

ALL NEW STORIES OF WEIRD TERRORS

A.M.C.
No. 2 10¢

THE
MONSTER

THE MONSTER



OUT OF THE ANCIENT
OOZE IT CRAWLED
"THE DARK
ABYSMAL"



"THE TIGER-KISS"
"KOHNOORI'S CURSE"



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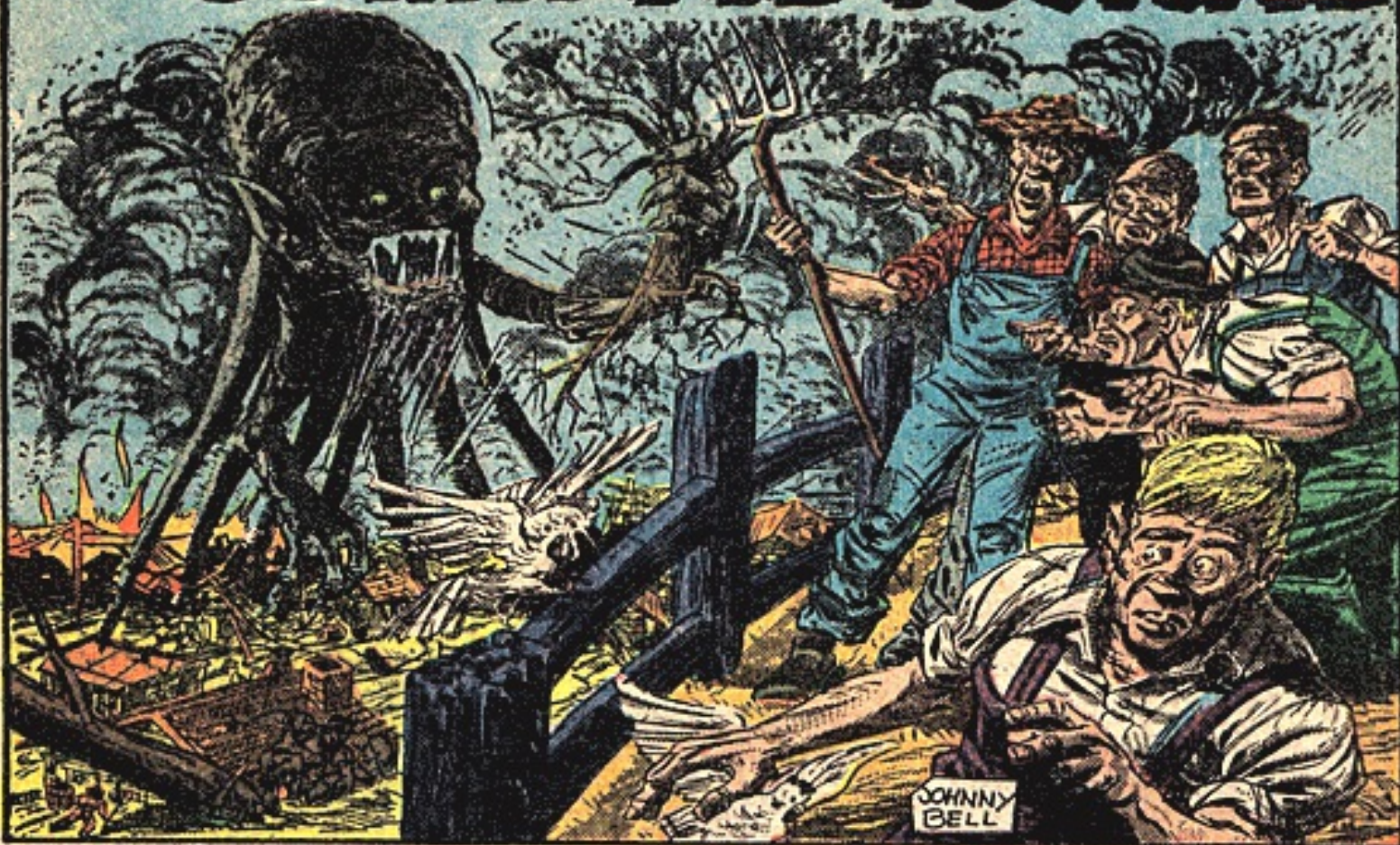


Look for the BULL'S-EYE!



YOU ARE ONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVES IN THIS SMALL KENTUCKY HILL-TOWN. FOR OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS, YOUR ANCESTORS-- AND TODAY EVEN YOU-- HAVE LIVED A LIFE OF HUMDRUM CONTENTMENT. THEN SUDDENLY, YOU ARE JOLTED OUT OF YOUR WAY OF LIVING AND YOU ARE HURLED INTO A WILD, NIGHTMARE TERROR; YOU WONDER WHOM IT WILL STRIKE NEXT-- YOUR NEIGHBOR, A LOVED ONE, OR EVEN YOURSELF; YOU EXIST, MOMENT TO MOMENT, IN A COLD-SWEAT FEAR OF

The DARK ABYSSMAL



JOHNNY BELL

IT'S A COMIN' THIS WAY!
RUN FOR YOUR LIVES...

LOOK, IT'S JOEL'S
STABLES THIS TIME!



AS THEY RAN, THEY COULD HEAR THE TORTURED SOUND OF WOOD BEING RIPPED. THEY COULD HEAR THE DEEP RUMBLE OF ALIEN ANGER...



MILES AWAY IN A BIG-CITY NEWSPAPER OFFICE, THE STORY WAS BEGINNING TO DRIBBLE IN ON THE TICKER MACHINE...

BETTER GET YOURSELF
DOWN THERE PRONTO,
HAP. LOOKS LIKE A
GOOD STORY! WHAT'S
THE PLACE AGAIN...

GOPHERSVILLE!
MIGHT BE A
HOAX, BUT IF
YOU SAY SO,
I'LL DIG IT!



IT'S FUNNY... HAP'S BEEN A BIG-CITY REPORTER FOR MORE YEARS THAN HE CARES TO REMEMBER, AND HE'S WRITTEN HIS STORIES AS THEY COME, SOMETIMES WITH TONGUE-IN-CHEEK, THEN, ONE DAY "THE BIG ONE" AND HE DOESN'T KNOW QUITE HOW TO TELL IT...

THE DAY THE COMMOTION STARTED WAS JUST LIKE ANY OTHER SUMMER DAY IN GOPHERSVILLE, ESPECIALLY AT THE OLD SWIMMING HOLE ON BEN JACKSON'S PROPERTY...

C'MAWN, JEBBY--THEM OLE TADPOLES AINT GONNA 'HURT YE!



WHEN ONE OF THE KIDS FISHING GOT HIS HOOK SNAGGED ON SOMETHING...

LOOKEE HERE--EITHER I'M CATCHIN' ME A WHALE OR THAT TURNED HOOK'S CAUGHT ON A LOG. HEY, DAN'L, DIVE DOWN FER A LOOK-SEE, WILL YE?



THE BOY, DAN'L, WENT DOWN, AND AS HE RELEASED THE HOOK, SOMETHING MOVED THERE IN THE DARK, MURKY DEPTHS...



WHEN DAN'L SURFACED, HE YELLED, AND THE KIDS RACED FOR SHORE, AS A VAGUE OUTLINE SHIMMERED IN THE WATER...



THEY SAW IT CLEARLY AS IT SURFACED AND CAME ASHORE RIGHT AFTER THEM...

HEE, HEE! LOOKS LIKE A TADPOLE THAT GROWNED TOO MANY LEGS!

A'COMIN' RIGHT AFTER YOU, DAN'L, LIKE HE WUZ YOUR FRIEND!



SURE ENOUGH, THE LITTLE THING Huddled ITS WET BODY AGAINST DAN'L...

MEBBE IT'S THANKIN' YE FOR FREEIN' IT FROM THE HOOK--BUT, SAY, WHAT IN TARNATION IS IT, ANYWAY?

SURE'S TAKIN' A SHINE TO ME, HUH? WE'LL TAKE IT TO TOWN, MAYBE SOMEONE THERE'LL KNOW WHAT IT IS!



WHEN THEY REACHED TOWN, THE FIRST PEOPLE THEY MET ONLY STARED CURIOUSLY AT THE QUEER CREATURE, WHO KEPT CLOSE TO DAN'L...

WAT'CHA GOT THERE, BOYST?

DUNNO! WE FOUND IT IN JACKSON'S POND!



BUT NOBODY IN TOWN KNEW WHAT IT WAS. CURIOSITY BECAME WONDER; WONDER BECAME BAFFLEMENT; AND WHAT HUMANS CANNOT UNDERSTAND THEY FEAR...

