AMERICA'S FIRST and GREATEST SUPERNATURAL!

AMERICAN COMICS GROUP ACG

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NO 42- APRIL

ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN!

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BUT HOW COULD A--- **SPIRIT** BE KILLED?

NO **MORTAL** COULD HAVE DONE IT---BUT **I** HAVE **SUPER-NATURAL** POWER!

Two DREAD APPARITIONS STOOD FACE TO FACE ---AND DEADLY DANGER THREATENED! READ THE STRANGE, SINISTER SECRET OF A SPECTER IN--- "AUNT LAVINIA'S GHOST"!

AUNT LAVINIA'S GHOST

STUDENTS OF THE SUPERNATURAL NOW REGARD THE FAMOUS **SALEM WITCH TRIALS** AS A BLACK MARK IN COLONIAL HISTORY---FOR THE EVIDENCE CONDEMNING SCORES OF MEN AND WOMEN TO DEATH HAS BEEN PROVEN FLIMSY! BUT NOT **ALL** WHO WERE BURNED AT THE STAKE WERE **INNOCENT**--- NOR, AS RECENT EVENTS HAVE SO TERRIBLY SHOWN, WAS THEIR EVIL FOREVER DESTROYED BY THE FLAMES!

GLOAT, FOOLS---BUT I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE! I DIE CURSING THE JUDGES WHO HAVE CONDEMNED ME---AND I VOW THAT THEY SHALL BE REPAID IN THE SUFFERING OF THEIR DESCENDANTS ---FOR I SHALL **RETURN FROM MY GRAVE!**

HARRY AZARUS

IN THE ANCESTRAL HOME OF THE MATHER FAMILY---

IT'S SWELL HAVING YOU BACK FROM COLLEGE AT LAST, TED--- BUT ARE YOU **REALLY** GOING TO LIVE IN THIS GLOOMY OLD PLACE **ALONE?**

WELL, AT LEAST UNTIL WE GET **MARRIED**, PRUDENCE! AFTER ALL, I WAS **BORN** HERE! SURE, IT'S BEEN EMPTY FOR YEARS---BUT I'LL REVIVE THE JOINT WITH A PARTY FOR MY OLD PALS!

SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER---

THE LEAST YOU CAN DO IS GET RID OF THOSE STUFFY OLD PORTRAITS! WHO'S **THAT** --- MISS AMERICA?

THAT'S OLD **AUNT LAVINIA**, WHO TOOK CARE OF ME AS A KID! IT WAS ALWAYS, "YOUNG MAN, **DON'T** FORGET YOUR RUBBERS!" OR, "YOUNG MAN, THAT ISN'T **RE-SPECTABLE!**" MAN, WAS SHE A **TERROR!**

BUT HERE'S THE SKELETON IN THE FAMILY CLOSET---**OCTAVIUS MATHER**, BURNED AT THE STAKE FOR **SORCERY!** BOY, HE REALLY **WAS** A QUEER CHARACTER! LET ME READ YOU SOME OF THE STUFF HE WROTE IN AN OLD DIARY THAT'S BEEN HANDED DOWN AS A FAMILY HEIRLOOM!

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FROM AN ANCIENT JOURNAL---

LISTEN TO *THIS*---"TO SUMMON A SOUL FROM THE *BEYOND*, IT IS NEEDFUL TO CONDUCT A *SÉANCE!* LET THE ASSEMBLED COMPANY JOIN HANDS UPON A ROUND TABLE IN UTTER DARKNESS! THEN, CALLING UPON THE NAME OF THE DESIRED SOUL, PRONOUNCE THE MYSTIC WORD---*ZUMRACK!*"

GREAT IDEA! LET'S GET IN TOUCH WITH OCTAVIUS RIGHT NOW!

AND SO, IN THE SPIRIT OF FUN, THE SÉANCE COMMENCED! LITTLE DID THE GUESTS KNOW THE STARK HORROR THAT LAY AHEAD---

OKAY, FOLKS, HERE I GO!---O SPIRITS OF THE VAST BEYOND, WE CALL UPON THE SPIRIT OF *OCTAVIUS MATHER* TO APPEAR BEFORE US---*ZUMRACK!*

SUDDENLY, GLOWING EERILY IN THE DARKNESS---

S-SOMETHING'S--- *MATERIALIZING!*

HOLY SMOKE! DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?

