GET** THE **idea** THAT **THEY** CAN **REFUSE** US TOO, SINCE YOU **HAVEN'T** **LEARNED**, **POP**...WE'RE **GONNA** **HAVE** TO MAKE AN **EXAMPLE** OF YOU FOR THE **OTHERS**...







**DARK MASTER**, ONE OF THY **EMISSARIES** I BEG THEE **SEND...** TO BRING ABOUT WITH **HORROR** THE EVIL ONE'S **END!**

WHO THE HELL COULD **THAT** BE AT THIS HOUR?

**TOK TOK TOK**



**GOOD GOD...!**



**YAAAAHHHHH!**

**EBON PRINCE OF DARKNESS**, HEED THY SERVANT'S ASKING...

THROUGH **DEATH** ENSURE AN **AGONY** OF LIFE **EVER-LASTING!**





OH GOD! MY BODY...  
BLOOD SPLATTERED EVERY-  
WHERE...RIPPED TO SHREDS  
...I...I'M DEAD!

DEAD!

HIS BLOOD, ACID-SEARING THROUGH BARBED VEINS...  
PIERCING PUS-CYSTED MUSCLES...RIPPING PAIN-  
SLASHED FLESH...

AAHHGGHHH!

MY BODY!  
MY WHOLE BODY...  
ONE BIG BALL  
OF PAIN...!

...SLAMMED AGAINST AN  
UNYIELDING MASS, SPASMS OF  
EXCRUCIATING PAIN SHUDDER  
THE CORE OF HIS BEING...AND THE  
REALIZATION OF HORROR...!

LORD OF SCUM, RE-  
MOVE THE VICTIM FROM  
ALL SPACE AND  
TIME!

LASH HIS  
SPIRIT WITH WHAT  
HE FEARS...TO SUIT  
THE PUNISHMENT  
TO THE CRIME!

WH-WHAT'S  
HAPPENIIIIINGG...?!

SEIZED BY INEXPLICABLE  
FORCE...HURLED  
THROUGH THE BLEAK  
IMMENSITY OF SPACE...  
NAILS DRIVEN INTO HIS  
EARDRUMS...HIS THROAT  
PINCHED ON SOUR BILE...

A LOOMING DEMONIC FIGURE...  
A GLINTING BLADE OF SERRATED  
AGONY...AND EVERLASTING  
PANIC...!

NOOOOOO!

A RUSH OF AIR IN A SUFFOCATING  
VACUUM...HOWLWINDS STABBING  
HIS EARS...PAIN ESSENTIAL,  
SPEED UNIMAGINABLE...

...IMPACT DEVASTING...  
TERROR IMMINENT...



...INEXORABLE...  
...ALL-CONSUMING!



HURLING AGAIN,  
WITH EVER-INCESS-  
ANT PAIN...  
HURLING THROUGH  
EMPTINESS ON A  
COLLISION COURSE  
WITH UNMITIGATED  
HORROR...



...IN THE FORM OF  
MANY FLASHING  
FANGED SCRABBLING  
DEMON-GHOULS WITH  
SHARP SHARP  
TALONS...RAKING  
FIRE AND  
SIZZLING  
FLESH...



AND SO IT GOES...  
...THROUGH AN  
INFINITY OF  
TORTURE...  
SUFFERING DEATH  
COMPOUNDED AND  
TRANSCENDED BY  
EACH SUCCESSIVE  
DEATH...!



A TOTAL  
PERPETUAL  
PUNISHMENT  
GEARED TO SUIT  
THE CRIME...

...INITIATED BY A  
GRIEF-STRIKEN,  
VENGEANCE-BENT  
LITTLE BOY...  
DABBLING IN THE  
DARKLING ARTS...

A LITTLE BOY, WHO  
IN HIS OWN STRANGE  
WAY, HAS DEALT  
OUT AN ODD FORM  
OF JUSTICE!



CHARLIE SCHMIED, RUTHLESS  
SYNDICATE STRONGARM MAN HAS  
SUCCEEDED IN PLACING ONE OF  
HIS PINBALL MACHINES IN HELL...!

PERHAPS HE'D BE PROUD  
OF THIS UNPRECEDENTED  
FEAT...IF NOT FOR THE  
FACT THAT ONE OF SATAN'S  
MINIONS IS A HIGHLY  
ACCOMPLISHED PLAYER IN  
THE SLIGHTLY ALTERED  
VERSION OF THE GAME...!

HE'S GOT CRAZY FLIPPED  
FINGERS...AND NEVER DROPS  
THE BALL...

...WINNING FREE GAME  
AFTER FREE GAME...  
WITH NEVER THE SLIGHTEST  
FALL...!

HE'S THE PINBALL  
WIZARD...OF HELL!