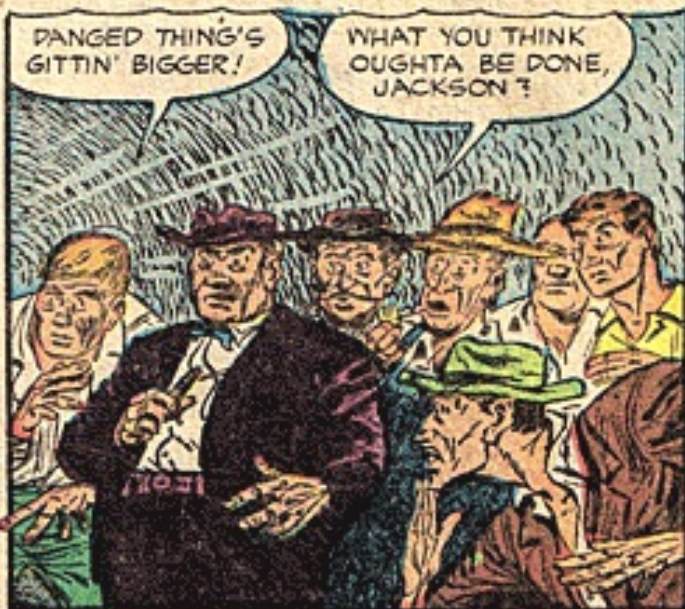
AND AS THE FEAR AND THE EXCITEMENT GREW, THE SHAPE AND SIZE OF THE STRANGE CREATURE ALTERED...



A PLAINTIVE, ALIEN SOUND... AND IT SET THEIR HEARTS BEATING FASTER...

DANGED THING'S GITTIN' BIGGER!

WHAT YOU THINK OUGHTA BE DONE, JACKSON?



A CRAFTY GLEAM SPRUNG INTO BEN JACKSON'S EYES; HIS BRAIN WAS QUICKLY CALCULATING THE POSSIBILITIES...

A FREAK FISH OF SOME KIND, THET TRAVELIN' CARNIVAL WILL PAY PLENTY, IF THE THING KIN REALLY CHANGE ITS SIZE...

JACKSON SPOKE SOFTLY TO HOLD BACK THE GREED THAT WAS LEAPING INSIDE HIM...

WAL NOW, SEEN THE CRITTER WAS FOUND ON MY PROPERTY, SEEMS TO ME IT'S RIGHTFULLY MINE. ONE OF MY TRUCKS'LL TAKE IT OUT TO THE FARM, WHERE I'LL KEEP IT IN A VAT!

THE CREATURE SEEMED TO SENSE WHAT WAS IN JACKSON'S MIND, AND DAN'L COULD FEEL ITS FRIGHT GROWING...

RESPECTS TO YOUR PROPERTY, SUH, BUT I FOUND IT! IT'S MINE! I AIM TO KEEP IT!



JACKSON SEEMED STUNNED FOR A MOMENT, THEN RED ANGRY HAZED, AS HE RUSHED IN...

DANGED BRAT! GIVIN' ME LIP, EH?

MOTIONS WERE LIKE ELECTRICITY NOW--ELECTRICITY GONE WILD... IT WAS IN THE AIR, LIKE A CONTAGIOUS DISEASE, TRAVELLING FROM ONE TO THE OTHER...

I SAY KILL IT, AN' STOP ALL THE FUSSIN'!

NO SENSE HAVIN' TROUBLE OVER THAT LITTLE THING!

LITTLE? HEY, LOOK AT IT...

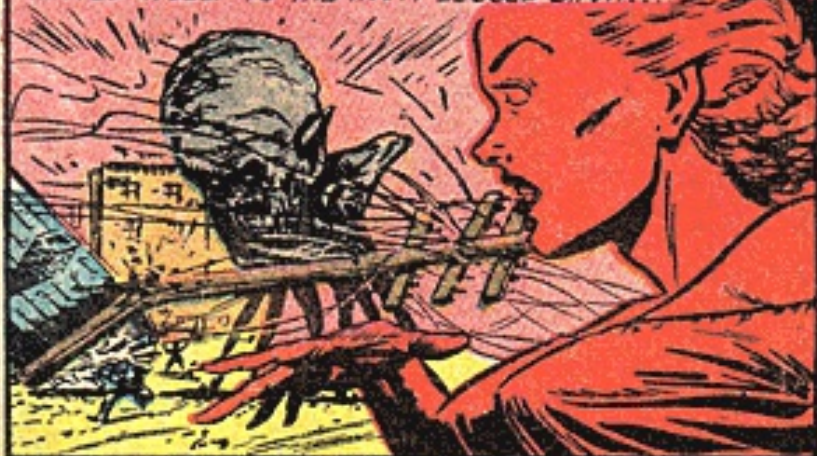


BEN JACKSON'S ASTONISHMENT FROZE HIM TO THE SPOT! THE FRIENDLY LITTLE POLYP HAD BECOME A THING OF BLOATED HORROR...



C-C-CAN'T BE!
JUST C-C-CAN'T
BE...

IT SEEMED ALMOST AS IF THE ANGER, THE EXCITEMENT ... AND THE FEAR OF THE PEOPLE HAD TRANSMITTED ITSELF TO THE MANY-LEGGED GIANT...



RUN FER YOUR
LIFE, MARTHA!

THE FEAR
WAS RAMPANT,
ITS TENDRILS
REACHING INTO
EVERY LIVING
THING IN THE
AREA...

AS THE WEAPONS LEFT
THEIR HANDS,
THE SOLID
OUTLINES OF THE
MONSTROSITY
SEEMED TO FADE,
AS IF THE THING
HAD STEPPED INTO
AN INVISIBLE
FOURTH DIMENSION...

AT THE EDGE OF THE TOWN,
TRUCK ENGINES COUGHED ...

GIT MOVIN', DAVIS!
WE'LL
KNOCK IT OUT COLD BY
RAMMIN' IT!



DESPERATE PEOPLE PREPARED
FOR A LAST DITCH STAND...

COMIN' THIS
WAY!

THESE FORKS AND
ROCKS OUGHTA
SOFTEN IT UP FOR
JACKSON TO RAM
IT! GIT READY TO
THROW...



BEN JACKSON'S FINGERS WERE LOCKED ON
THE STEERING WHEEL, AS HIS TRUCK CHARGED
DOWN THE STREET...

MUST BE WORTH A MILLION
DOLLARS TO A BIG TIME CARNIVAL!
ILL GIT HIM!

BUT DID YE SEE
WHAT HAPPENED?
AND--AND LOOK AT
IT NOW...

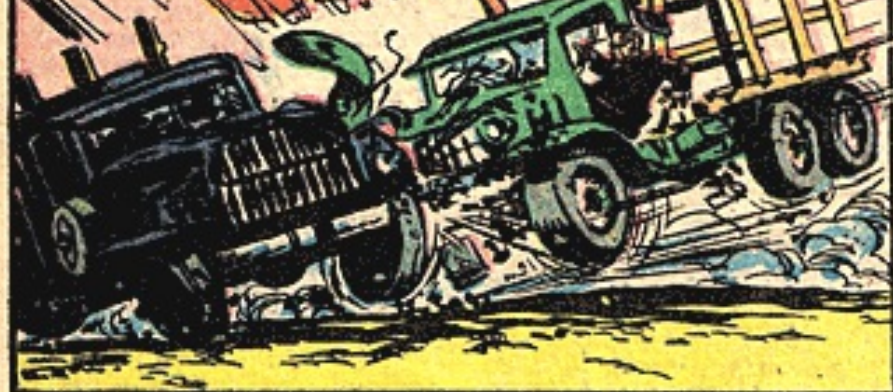


AFTERWARD THE PEOPLE OF GOPHERSVILLE ASKED THEMSELVES IF THE MONSTER HAD ACTUALLY DIVIDED ITSELF INTO EIGHT SEPARATE BODIES OR HAD IT, AS DOCTORS LATER THEORIZED, THROWN A HYPNOTIC SPELL...



WHICHEVER ONE IT WAS THEY NEVER FOUND IT--THERE WERE ONLY TWO TRUCKS, WITH A SHARP RASP OF STEEL AGAINST STEEL, SMASHING HEAD ON...

CRASH



LATER, THE RUINS OF GOPHERSVILLE TOLD THE STORY...



AND THE PEOPLE'S FACES TOLD THE SAME TALE, WHEN THEY CAME ONE BY ONE FROM THEIR HIDING PLACES...



GAYN! MUSTA HEADED INTO TH' HILLS! ANYONE HURT?

ONLY BEN JACKSON, AND NOT SO BAD! HERE HE COMES NOW...

GOT ANY SUGGESTIONS, BEN?



I ALREADY GOT IN TOUCH WITH ARMY OFFICIALS. THEY'LL BE HERE IN A FEW DAYS -- TO DESTROY IT!

YOU HEARD HIM, MELISS! HE'S HAVIN' IT KILLED BECAUSE HE CAN'T HAVE IT HIMSELF...



HUSH, DAN'L! WE'LL WAIT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENING!