GREAT GUNS! IT---IT'S *AUNT LAVINIA!*

YES, YOU YOUNG *SCAMP* ---AND I'M TELLING YOU TO STOP THIS NONSENSE *IMMEDIATELY!* GOOD THING I GOT HERE BEFORE ANY *HARM* WAS DONE!

AS THE LIGHTS GO ON---

WHAT THE---! SHE'S *GONE!*

VERY GOOD *ACT*, TED--- BUT YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR IS IN POOR TASTE! YOU TALKED US INTO THIS SEANCE SO YOU COULD PRODUCE YOUR AUNT LAVINIA WITH TRICK MIRRORS! WHY NOT *ADMIT* IT?

B-BUT I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS!

HOURS LATER, AFTER THE GUESTS HAD LEFT AND A BAFFLED TED WENT TO HIS ROOM---

YE GODS--- I MUST BE LOSING MY---

YOUNG MAN, DO YOU REALIZE WHAT *TIME* IT IS? HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU THAT *EARLY TO BED AND EARLY TO RISE---*

---MAKES A MAN HEALTHY, WEALTHY AND WISE! GOOD GRAVY---IS IT REALLY *YOU?*

OF *COURSE* IT'S ME! YOU SEE, MY BOY, YOU WERE ALWAYS MY FAVORITE NEPHEW--- AND EVEN IN THE BEYOND I WAS ALWAYS CLOSE BY, WATCHING OVER YOU! SO WHEN THAT AWFUL SUMMONS WENT OUT TO OCTAVIUS, I WAS IN A POSITION TO HEAR IT *FIRST!*

OCTAVIUS IS **EVIL, DANGEROUS!** THEREFORE, **I** MADE USE OF THE BRIDGE THE SÉANCE OFFERED TO ENTER THE MORTAL WORLD BEFORE **HE** COULD··· KNOWING THAT MY APPEARANCE WOULD STARTLE YOU INTO BREAKING HANDS··· THEREBY DESTROYING THE NECESSARY LINK! BUT ENOUGH TALK! GET A GLASS OF HOT MILK AND SOME COOKIES AND GO TO BED··· **AT ONCE!**

NEXT MORNING···

OKAY, AUNT LAVINIA, I ATE EVERY SPOONFUL OF YOUR PORRIDGE! NOW REALLY··· THERE'S NO NEED FOR **YOU** TO HANG AROUND··· I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF!

HMPH! WHAT WITH THESE WILD PARTIES TILL ALL HOURS, I'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOU **IN HAND!** NOW GO ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS AND DON'T BE LATE FOR DINNER!

THAT NIGHT···

THE MEAL WAS SWELL, AUNTIE··· BUT I'VE HAD ENOUGH! I'VE GOT TO BLOW ···GOT A DATE WITH MY ONE AND ONLY!

IF YOU MEAN YOUR LADY FRIEND, I CERTAINLY WON'T PERMIT YOU TO GO DRESSED LIKE **THAT!** I'VE LAID OUT SOME **SENSIBLE** THINGS WHICH I FOUND IN THE ATTIC!

WHAT! YOU DON'T MEAN FOR **ME** TO WEAR **THAT** OLD JUNK, DO YOU? THOSE THINGS ARE OUT OF STYLE!

GOOD TASTE **NEVER** GOES OUT OF STYLE! NOW HURRY UP··· WE DON'T WANT TO BE LATE FOR OUR APPOINTMENT!

OUR APPOINTMENT? JUST WHERE DO YOU THINK **YOU'RE** GOING? IF **YOU** SHOWED UP, PRUDENCE WOULD BE SCARED OUT OF HER WITS!

SINCE YOU HAVE A SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT WITH A **YOUNG LADY** ···YOU WILL NEED A **CHAPERONE!** BUT PERHAPS IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA FOR ME TO MAKE MYSELF **INVISIBLE** ···SO THAT NOBODY CAN SEE OR HEAR ME BUT YOU!