A FEW DAYS LATER, AN ARMY OFFICER HAD BROUGHT IN A PLATOON OF MEN WITH RIFLES AND A COMBAT CAR. AT FIRST, THEY TOO THOUGHT IT WAS ALL A BIG HOAX--UNTIL THEY SAW THE WRECKED TOWN WITH THEIR OWN EYES--A TEMPORARY ARMY HEADQUARTERS HAD BEEN SET UP IN THE GENERAL STORE...

MY MEN HAVE THE TELEPHONE LINES WORKING AGAIN; I'VE GOT THE POND GUARDED IN CASE THE THING TRIES TO RETURN TO IT; AND ONE THING IS CERTAIN, GENTLEMEN--ALL LIVING THINGS HAVE GOT TO EAT! WE'LL BE HEARING FROM IT SOON!



INSIDE THE BARN, THE THING WAS EATING HAY AS PLACIDLY AS A HORSE OR COY...



ON THE MAIN STREET, MOST OF THE DEBRIS HAD BEEN CLEARED AWAY...

I TELL YUH, MISTER HAP, THAT LITTLE FELLER WAS HARMLESS 'TIL MR. JACKSON STARTED THE RUCKUS. IT WUZ THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES WHO...

SURE, SURE, SONNY! SAY, LOOKS LIKE THERE'S SOME COMMOTION GOING ON OVER AT HQ!



CARSON, A COOL HEADED MAN, FOLLOWED THE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER...

DANGED CRITTER'LL NO DOUBT EAT UP MY FLOW HORSES AND MY COWS! FUNNY, I KNOW IT'S IN THERE, BUT NOT A SOUND...



A MOMENT EARLIER THE PHONE HAD JANGLED; IT WAS ZEKE CARSON, CALLING FROM AN OUTLYING FARM...

...IN YOUR FIELD NOW? DON'T DISTURB IT, DON'T GET EXCITED--BUT KEEP TRACK OF IT!



TENSION WAS RIDING THE AIR ONCE AGAIN; SOLDIERS MOVED TOWARD THE BARN AT A CAREFUL PACE--AND FEAR WENT WITH EACH ONE OF THEM...



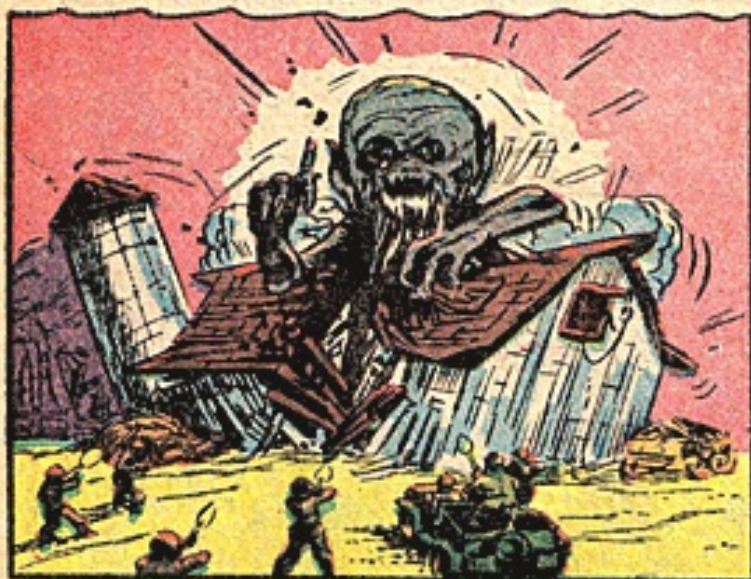
A FEW MINUTES LATER, THE ROAR OF AN ENGINE AND THE SKID OF HALTING WHEELS BROKE THE PEACE...

THERE, SUH! EATIN' ME OUTTA STOCK AND NOT MAXIN' A SOUND!

GOOD! IT TRAPPED ITSELF! DEPLOY AS SKIRMISHES, MEN--ON THE DOUBLE!



THE SHARP AND SUDDEN CRACKING OF WOOD, THE MONSTROUS SHAPE LOOMING BEFORE THEM, STOPPED THEM DEAD IN THEIR TRACKS...



THE COMBAT CAR CAREENED WILDLY TOWARD IT; SURE-EYED MACHINE GUNNERS POURED A STEADY STREAM OF LEAD INTO A TARGET THEY COULDN'T POSSIBLY MISS...



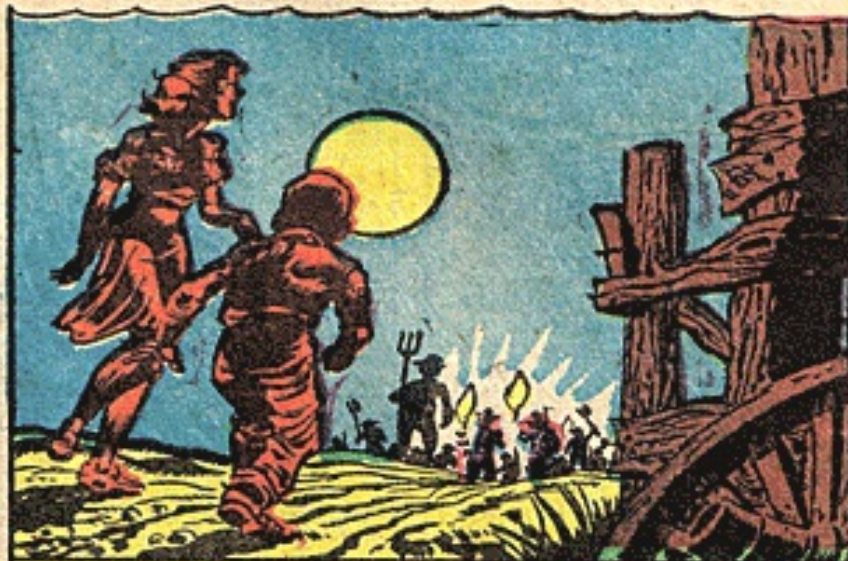
IT'S TAKEN ENOUGH SLUGS TO CUT 'IM IN HALF!

THEY MUST BE GOING RIGHT THROUGH IT!

A TENTACLE FLIPPED OUT, AND THE SHOOTING CEASED...



ON ITS FLIGHT, IT HAD LEFT A PATH OF SMASHED TREES EASY TO FOLLOW; AND BY NIGHT SOLDIERS AND FARMERS WERE SEARCHING THE HILLS...



IT WAS DAWN WHEN A SHOT RANG OUT...

HEY! SOMETHING MOVING IN THAT NICHE DOWN THERE!

TRAPPED! I'VE ALREADY SENT FOR THE AIR FORCE! THEY'RE BRINGING IN A BOMB! CLEAR OUT OF HERE!



AS THEY LEFT THE AREA, THE SEARCHERS DID NOT SEE TWO PEOPLE CROUCHED BEHIND HUGE BOULDERS...

A BOMB, YOU HEARD 'EM, SIS! I JUST KNOW THAT BIG THING AIN'T NO MONSTER!

I DON'T KNOW WHY I BELIEVE YOU, DAN'L, BUT IF YOU'RE A 'GONNA DO SOMETHING THEN WE'D BEST BE HURRYIN' DOWN THERE!



WHEN THEY GOT TO THE OPENING OF THE CREVASSE, DAN'L COULD HEAR THE ANGRY, FUTILE STRUGGLE GOING ON INSIDE...

HULLO, THERE! WILL YUH STOP THAT THRASHIN' ABOUT SO'S I KIN FIGGER A WAY OUT FOR YE?



HERE WAS A RUMBLE OF SOUND, AND MELISS, ALMOST SCREAMED WITH FRIGHT AT WHAT SHE SAW...

OH, DAN'L--NO! WHY DID I LET YOU...THE SEARCH PARTY... I'LL SHOUT FOR THEM--NO, I PROMISED I'D STAY QUIET...



INSIDE THE DARK, ROCKY CLEFT DAN'L'S VOICE WENT ON SPEAKING SOFTLY...

HOPED YOU'D RECOLLECT ME AS THE YOUNG 'UN YOU CLUNG TO AT THE POOL, THE ONE WHO FREED YOU FROM THE HOOK, AND, AND--WAL! I DECLARE!



AT THE SOUND OF DAN'L'S VOICE, THE HUGE SQUID BECAME AS IT HAD BEEN DAYS AGO AT THE POOL...

SEE, MELISS--TOLD YUH IT WUZ HARMLESS! IT WUZ THAT GREEDY JACKSON AND THEM FEARFUL FOLKS WHAT MADE IT DO WHAT IT DONE!

WHY, IT'S CUTE! BUT LISTEN--THOSE PLANES ARE COMING FAST!



WHEN THEY REACHED JACKSON'S POOL, MELISS GAVE THE HORSES A SPURT OF SPEED...

HEY, STOP-- IT'S ORDERS... OOF!

NO EXCITEMENT, LITTLE FELLER! YE'LL BE BACK HOME IN ANOTHER MINUTE...



WHEN DAN'L WAS WATCHING HIS LITTLE FRIEND DISAPPEAR BENEATH THE POOL'S CALM SURFACE...

WHY, I DO BELIEVE THE LITTLE CRITTER'S SMILIN' AND WAVIN' TUH ME! G'BYE!



IT WAS SOMETIME LATER WHEN THE PEOPLE GATHERED AT THE POOL'S SHORE; AT FIRST IT SEEMED LIKE AN UNDERWATER EXPLOSION--THEN THEY ALL SAW IT...

A SPACE SHIP--THE HULL DISGUISED AS A METEORITE!

DANG! IF AH'D KNOWED IT, COULD'A CHARGED 'EM ALL ADMISSION T'SEE THIS HERE!

WHAT A STORY!



THERE'S NO QUESTION IN MY MIND BUT THAT THEY WERE PEACEFUL EMMISSARIES FROM A DISTANT PLANET--A DIFFERENT LIFE-FORM FROM OURS, VERY SENSITIVE TO EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS, WHICH ONLY LITTLE DAN'L UNDERSTOOD. WHAT A STORY! BUT GEE, I WISH SOMEBODY'D TELL ME HOW TO WRITE IT!



THE END

IT WAS A DANGEROUS CALLING GIFFORD FOLLOWED--POKING INTO THE ODD SPOTS OF THE WORLD...LOOKING FOR PIECES THAT WOULD FIT INTO THE GIGANTIC JIGSAW OF THE PAST. TIME AND AGAIN HIS BEST FRIEND, AND HIS YOUNG, PRETTY WIFE HAD WARNED HIM AGAINST PROBING TOO DEEPLY INTO MYSTERIOUS RITES AND AGE-OLD CUSTOMS PRACTICED BY STRANGE PEOPLES; TIME AND AGAIN HE HAD ONLY LAUGHED AT THEIR FEARS...IT WAS HIS JOB, HE'D SAID, TO FIND THE ANSWERS. WELL, IT WAS DEEP IN THE BENGAL JUNGLE INTERIOR THAT HE FOUND THE ANSWER TO A DEVILISH CULT, CALLED...

TIGER KISS



EVERYTHING HAD BEEN QUIET AT THE TEMPORARY EXCAVATION CAMP UNTIL THE EXCITED NATIVE CAME POUNDING UR...

COME TO PIT, MISSY!
SAHIB ACTING STRANGE
...L-LIKE ANIMAL...

JULIA GIFFORD COULD FEEL
COLD TREMORS OF FEAR
PUSHING HER FEET OVER THE
SOGGY GROUND, FASTER,
FASTER...

HURRY, DAN! IT
MUST BE ANOTHER
ONE OF THOSE QUEER
FITS HE'S BEEN
HAVING LATELY!

STEADY!
WE'LL GET
TO HIM IN
TIME!

JUST AHEAD, WHERE GIFFORD HAD BEEN
EXCAVATING AN OLD TEMPLE RUIN, EXCITE-
MENT WAS SPREADING LIKE A CONTAGIOUS
DISEASE...

HARREEE! THE
SAHIB IS LIKE ONE
WITH THE DEMON
CURSE!

FLEE! FLEE!



DOWN IN THE PIT; A STRANGE MADNESS HAD COME OVER THE USUALLY SMILING, CAREFREE GIFFORD...

A LONG, BURNISHED SPEAR POINT GLISTENED IN THE INDIAN SUNLIGHT. POISED THERE A MOMENT, AS AN AVE-STRUCK NATIVE TOOK CAREFUL AIM...

AT THE RIM OF THE PIT, JULIA GIFFORD'S EYES FROZE IN HORROR AT THE SCENE BELOW...

GRRRAUGHH!

THE ROAR OF THE TIGER! HELP ME...



S-STOP HIM, DAN! DON'T LET HIM THROW IT...

LET ME HANDLE IT... YOU RUN FOR JOHN-- QUICK!



THE FLAT CRACK OF DAN CROWDER'S REVOLVER HALTED THE NATIVE'S SPEAR THROW; HIS IRON FIST DROVE THE OTHERS BACK--SPEECHLESS...

AT HIS SIDE NOW, SHE SAW THE SHOCK AND AMAZEMENT STILL LINED DEEP IN HIS FACE...

ARRGHH!

AGGGH!



J-JULIE, I... WHAT HAPPENED? WHY'S EVERYONE STANDING AROUND? WHY AREN'T THEY...

EASY, JOHN! DO YOU THINK THEY'LL LET US PASS TO THE HUT, DANT?



AN OATH WAS UTTERED IN BENGALESE; THE STEEL OF A BLADE GLEAMED FOR AN INSTANT; FEAR AND ANGER SEETHED THROUGH THE NATIVES...

AS THEY NEARED THEIR LIVING QUARTERS, SHE COULD FEEL THE FULL WEIGHT OF HIS PHYSICAL EXHAUSTION...

STAND BACK, DOGS-- OR YOU GO TO BUDDHA WITH LEAD IN YOUR GUTS! GO ON, JULIE, GET HIM OUT OF HERE!

JOHN, WHAT MAKES YOU GO OFF LIKE THAT? WHAT HAPPENS?

DUNNO, J-JULIE... MY MIND BLANKS OUT! TH-THIRD OR F-FOURTH TIME NOW, ISN'T IT?



IT WAS ACTUALLY THE SIXTH TIME! FOR THREE DAYS, GIFFORD TOSSED AND GROANED IN BED. ON THE FOURTH DAY, A DOCTOR FROM THE NEAREST CITY ARRIVED...

IT WAS EVENING WHEN HIS EXAMINATION WAS FINISHED...

TELL ME THE TRUTH, DOCTOR CHAMBERLAIN-- IS- IS IT SERIOUS... OR JUST A FEVER THAT WILL PASS OFF?

SERIOUS, I'M AFRAID, MRS. GIFFORD-- EXTREMELY SERIOUS! I'LL HAVE TO KNOW A LITTLE MORE ABOUT YOUR HUSBAND'S BACKGROUND.



IN THE WOMAN'S HESITANT SILENCE THAT FOLLOWED, A NIGHT-BIRD SCREECHED AND WHEELED IN THE MOONLIGHT...

BACKGROUND? EXACTLY WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

AS AN ARCHEOLOGIST, HIS BUSINESS IS DELVING INTO THE PAST... HAS HE EVER, TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE, PROBED INTO BLACK MAGIC, SINCE YOU CAME TO INDIA?



THE QUESTION SHE HAD DREADED, HER OWN SUSPICIONS CONFIRMED, HER VOICE WAS TREMBLING NOW...

I-I PROMISED HIM ON OATH I'D NEVER TELL ANYONE, BUT IF IT MEANS SO MUCH... DAN CROWDER MET US WHEN WE FIRST ARRIVED... IT WAS IN CEYLON... THE PEOPLE WERE OBSERVING THE FESTIVAL OF BUDDHA'S TOOTH...

NEVER KNEW HOW HE MET SABADU, A FAKIR AND SEER WHO BELONGED TO A CERTAIN CULT...

YOU SIMPLY MUST INITIATE ME INTO THE RITES OF THE TIGER! ENOUGH RUPEES WILL BUY ANYTHING!

I WANT NO MONEY, SAHIB! ON OATH, YOU MUST NEVER TELL HOW WE MET, NOR THE SECRET OF THE RITES!



IT WAS IN A NIGHTMARE, LATER, THAT HE BABBLED OUT THE TERRORS OF THE RITES...

BY THE FIRES OF VISHNU, BY THE WILL OF GUNGA PAH-- YOU, JOHN GIFFORD, ARE OF ONE BLOOD WITH THE TIGER!

IT-IT'S SCALDING... YAAAAH!

IT WAS AFTER WE'D COME TO BENGAL THAT I FIRST NOTICED SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT HIM...

THAT TIGER HEAD... DOES SOMETHING TO YOU, JOHN... WHAT? I KNOW NOW OF THE TIGER RITES...

THE NIGHTMARES I'VE BEEN HAVING... BABBLED EVERYTHING OUT, EH? YOU'VE GOT TO PROMISE, JULIE-- NEVER TO TELL ANYONE!

HE STARTED HAVING STRANGE DELUSIONS AFTER THAT. I HOPE WHAT I'VE TOLD YOU WILL HELP, DOCTOR!

IT HAS, MADAM-- IMMENSELY! THE MENTION OF SABADU, THE RITES... EXPLAINS ALMOST EVERYTHING. YOU'VE GOT TO PUT YOUR HUSBAND IN A CAGE-- AS YOU WOULD ANY ANIMAL!



THE WORDS WERE LIKE ACID BURNING INTO HER BRAIN, HER HEART...