OH, HELLO, DARL··· **GOOD HEAVENS!** HAVE YOU GONE **MAD** ···OR ARE WE GOING TO A **MASQUERADE?**

WHY, ER···ALL MY OTHER STUFF IS OUT TO THE CLEANERS!

BOY, AM **I** IN A FIX! I CAN'T **EXPLAIN** IT TO HER!

LATER···

SLOW DOWN, YOU YOUNG SCAMP··· YOU WANT TO GET US ALL **KILLED?**

HOLY HANNAH··· I'M ONLY DOING **FORTY!**

THAT DOES IT! IN ADDITION TO EVERYTHING ELSE··· YOU'VE STARTED TALKING TO **YOURSELF!**

AT THE END OF A HARROWING EVENING...

I DIDN'T OBJECT WHEN YOU ORDERED **MILK** IN THE NIGHTCLUB---OR WHEN YOU INSISTED ON DANCING OVER A FOOT **AWAY** FROM ME---

BUT ALL NIGHT LONG YOU KEPT **MUMBLING TO YOURSELF!**

ER---FORGET IT, HONEY! JUST COME HERE AND KISS ME GOOD NIGHT!

KISS? MERCY ME! THEY AREN'T EVEN MARRIED YET!

WHEN TED ARRIVES HOME---

THAT'S THE LAST TIME I EVER **DOUBLE-DATE** WITH **AUNT LAVINIA!** BUT THANK GOODNESS SHE'S TAKEN OFF FOR THE NIGHT! NOW TO CALL PRU AND EXPLAIN---BEFORE SHE THINKS I'M OFF MY ROCKER!

NOW I **KNOW** YOU'RE CRAZY, TED---THAT SÉANCE **COULDN'T** HAVE PRODUCED A SPIRIT FROM THE BEYOND!

OH, **NO?** COME RIGHT OVER AND I'LL **PROVE** IT TO YOU!

WHEN PRUDENCE ARRIVES...

I **STILL** SAY THAT THIS WHOLE BUSINESS IS ONLY YOUR IMAGINATION!

OKAY, THEN, YOU ASKED FOR IT! WE'LL RE-ENACT THIS SÉANCE JUST LIKE THE LAST TIME! **HERE GOES!**... "O SPIRITS OF THE VAST BEYOND, WE CALL UPON THE SPIRIT OF **OCTAVIUS MATHER** TO APPEAR BEFORE US---**ZUMRACK!**"

THERE---YOU **SEE? NOTHING HAPPENED!** MOTHER ALWAYS **SAID** THERE WAS AN ODD STREAK SOMEWHERE IN THE MATHER FAMILY, BUT I NEVER BELIEVED IT---**UNTIL TONIGHT!** PLEASE DON'T CALL ME UNTIL YOU COME BACK TO YOUR SENSES!

ALL RIGHT, IF YOU WANT IT THAT WAY! **GOOD NIGHT!**

WOMEN! A GUY IN HIS RIGHT MIND WOULDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH 'EM! **WHAT THE---?**

KINSMAN--- I GREET YOU! NOW THAT **SHE** IS GONE ---WE CAN **SPEAK!**

TAP! TAP!

Y-YOU! BUT ---I THOUGHT--

I ARRIVED WHEN SUMMONED ---BUT HID BECAUSE **NO ONE** MUST KNOW OF MY PRESENCE IN THE WORLD---SO THAT NOBODY WILL INTERFERE WITH MY PLANS FOR **REVENGE!** NOW I MUST VENTURE INTO THE NIGHT---AND **DEATH** WILL FOLLOW IN MY WAKE!

WAIT, YOU MANIAC! I WON'T LET YOU... OH-HH!

FOOL... NO ONE SHALL STAND IN MY WAY!

WHAM!

TOO LATE TED MATHER LEARNED THE AWFUL PERIL OF TAMPERING WITH FORBIDDEN THINGS! A CRAZED KILLER-SPIRIT HAD BEEN LOOSED ...UPON A HELPLESS CITY...

MELISSA WINTHROP... YOU SHALL BE THE FIRST TO DIE!

QUENTIN APLEY ...A WORTHY VICTIM!

NO... NO! HELP!

YAAARGH!

HAA-HA-HA!

HOURS LATER...

WH-WHERE AM I? OH ...THANK HEAVENS IT'S YOU, AUNT LAVINIA... SOMETHING HORRIBLE HAS HAPPENED!

NO USE TELLING ME... I KNOW! YOU'VE RELEASED... THAT CREATURE! OH, WHAT A FOOL YOU'VE BEEN, THEODORE... TO MEDDLE IN THINGS YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT! PERHAPS IT'S TIME YOUR LEARNED A FEW THINGS... ABOUT OUR FAMILY HISTORY!

"OCTAVIUS MATHER LIVED IN THE 17TH CENTURY... ONE OF THE WORST FIENDS EVER SPAWNED IN AMERICA! FROM THE BEGINNING, HE WAS INTERESTED IN ONLY THE MOST MONSTROUS THINGS..."

HA-HA! ANOTHER BODY FOR USE IN MY EXPERIMENTS!

YES, OCTAVIUS WAS A SORCERER ...WHO DELVED DEEP INTO THE BLACK ARTS! THERE WERE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCES IN SALEM, WHISPERS OF FRIGHTFUL HORRORS COMMITTED IN HIS LABORATORY..."

BAH... I'VE FAILED AGAIN! BUT I SHALL SUCCEED NEXT TIME!

"FINALLY, AFTER A LIFETIME OF UNSPEAKABLE CRIME... OCTAVIUS WAS BROUGHT TO JUSTICE..."

YOU HAVE BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF WITCHCRAFT ...AND OF BEING IN LEAGUE WITH SATAN! THEREFORE, THIS COURT SENTENCES YOU TO BE BURNED AT THE STAKE!

FOOLS! I WILL BE REVENGED! SOMEDAY I SHALL RETURN FROM THE GRAVE... AND THEN... LET THE DESCENDANTS OF THOSE WHO HAVE CONDEMNED ME BEWARE!

I---I DON'T BELIEVE IT! IT'S---JUST A MYTH! IT COULDN'T BE TRUE!

CAN'T IT? LOOK AT THIS NEWSPAPER HEADLINE--- "GHASTLY MURDERS BY UNSEEN KILLER!" DON'T YOU SEE? HIS REVENGE HAS ALREADY BEGUN!

DAILY

BUT WHY SHOULD HE GO ON A RAMPAGE OF SUCH SENSELESS SLAUGHTER?

IT'S THE VERY REVENGE HE SWORE---EVERY ONE OF THOSE VICTIMS IS A DESCENDANT OF THOSE WHO CONDEMNED HIM! HE'LL GO ON LIKE THIS TILL HE'S KILLED THE LAST ONE---AND THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO!

AS THE DAY WENDS ON AND THE WAVE OF TERROR SPREADS---

PANIC HAS GRIPPED THE HISTORIC OLD TOWN OF SALEM! WHO WILL BE THE NEXT VICTIM OF THIS UNSEEN KILLER? POLICE ARE BAFFLED---

YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN, CHIEF--- I TELL YOU THE KILLER IS THE SPIRIT OF OCTAVIUS MATHER!--- NO, I'M NOT CRAZY!

ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS, THE NEXT VICTIM SHOULD BE ICHABOD LODGE! TELL THE POLICE TO SURROUND HIS HOME!

AT THE LODGE MANSION---

IT DON'T MAKE SENSE GOIN' OFF ON A WILD GOOSE CHASE JUST BECAUSE SOME NUT---

GREAT SCOTT! LOOK! FIRE MEN---FIRE! CUT THAT THING DOWN!

OUT OF MY WAY, MORTALS! ICHABOD LODGE MUST DIE!

BULLETS JUST--- INFURIATE THAT THING! HE CAN'T BE STOPPED!

CRASH

RATTATTAT!

POLICE HAVE LEARNED THAT THE KILLER IS THE SPIRIT OF THE 17TH CENTURY SORCERER, OCTAVIUS MATHER, WHO HAS JUST FOUGHT HIS WAY THROUGH A POLICE GUARD AND MURDERED ICHABOD LODGE! ESCAPING, HE SHOUTED THAT ONLY ONE MORE VICTIM AWAITED HIM--- BEFORE HIS REVENGE WOULD BE COMPLETE!