THE STUNNED SILENCE FROM WITHIN THE HUT WAS SHATTERED BY A THUNDEROUS RUMBLING...

AND A MINUTE OR SO AFTER THE ECHO OF IT FADED IN THE JUNGLE NIGHT, DOCTOR CHAMBERLAIN WAS PULLING ASIDE THE BEDROOM CURTAIN...

NO! YOU'RE MAD-- YOU CAN'T MEAN IT... THERE MUST BE SOME OTHER WAY!

THERE IS-- KILL HIM, OUT-RIGHT, NOW!



TAKE A FIRM GRIP ON YOURSELF, MRS. GIFFORD. LOOK AT YOUR HUSBAND NOW!

THERE WAS A PALLID GLOW CAST BY THE FLICKERING LAMP... JULIE GIFFORD STIFLED A SCREAM AT WHAT SHE SAW THERE ON THE BED...

SHE COULD ONLY STARE, SHOCKED, AT THE DOCTOR FOR A LONG TIME AFTERWARD...



THERE'S NOTHING TO FEAR RIGHT NOW. HE'S UNDER VERY POWERFUL SEDATION. BUT TOMORROW THE EFFECT WILL BE GONE. I SUGGEST THE CAGE BECAUSE, IN TIME, THOUGH THERE'S ONLY A SLIM CHANCE, HE MAY REVERT TO NORMAL!



IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIFIC THAT COULD CAUSE HIM TO COME BACK TO HIMSELF?

NO MEDICATIONS KNOWN TO SCIENCE, OF COURSE-- THIS IS ANIMALISM, BLACK MAGIC... AND SABADU'S POWERS ARE GREAT! BUT SOMETHING IN HIS WORK, SOMETHING HE WAS SEEKING, PERHAPS-- A SUDDEN JOLT THAT WOULD MAKE HIM REMEMBER!

IT WAS DAN WHO WAS TAKING THE DOCTOR BACK TO THE CITY, HIS PARTING WORDS RANG DULLY, AS IF THROUGH A HAZE...

CHIN UP, TILL I GET BACK, JULIE! YOU CAN TRUST THESE MEN I'VE ROUNDED UP FOR YOU. OH SURE, DAN-- SURE! THANKS...



MONTHS PASSED, AND THOUGH GIFFORD WAS KEPT IN THE CAGE CONSTANTLY, HE GREW WORSE--BUT THE FAINT HOPE THAT HE MIGHT REVERT TO NORMAL STILL LIVED WITHIN JULIE...

SHE KEPT BUSY BY COMPLETING THE TEMPLE EXCAVATION AND DIGGING DOWN BELOW THE LOOSE DEBRIS...



ENOUGH FOR TODAY, I GUESS... WHAT'S THIS! MY SHOVEL'S STRUCK SOMETHING HARD...

THEN HER FINGERS WERE TEARING ASIDE THE DIRT AND STONE TO REVEAL TWO ROUGH AND ANCIENT SLABS...



DAN! COME QUICKLY-- LOOK WHAT I'VE FOUND!

THE TABLETS OF AZBAH, AN ANCIENT PRINCESS OF INDIA ...THESE ARE WHAT JOHN CAME HERE TO FIND! THEY MAY GIVE HIM THE JOLT DOCTOR CHAMBERLAIN SPOKE OF...



I SURE HOPE SO, JULIE--BUT DON'T EXPECT TOO MUCH.

LATER, BACK AT THE COMPOUND, SHE APPROACHED THE CAGE: HOPE BURNING BRIGHT NOW...



LOOK, JOHN-- THE TABLETS OF AZBAH... I-I'VE FOUND THEM... THE THINGS YOU CAME HERE FOR! YOU REMEMBER...OH, PLEASE SAY YOU REMEMBER...

FOR ANSWER, THE CAGE BARS RATTLED WITH A HARSH, GRATING SOUND; A BELLOWING ROAR SENT THE NATIVES SCRAMBLING FOR SAFETY.



THE MOMENT WAS LIKE A SUDDEN FLASH OF FLAME--THE TERROR, THE DYING HOPE CRUSHED FOREVER; THE QUICK ROUGH GRASP OF CROWDER'S HANDS...



DAN, STOP! WHAT ARE YOU DOING...

JULIE, I-- I...

DAN CROWDER WAS A STRANGER NOW, JUST AS MUCH OF A STRANGER TO HER AS WAS THE "THING" IN THE CAGE...



HE'S GONE, JULIE--BEYOND ANY HELP NOW! I LOVED YOU EVEN BEFORE YOU MARRIED HIM; I LOVED YOU MORE THAN HE EVER DID--AND I'VE WAITED, WAITED A LONG, LONG TIME!

OH, DAN, I NEVER GUESSED... I WISH YOU HADN'T TOLD ME!

THAT NIGHT, JULIE GIFFORD WATCHED FROM HER DARKENED SHACK AND SAW THE SHAPES OF TWO MEN CROSS THE CLAY-HARDENED COMPOUND...



ONE OF THE MEN HAD BEEN DAN; THE OTHER A FAKIR... INSIDE CROWDER'S SHACK, THEY SPOKE IN LOW TONES...

FOR A MOMENT, I THOUGHT THOSE TABLETS OF AZBAH MIGHT BRING HIM BACK. ANYHOW, HERE'S THE OTHER HALF-MILLION RUPEES, FRIEND!

A LOT OF MONEY FOR JUST A WOMAN, SAHIB-- YET IT IS NOT MY AFFAIR! YOU HAD NOTHING TO FEAR; SABADU DOES HIS WORK WELL!



THE NEXT INSTANT, A SCREAM--HIGH AND SHRILL--SENT THEM HURLING FROM THE HUT...

DAN, DAN! HELP ME--IT--IT'S GOT ME...OOOH!

IT'S JULIE! THAT DEVIL-MONSTER OF YOURS HAS GOTTEN HER! THE CAGE... COME ON!



THE TWISTED CAGE DOOR TOLD DAN WHAT HAD HAPPENED...

GONE! IF THAT "THING" HARMS HER, I'LL KILL YOU, SABADU-- WITH MY BARE HANDS!

NO, SAHIB-- IT IS A TRICK... BEHIND US... LOOK!



A BLOOD-CURDLING ROAR THAT WAS HALF-HUMAN, HALF-TIGER SPUN THEM AROUND TO FACE IT AS IT LEAPED...

RRRAAAHHH!

THE HIGH-PITCHED SCREAMS FILLED THE JUNGLE NIGHT.

TWO WEEKS LATER, JULIE GIFFORD TOLD THE STORY TO DOCTOR CHAMBERLAIN, WHO HAD RETURNED...

SO, THE ANCIENT INDIAN LEGEND SAYS: "EACH MAN TO HIS DESTINY WILL GO; OR MISS; BUT BEWARE SAHIB, BEWARE THE TIGER-KISS!"

HELP! AGGHH!

GAAAGH!



THEN, SILENCE-- DEATHLIKE SILENCE...

CROWDER, HIS LIFELONG FRIEND... JUST DOESN'T SEEM POSSIBLE ONE MAN COULD DO THAT TO ANOTHER! YOU'VE HAD YOUR REVENGE UPON THEM BOTH.

IT WAS ONLY WHAT THEY DESERVED, DOCTOR! I'LL LEAVE WITH YOU IN THE MORNING!



GGGRRROUWW!



STAMP PAGE

By *SIDNEY M. ELIAS*

Line of Tordesillas



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By a stroke of fate in the year 1500, Pedro Cabral set sail around the coasts of Africa on a journey to the East, but, an adverse wind struck his ships and drove them off their course until they reached the Brazilian coast. The point at which they landed, Porto Seguro, actually was situated east of the line of Tordesillas and Portugal had all the right of exploration. Cabral took possession of the land in the name of the king and continued his journey. It was not until 30 years later that the first Portuguese settlement was made in Brazil at a place called Sao Vincente.

In 1932, Brazil issued a set of four different stamps to commemorate the colonization of Brazil and the fourth century of the founding of Sao Vincente. One of the stamps, the 20-reis, shows a map of South America and a line thru it representing the Meridian of Tordesillas. The 200-reis stamp shows a picture of Martin Affonso de Souza who founded the first Brazilian settlement at Sao Vincente.

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ARMED **SISSY** WAS ME
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ROGER HIRSCH
was a 112 lb. 6 ft. WEAKLING.
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**as YOU
can be
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MAIL COUPON IN TIME FOR FREE OFFER!

HE WAS MISSING... AND HIS TRAIL LED INTO THE GRIM BACK BAYOUS...

WHERE THE UNDEAD ROAM




IT LED JAKE CONDON, MAN-TRACKER FOR THE SOUTHERN CROSS SURETY COMPANY, TO A MIST-LOCKED OLD PLANTATION... TO A SATANIC SYMBOL! AND IT BROUGHT HIM FACE TO FACE WITH A SHUFFLING, SIGHTLESS, GRAVEYARD LEGION... ZOMBIES!