AND THE LAST AND MOST IMPORTANT VICTIM, THE ONLY LIVING DESCENDANT OF THE CHIEF JUDGE WHO CONDEMNED OCTAVIUS IS--- YOUR SWEETHEART, PRUDENCE CABOT!

TED CAN'T SAVE HER FROM A CREATURE LIKE OCTAVIUS---HE'LL ONLY GET HIMSELF KILLED! IF ONLY I WERE STRONG ENOUGH TO OPPOSE HIM! IF ONLY---WAIT ---I'VE GOT IT! AND THERE'S NOT A MOMENT TO LOSE!

I---I'VE GOT TO GET TO HER HOUSE BEFORE THAT FIEND DOES!

LISTEN TO **REASON**, DARLING---WE'VE GOT TO GET **OUT** OF HERE--- **NOW!**

NON-SENSE! IMAGINARY GHOSTS CAN'T SCARE ---**WHAT'S THAT?**

CR-RASH!!

OCTAVIUS JUST CAME CRASHING IN! I'M TAKING YOU TO **MY** PLACE---AND PRAY THAT HE DOESN'T THINK OF LOOKING THERE!

MEANWHILE, AT THE TOWN MUSEUM, WHERE EXCITED CROWDS HAVE GATHERED TO LOOK AT AN OLD RELIC WHICH NOW HELD GRIM MEANING---A STARTLING SIGHT!

HOLY SMOKE ---SHE MATERIAL-IZED OUT OF THIN AIR!

HELP--- LET ME OUT OF HERE!

ACTUAL STAKE AT WHICH OCTAVIUS MATHER WAS BURNED

THEN, SEIZING A CUTLASS FROM A NEARBY EXHIBIT---

SHE'S WHITTLING THAT STAKE TO A **POINT!**

GHOST OR NO GHOST, SHE'S DESTROYING **CITY PROPERTY** ---AND I'M PUTTING A **STOP** TO IT!

ACTUAL

HUH? WHERE'D SHE GO?

BEATS ME! AND LOOK--- THE STAKE IS GONE!

AT THAT MOMENT---

OH, TED--- I---I'M SO **SCARED!**

DON'T WORRY, PRU--- EVEN IF HE FOUND YOU, I'D---

AH, BUT I HAVE FOUND HER--- **AND THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO!**

AS TED STEPS BETWEEN PRUDENCE AND OCTAVIUS---

FOOL---I SPARED YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU INTERFERED BEFORE BECAUSE YOU WERE A **KINSMAN!** BUT **NOW** ---**FIRST YOU---AND THEN THE GIRL!**

NO, OCTAVIUS! YOU'VE GOT TO DEAL WITH ME FIRST!

YOU! MEDDLER--- BACK TO THE SPIRIT WORLD WITH YOU, BEFORE I TEAR YOU TO PIECES!

NO, MONSTER ---IT IS YOU WHO WILL BE DESTROYED!

IT WAS A SPECTACLE SUCH AS THE WORLD HAD NEVER SEEN---A DEADLY COMBAT BETWEEN TWO CREATURES FROM THE BEYOND!

MY STRENGTH IS FAR GREATER THAN YOURS, LAVINIA! PREPARE TO MEET YOUR DOOM!

NO, OCTAVIUS! YOU SHALL MEET---

---YOURS!

YAAAAGH!

AS THE UNEARTHLY SHRIEK DIES AWAY---

M-MERCIFUL HEAVENS!

IT---IT'S OCTAVIUS' SKELETON!

BUT I--- I THOUGHT A SPIRIT COULDN'T BE KILLED!

AN EVIL SPIRIT CAN---BUT THE SAME MEDIUM WHICH METED OUT IT'S DEATH IN THE FIRST PLACE! IN THIS CASE---IT WAS THE STAKE AT WHICH HE WAS ORIGINALLY BURNED!

OH, TED--- HOW CAN I EVER THANK YOU?

DON'T THANK ME! THANK AUNT---! LAVINIA--- WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

I'VE DONE ABOUT ALL THAT'S NECESSARY AROUND HERE! AND BESIDES---

---YOU SEEM TO HAVE THE SITUATION WELL IN HAND!

SHE'S SO RIGHT, DARLING! SO WHY DON'T YOU--- KISS ME?

THE END!

D-E-V-I-L on your Dial

It LOOKED like an ordinary television set! But it played only one program -- a program of incredible horror that never could have been conceived by a human mind! You're not likely to tune in on a more chilling story than this one -- unless you find the D-E-V-I-L ON *YOUR* DIAL!

EVERYONE WAS HAPPY WHEN JOE GEER WAS MADE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR OF THE LOCAL TV STATION -- EVERYONE BUT ***ROD RANDALL!***

WE'VE DECIDED YOU'RE THE BEST MAN FOR THE JOB, JOE!

THANKS, MR. SAUNDERS!

I'M AS GOOD A RADIO ENGINEER AS ***HE*** IS! ***I*** SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN THE JOB!

AT THE RECEPTION FOR JOE--

MIGHT AS WELL ADMIT IT-- I ***ENVY YOU!***

YOU SHOULDN'T, ROD-- THIS IS JUST A STEP UPWARD! TAKE SAUNDERS, THE GENERAL MANAGER -- ***I*** ENVY ***HIM***-- AND I'M OUT TO GET HIS JOB NEXT!

ROD -- EVERYBODY BROUGHT A GIFT BUT ---------- US!

ER -- JOE, I'VE GOT A PRESENT FOR YOU, BUT IT HASN'T BEEN DELIVERED YET!

ROD AND ENID LEFT THE PARTY EARLY, AS ROD'S BITTERNESS GREW--

HE SHOULD BE BUYING **ME** A PRESENT! GUESS I'LL HAVE TO MAKE GOOD ON IT, THOUGH---

ROD-- **LOOK!**

IT'S JUST THE THING! JOE CAN USE IT IN THAT HUNTING LODGE OF HIS!

STRANGE-- I DON'T REMEMBER THIS STORE BEING HERE WHEN I PASSED BY THIS MORNING!

TV SET

YOU'VE MADE A WISE CHOICE! I'M SURE YOU'LL FIND THIS AN **UNUSUAL** BARGAIN!

THAT SALESMAN-- HE'S **UNEARTHLY**-LOOKING!

AT ROD'S HOME--

SOMETHING ABOUT IT MAKES ME FEEL-- **UNEASY**, ROD!

NONSENSE! I WANT TO TEST IT... I'LL GET MY TOOLS!

A MOMENT LATER--

ROD, COME QUICKLY! THE SET-- IT WORKS, BUT IT'S IN **COLOR!**

COLOR? BOY, I **DID** GET A BARGAIN!

THERE WAS A MYSTERY PROGRAM ON THE SCREEN-- BUT THAT WASN'T WHAT MADE ROD'S HEART SUDDENLY POUND WITH CREEPING TERROR--

HOLY SMOKE-- I DON'T GET IT! **LOOK!**

GOOD EVENING! THIS IS **MORDO**, SPEAKING TO YOU FROM THE **SPIRIT WORLD!**

IT'S PLAYING WITHOUT ELECTRICITY-- AND THAT'S **IMPOSSIBLE!**

I, MORDO, AM REGISTRAR OF THE SPIRIT WORLD! IT SEEMS THAT IN ORDER TO GET NEW SPIRITS FOR OUR REALM, WE MUST KEEP UP WITH THE TIMES-- THUS, WE NEED RECRUITS WITH **TELE-VISION EXPERIENCE!** THAT'S WHY WE HAVE CONTACTED ROD RANDALL!

ROD-- WH-WHAT IS IT? I'M **SCARED!**

I-- I'M AT A LOSS, TOO! MAYBE IT'S SOME KIND OF JOKE...