WE QUESTIONED THE FRENCH PLANTER AND HIS GAUNT, STEEL-EYED WIFE... THEIR ANSWERS WERE SULLEN...

JOHNATHAN CLAY **WAS** HERE, M'SIEU, BUT HE LEFT **MONTHS** AGO!

WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE HE WENT... **NO!** AND STRANGERS ARE NOT WELCOME HERE...



THE PITCHFORK CLUTCHED BY THEIR HULKING SERVANT PROVED THAT!



I SAW HIM PROWLING ABOUT, MASTER! ONE WORD FROM YOU, AND I KILL HIM!

BUT JAKE RETREATED INTO THE NIGHT!

BENJAMIN
AND
ABEL

HERE WAS TIME NOW TO EXAMINE THE FRUIT OF HIS PROWLING. HIS EYES OPENED WIDE...

A DOLL...AN IMAGE OF A LOVELY GIRL...PIERCED BY A PORCUPINE QUILL! WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



THEN A CLOP OF HOOF-BEATS SOUNDED, COMING CLOSER. A CARRIAGE CREAKED OUT OF THE MIST, AND A VOICE MURMURED...



MERCY, CELIE...I'M COMING...I'M COMING!

...THE VOICE OF A TRANCE, OF PAIN AND FEAR! JAKE GASPED, AND STARED... THE HUMAN COUNTERPART OF THE EFFIGY HE CLUTCHED!



HE RAN TO THE CARRIAGE, QUESTIONING...

WHO ARE YOU? ...WHAT IS THE MATTER? ARE YOU ILL?



THE STING OF THE DRIVER'S WHIP STAGGERED HIM...A SNARL...

AWAY WITH YOU! THERE ARE THINGS NOT GIVEN TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF FOOLS!



THE WHIP CRACKED ONCE AGAIN, AND THE COACH MOVED OFF QUICKLY THROUGH THE MISTS!

WITHIN THE MANOR HOUSE, THE PLANTER'S HANDS MOVED SWIFTLY AT THEIR TASK, AND FINALLY...

I ADDED BITS OF HER HAIR AND HER NAILS TO THIS ONE. I FOUND THEM IN HER OLD ROOM, CELIE...

GOOD! IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF THEM THAT THE OTHER ONE FAILED.



NOW CELIE WAVES THE IMAGE THROUGH THE CANDLE FLAME, HER CHANT RISING...

SPEED HER TO ME, DARK SPIRITS...IT IS YOUR PRIESTESS, CELIE, WHO CALLS...



AND AT LAST, TRIUMPHANTLY SHE SHRILLS...

LOOK, JACQUES...LOOK! SHE IS COMING!

OUI, WHO CAN FIGHT AGAINST THE POWERS OF DARKNESS? WE HAVE WON HER!



BLACK MAGIC... WITCHCRAFT HORRORS! THE WORDS RACE THROUGH JAKE'S MIND AS HE SLIPS THROUGH THE MOSS-HUNG WOODS...

DID A TWIG SNAP? SILENCE... THEN THE CRY OF THE CRAZED SERVANT FILLED THE WOODS...

THAT GIRL... DOOMED UNLESS I HELP HER! I KNOW IT... WAIT! WHAT WAS THAT?

SNAP



THE PROWLER... THERE HE IS! AT HIM!



JAKE SNATCHED UP A FALLEN LIMB, AS THE DOGS BOUNDED TOWARD HIM FOR THE KILL...



TO THE OLD HOUSE, CAME WORD OF JAKE'S DEATH...

WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR NOW, CELIE...

TRUE... A PITY MY DEAR HALF-SISTER DISCOVERED OUR "HUMBLE" SERVANTS. BY HER SNOOPING, SHE HAS WAIVED HER HALF-OWNERSHIP OF THE PLANTATION...

CAN YOU HEAR THAT, MARIE? THE PLACE IS ALL MINE NOW... AND YOU WILL BE ONE OF MY SLAVES! THE DRUM, JACQUES... SHE IS READY TO JOIN THEM!



FROM THE BLOOD-STAINED DRUM, A DIRGE-LIKE CADENCE THROBS, LOUDER, LOUDER...

...IT CARRIES TO THE FAR FIELDS WHERE GRAVE-THINGS HALT THEIR LABORS...



...AND THEY GATHER... MOVE SWIFTLY OFF TO HEED ITS SUMMONS... THE UNDEAD!

FROM THE HIGHWAY, MILES AWAY A STATE TROOPER'S RADIO CRACKLES...

...HIS CLOTHES IN TATTERS... DOGS' BLOOD ALL OVER HIM... HE SAYS IT'S THE OLD BROUSSARD PLACE!

TELL 'EM TO HURRY, CAN'T YOU?



WHEN JAKE WAS IN HIS OWN CAR, SPEEDING BACK ALONG THE ROUTE HE HAD COME...

THEY'LL KILL HER... I KNOW IT! MAYBE IT'S TOO LATE NOW!



WHERE SWAMPS FRINGE THE OLD PLANTATION'S BURYING GROUND, A GRIM PROCESSION HALTS. CELIE, THE WITCHWOMAN, SPEAKS...



OUR SLAVES SHALL NOT BE NEEDED, JACQUES... AWAY WITH THEM!

THEY SHUFFLED STIFFLY INTO THE BRUSH, HALTED, AS A PULSING THROB BORE THE OLD WITCHWOMAN'S COMMAND...

NOW ALL IS READY... FIREPOTS AND GREEN EARTH... A HELPLESS FORM ON A HEATHEN ALTAR... AND A BANSHEEWAIL TO THE GODS OF DARKNESS...

MAKE HER ONE OF THEM, DARK SPIRITS... ONE OF THE UNDEAD... A SLAVE TO YOUR PRIESTESS, CELIE!



SLEEP NOW SLEEP ONLY THE DRUM SHALL WAKEN YOU!

THE DRUM THAT BECKONED CELIE'S GODS TO THE RITUAL LED JAKE THROUGH THE TANGLING BRUSH TO THE CLEARING...

SHE'S SLASHING AT THAT DEVIL-DOLL! THE GIRL'S A GONER, UNLESS...

A SUDDEN RUSH, AND THE DOLL WAS IN JAKE'S HAND, UNHARMED...



AND INSTANTLY HIS HAND SLAPPED THE DRUM IN SUMMONS TO THE GRAVEYARD LEGION... 'COME, ZOMBIES... COME!'

A BULLET BLASTED! THE DRUM CRUSHED BENEATH JACQUES AS HE FELL. BUT A GHOSTLY ARMY WAS ON THE MARCH...



BLAM

BUT THEY SHUFFLED PAST, BLIND, AND WORDLESS... WHAT DID IT MEAN?

THEY OBEY ONLY THE DRUM! AND IT SHATTERED BEFORE THEIR COMMAND WAS COMPLETE!



ON THEY CAME... LIFELESS AUTOMATONS...



JOHNATHAN!

JOHNATHAN CLAY--THE MAN HE HAD COME SEEKING... WAS ONE OF THE WALKING DEAD!

FROM A NEAR HILLTOP, HARDENED TROOPERS WHISPERED FEARFULLY...

THE SCENT, OF THE GRAVE STILL ON 'EM! TELL ME I'M SEEN' THINGS!

LOOK-- THEY'RE ON THE EDGE OF THAT BOG!



AND STILL THEY PRESSED FORWARD, AS THE CLUTCHING SANDS SUCKED THEM DOWN, DOWN, DOWN... TO A FINAL RESTING PLACE!



HOWEVER, SOUTHERN CROSS SURETY WAS INTERESTED ONLY IN JOHNATHAN CLAY...

INHALANTS AND VANISHED FEARS WORKED WONDERS WITH MARIE BROUSSARD...

IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S GONNA BE OKAY!

GOOD DEAL... PLANTATION WILL BE HERS NOW... SISTER CELIE HERE AIN'T GONNA BE AROUND TO DIVVY BY MUMBO-JUMBO!



BUT, LOOK, JAKE... WHAT DO I PUT DOWN HERE? WHEN DID HE DIE?

WHO KNOWS? HOW DO I KNOW WHO'S LIVING AND WHO'S DEAD DOWN THERE IN THAT BAYOU COUNTRY WHERE THE UNDEAD ROAM?!



END

KOHINOORI'S CURSE



THE OLD INDIAN GUIDE GASPS AS HE COLLAPSES...

YOU HAVE WON, SAHIB... YOU HAVE WON!



THERE IS NO MERCY, NO REGRET IN THIS RUTHLESS KILLER...

ROCKY SHANNON ALWAYS WINS, ABA KALIM. AND THIS TIME IT'S A KING'S RANSOM IN JEWELS!



MINE...ALL MINE! I'LL SOON HAVE THIS TUMBLING-DOWN PASSAGE TO THE JEWELS CLEARED...



BUT...WAIT! IS IT ONLY THE NIGHT WIND WAILING AS HE LABORS?

OR IS IT THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT-SHAPE THAT RISES FROM HIS MURDER VICTIM?

"THE JEWELS WERE BROUGHT TO A SHRINE BY A JUNGLE TRIBE CENTURIES AGO AS AN OFFERING TO ITS GODS..."

KOHNORI, THE MYSTIC, PLANNED THIS RICH TREK! KOHNORI, THE DEVOUT, WHO LED HIS TRIBESMEN IN A FALSE RITUAL OF LOVE, WHOSE OWN GOD WAS GREED-- THIS KOHNORI RETURNED TO THE SHRINE AND SEIZED THE TREASURE!

BEWARE, SAHIB... BEWARE OF KOHNORI'S CURSE! REMEMBER? I TOLD YOU OF IT ON THE TRAIL...

WE HAVE BROUGHT ALL THE WEALTH OF OUR TRIBE TO OUR GODS... THIS IS THE VISION AND THE COMMAND OF KOHNORI FULFILLED!



"THEN LIKE A MAGNET, THE JEWELS LED A KILLER'S DAGGER TO KOHNORI'S LAIR..."



NO PLACE ON EARTH SHALL HIDE MY ASSASSIN! FOR NOW I CURSE THE JEWELS... CURSE THEM!

"AND EVEN WITNESSES TO THE THIEF'S HARSH END HID THEIR EYES..."

"AND THE MEN OF LAW WHO FINALLY TRACKED DOWN THE KILLER, COULD ONLY STARE IN HORROR..."



LOOK NOT UPON HIM, MY CHILD... HE IS A CREATURE OF DARKNESS!



BY THE ARMS OF KRISHNA-- LOOK!

WHAT KIND OF DEVIL'S WORK IS THIS!

THE CURSE! KOHNORI'S CURSE!

THE PICK IN SHANNON'S HAND BIT INTO THE SOFT EARTH. THE QUAVERING VOICE SPOKE SOFTLY...

"THE JEWELS NEXT FOUND THEIR WAY TO A FAMED AND MIGHTY MAHARAJAH... HIS PEOPLE LOVED HIM... HE WAS OF GOOD HEART..."

THUS DID THE FIRST VICTIM OF THE CURSE PAY, UNBELIEVER, BUT HE WAS NOT THE LAST...

A TIDBIT FOR YOU, MY CHILD... NOW GO AND PLAY!



"BUT WITH THE COMING OF THE TREASURE, HE CHANGED... IT SEEMED TO GRIP HIM IN A SPELL..."

"HIS SERVANTS SHRANK FROM HIM IN TREMBLING FEAR..."

BY THE GODS... NO! IT CANNOT BE!



"AND HIS COURTYARD RANG DAILY WITH THE SCREAMS OF THE SLAVES HE CONDEMNED"

"SOON HIS PROUD EMPIRE CRUM- BLED... HIS COURT BECAME A PROWLING PLACE FOR JUNGLE BEASTS..."

"HE WAS BURIED HERE WITH THE TREASURE... A MARKER WAS PLACED AS A WARNING TO ALL THE GREEDY..."

Y-I-I-I! MERCY... HAVE MERCY!

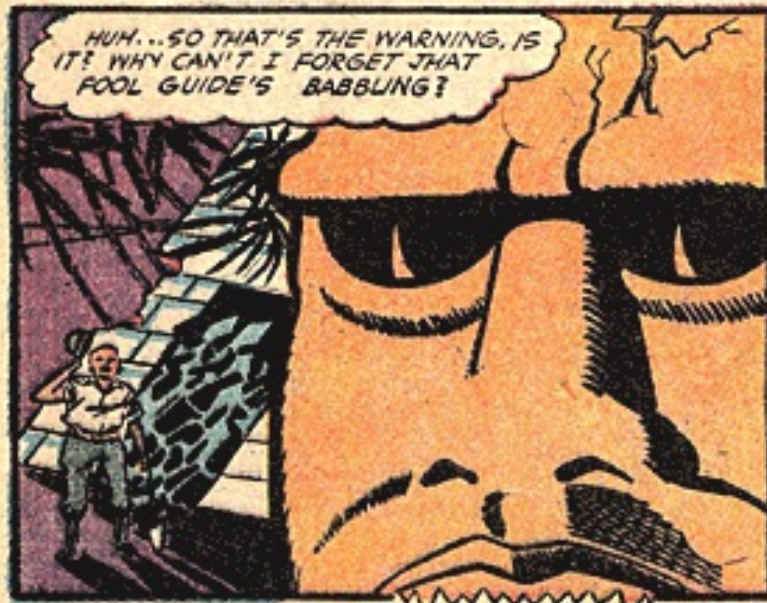


"HE DIED ALONE WITH THE JEWELS... UNATTENDED, UN- MOURNED..."

THE VOICE FADED THEN... HAD IT BEEN ONLY THE WIND?

...OR HAD IT BEEN A VOICE FROM THE KILLER'S MEMORY AS HE HALTED TO GLANCE AT A MARKER OF WEATHERED STONE?

THE PICK SWINGS FASTER NOW... FASTER! AND AT LAST...



HUH... SO THAT'S THE WARNING, IS IT? WHY CAN'T I FORGET THAT FOOL GUIDE'S BABBLING?



I'VE MADE IT... BROKEN THROUGH! NOW FOR A LIGHT!

THEN, WITH A TORCH, HE RACES THROUGH A MUSTY PASSAGE... PAST A POOL...

A CRUMBLING COFFIN OF STONE. HE PAUSES BESIDE IT, AND CANNOT SUPPRESS A SHUDDER...

THE WEALTH OF A HUNDRED KINGS.



SOMETHING UP AHEAD THERE... THE TOMB OF THE MAHARAJAH!



SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT THE REMAINS...

BUT THEN HIS EAGER EYES DISCOVER THEM... THE JEWELS.



WINE AND WOMEN... EASY STREET! I'VE WON... I'VE LICKED THAT STUPID CURSE!

AND DEPARTING WITH HIS PRECIOUS BURDEN, HE SEES HIS IMAGE IN THE STILL POOL. THE ROAR OF AN ANGUISHED BEAST ESCAPES HIS THROAT...

AND HE LEARNS THE HORROR OF KOHNOORI'S CURSE... THE CURSE THAT HAS MADE HIM, LIKE THE OTHERS BEFORE HIM, A MONSTER!



NO! NO!

AAAAAH!



THE END

The DEADMAN'S CHEST

J. B. MORGANROTH WAS OLD AND RICH—OLD AS METHUSELAH, RICHER THAN MIDAS YET, EACH MORNING HE LEFT HIS LONELY SEACLIFF MANSION TO PROWL THE BEACH FOR DRIFT, ESPECIALLY FOR THE MANY STRAY MASSES OF SEAWEED—ALL THIS LAST WEEK, HIS GRANDSON, PETER, HAD WATCHED THESE STRANGE EXCURSIONS, WATCHED FROM THE DAMP GLOOMY ROCK-SHADOWS, WATCHED WITH A BIRD-OF-PREY GLITTER IN HIS SHARP, SHIFTY EYES...



GREEDY OLD DEVIL! RICH AS HE IS, HE'S LOOKING FOR AMBERGRIS... AH, HE'S WADING OUT AFTER A BED OF KELP!

THE SEABIRDS WHEELED AND SCREAMED OVER-HEAD, WHILE A PLOT DEVELOPED SWIFTLY IN PETER'S BRAIN...

THIS IS MY CHANCE! IT'S NOW OR NEVER!



HE MOVED SILENTLY AND QUICKLY, AS THOUGH HIS PART HAD BEEN REHEARSED COUNTLESS TIMES...



NOW, YOU COLD-HEARTED OLD PIRATE—YOU'RE GOING TO DIE! AND YOUR PRECIOUS SEAWEED IS GOING TO HELP ME!

OLD MORGANROTH NEVER HEARD THE FAINT SPLASH BEHIND HIM, SO INTENT WAS HE UPON SEIZING THE SLIMY MASS OF WEED...

I'VE GOT IT! WAIT, SOMETHING'S CLUTCHED MY ANKLE. I'M BEING PULLED UNDER...

HELP! HELP!



THE FIRST TWO
CRIBS WERE
LOST IN THE
WIND, IN THE
SCREAMING
GULLS, IN THE
CRASH OF SURF
AGAINST THE
ROCKY SHORE;
THE THIRD CRY
WAS A GASPING
GURGLE...



A
MOMENT
LATER,
PETER
EMERGED
FROM THE
BLUE-
GREEN
WATER--
ALONE, A
LOOK OF
TRIOUMPH
ON HIS
FACE...

THEY'LL FIND HIM, SOONER
OR LATER... ACCIDENTAL
DEATH, DROWNED BY
STRANGULATION... WRAPPED
IN DRIFTING SEANEEDE!
HAH! NOY TO REPORT
HIM MISSING...



ON
THE
FOURTH
DAY,
THE SHERIFF
CAME FOR
THE THIRD
AND
LAST TIME..

IT WAS AN ACCIDENTAL DEATH,
PETER. I'M GLAD YOU DIDN'T
HAVE TO SEE HIM WHEN WE
PULLED HIM IN... GHASTLY!
THAT SEANEEDE IS TREACHER-
OUS STUFF, YOU KNOW!

I'LL MISS HIM, SHERIFF!
HE WAS MORE THAN
JUST A GRANDFATHER,
HE WAS A FRIEND, A
COMPANION! I WARNED
HIM ABOUT SWIMMING
ALONE!



TWO WEEKS SLID EASILY BY, AND PETER HAD BECOME
MASTER OF SEACLIFF MANSION. THEN ONE DAY THE
DOORBELL RANG...

I STILL CAN'T FIGURE OUT
WHY OLD J.B. WOULD WANT
TO SEE ME, ETHEL. I HAVEN'T
SEEN HIM IN YEARS.

IT IS STRANGE,
DEAR--AND THIS PLACE
IS EVEN STRANGER...
GIVES ME THE
CREEPS!



IT WAS PETER
WHO ADMITTED
THE NEWCOMERS,
AND SOON THEY
WERE TALKING IN
THE ANCIENT
PARLOR.

I'M JOHN DEVENS
MORGANROTH.
YOUR GRANDFATHER
IS A DISTANT
COUSIN OF MY
FATHER'S.

JOHN DEVENS
MORGANROTH...
YES, I'VE HEARD
HIM MENTION
THE NAME. SENT
FOR YOU, EH?



HMM, THIS IS A
GRISLY JOKE! YOU SEE,
HE'S BEEN DEAD FOR
THE PAST TWO WEEKS!

DEAD? BUT I...
WELL, SOME
JOKE, I MUST
SAY...

THE
CONVERSATION
BUZZED ON;
OUTSIDE STORM
CLOUDS HAD
GATHERED
UNNOTICED
UNTIL A
BRIGHT WHIP
OF LIGHTNING
RELEASED
THEIR
FURY..

WELL, PETER, I'M SORRY
TO HEAR OF MY COUSIN'S
VIOLENT DEATH, BUT I
THINK WE'D BEST BE
GOING, EH, ETHEL?

HOLD ON, JOHN--THAT'S
QUITE A STORM OUT
THERE! SUPPOSE YOU AND
YOUR WIFE STAY HERE FOR
THE NIGHT? WE'VE PLENTY
TO TALK ABOUT AND BESIDES
IT GETS LONELY!



WELL, I'LL SAY THIS, PETER, OLD J.B. WAS CERTAINLY A VULTUROUS LOOKING CHARACTER!

VULTUROUS IS A GOOD WORD, JOHN! ACTUALLY, HE WAS A PIRATE, WITHOUT A GALLEON, WITHOUT THE USUAL TRAPPINGS. HE PREYED ON THE WEAK AND SICK ALIKE...



...I'VE BEEN READING HIS OLD RECORDS... ONCE HE EVICTED THE PATIENTS OF A CHARITY HOSPITAL HE'D BOUGHT; HE MUST HAVE BEEN GLOATING AS THEY FILED OUT...



WHEN, THERE WAS THAT OLD FIRE-TRAP TENEMENT HOUSE HE OWNED. TWENTY PEOPLE DIED IN THE FLAMES, WHILE HE COLLECTED THOUSANDS IN INSURANCE...



"THE ROSE MARIE A HORSE TANKER NEVER PLOUGHED THE SEAS... LLOYDS OF LONDON PAID OFF ON THAT DISASTER..."



AND IN AFRICA, IT WAS SLAVE LABOR THAT SAPPED THE TREES FOR HIS RUBBER EMPIRE; HIS OVERSEERS' WHIPS GOT THE WORK DONE...



YES, JOHN, VULTUROUS WAS AN APT EXPRESSION! OLD J.B.'S FORTUNE WAS ACCUMULATED THROUGH PIRACY!

AND I SUPPOSE ATONEMENT FOR THAT OLD SINNER'S CRIMES FALLS TO HIS HEIR.



AFTER JOHN AND HIS WIFE WERE SAFELY TUCKED AWAY FOR THE NIGHT, PETER RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY...



STUPID FOOLS! ATONEMENT! TO THE TUNE OF J.B.'S MILLIONST' BAN! AH, NOW FOR THE OLD BUZZARD'S SIGNATURE ON THIS...

STRAIGHT TO THE WATER'S EDGE, PETER WENT--HE HALTED AT THE SIGHT OF SOMETHING THAT SHONE BRIGHTLY IN THE GLOOM...



A CHEST! A PIRATE'S CHEST, FILLED WITH GOLD... AND IT'S MINE!

HE WAS UP TO HIS KNEES IN THE WATER, WHEN HE REALIZED THAT HIS EYES HAD BEEN DECEIVED...



IT'S NOT GOLD... ONLY SEAWEED! I'M FALLING... HELP!

HE COULD FEEL THE SLIMY FOLDS OF IT CLOSING ABOUT HIM, AS HIS CRY WAS SWEEPED OFF BY THE WIND...



LIKE GRANDFATHER LIKE BRANDON! THE POISON OF GREED WAS IN YOU AS IT WAS IN ME! BUT NOW IT DIES, EVEN AS I DIED, PETER!

THE THIRD CRY WAS A GURGLE, THEN THE STRUGGLES CEASED...



THE MONEY SHALL GO TO MY RIGHTFUL HEIRS! NOW COME, PETER, WE MUST BE GETTING ON...

JOHAN AND HIS WIFE WERE TOO LATE. THEY WATCHED IN HORROR FROM THE SHORE...



IF I HADN'T SEEN IT MYSELF, I'D SAY SOMEONE HAD FORCED HIM IN THE WATER... AS THOUGH TO MURDER HIM!

OH, JOHN! HE-HE SEEMED LIKE SUCH A NICE FELLOW...

JOHAN AND HIS WIFE, AFTER THEY'D MADE A REPORT TO THE SHERIFF, STAYED ON TO SETTLE THE AFFAIRS OF THE OLD HOUSE-- AND ONE DAY J.B. MORGANROTH'S LAWYER CAME WITH IMPORTANT LOOKING PAPERS...



...AND I DO HEREBY WILL TO JOHN DEVENS MORGANROTH, MY DISTANT COUSIN, ALL MY EARTHLY POSSESSIONS, WITH ONLY ONE REQUEST, THAT HE DO WITH THEM AS HE DEEMS BEST IN THE INTEREST OF ALL.

SO THAT'S WHY HE WANTED US HERE! BUT I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY HE CUT OFF HIS ONLY GRANDSON WITHOUT A CENT!

POOR PETER, HE PROBABLY HAD NO IDEA OF HIS GRANDFATHER'S PLANS. BUT WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS MONEY?

THE BEST INTEREST OF ALL CONCERNED WOULD BE FOR ME TO GIVE EVERY CENT TO CHARITY, ETHEL! I THINK THAT'S WHAT HE WANTED. PETER WOULD HAVE WANTED THAT TOO. I'LL DO IT!



THE END

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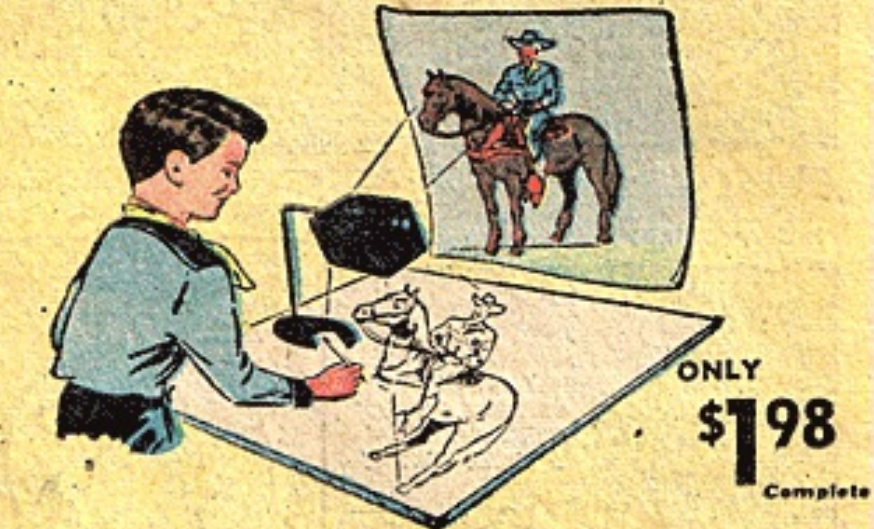
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