BUT THE DIABOLICAL FACE ON THE SCREEN LEERED HYPNOTICALLY, AND--

IT'S **NO JOKE!** WE NEED YOUR GENIUS-- AND WE NEED IT **NOW!**

AS THEY STARED, HELPLESSLY, A VAST, DARK WHIRLPOOL SEEMED TO ENGULF THEM--

ROD-- WHERE ARE YOU? **HELP!**

I CAN'T SEE YOU, DARLING! SOMETHING'S **HAPPENING!**

SUDDENLY, A STRANGE, EERIE GLARE-- THE SHUDDERING REALITY OF **TERROR!**

WE'RE IN A-- **TV** STUDIO! BUT IT'S-- **FANTASTIC!**

YES-- THE STUDIO OF THE SPIRIT WORLD-- AND **YOU** WILL BE IN CHARGE OF IT!

WHOEVER YOU ARE, I **REFUSE** THE JOB! **YOU** BROUGHT US HERE-- NOW SEND US BACK AND GET YOURSELF ANOTHER BOY!

IT IS **TOO LATE!** HAVING PASSED THE MYSTIC PORTALS THAT SEPARATE THE PHYSICAL WORLD FROM THE SPIRITUAL WORLD, YOU MUST REMAIN HERE-- **FOREVER!**

OH, ROD.. **NO!**

YOU CAN OFFER ME THE JOB AGAIN-- AFTER I'M **DEAD!** RIGHT NOW, I'M **GETTING OUT OF HERE!**

UGH!

POW!

THE WILL TO LIVE SENT EXTRA STRENGTH TO DON'S FLAILING ARMS -- AND WITH A SURGE OF CRUSHING POWER--

WE MADE IT TO THE DOOR! GET OUTSIDE -- **FAST!**

BEFORE THEM, A BLEAK, HORRIFYING REGION OF DARKNESS AND WEIRD SHAPES-- THE **SPIRIT WORLD!**

WHAT HAVE WE GAINED? WE'RE TRAPPED-- **IN A LAND BEYOND IMAGINATION!**

IT'S NIGHTMARISH, ALL RIGHT! BUT I'VE GOT AN **IDEA!**

WE'LL HIDE OUT TILL THOSE CREEPS LEAVE THE "STUDIO"! MAYBE WITH MY RADIO KNOWLEDGE, WE CAN GET BACK THE WAY WE **CAME!**

WHEN MORDO AND HIS GRUESOME HORDE DEPARTED, LEAVING A LONE GUARD, ROD MADE HIS DESPERATE BID FOR FREEDOM--

THERE'S ONE THING THAT SEEMS TO WORK WITH YOU GOONS-- **SURPRISE!**

OOF!

POW!

LET'S SEE NOW-- THESE CONTROLS DON'T LOOK SO COMPLICATED---

ROD-- **THEY'RE COMING! THEY'VE GOT US!**

I PREPARED THIS AMBUSH, KNOWING YOU WOULD RETURN! NOW YOUR EXISTENCE HERE WILL BE **FAR LESS PLEASANT!**

NOW-- ARE YOU READY TO BEGIN YOUR **NEW DUTIES?**

HMM-- IF MY STRENGTH WON'T GET US OUT OF HERE, MAYBE MY **WITS** WILL!

LOOK, MORDO-- WHY CAN'T YOU USE **SOMEONE ELSE** ON THIS PROJECT-- SOMEONE LIKE **JOE GEER?** HE'S GOT MORE EXPERIENCE, AND WOULD DO A FAR BETTER JOB!

IT WON'T WORK... THE ONLY RECRUITS WE CAN GET IN THIS WAY ARE THOSE WHO HAVE DISPLAYED SIGNS OF **MORAL WEAKNESS! YOU** QUALIFIED BECAUSE OF YOUR VICIOUS **ENVY** OF JOE GEER!

NOW ROD SAW HIS CHANCE TO ESCAPE-- AND GET EVEN WITH JOE AS WELL--

BUT **JOE'S** ENVY IS EVEN **GREATER!** HE TOLD ME, HIMSELF, HOW HE'S OUT TO GET THE GENERAL MANAGER'S JOB! HE'S PROBABLY WATCHING TV RIGHT NOW... BY JAMMING HIS SET, I CAN CONTACT HIM, BRING HIM HERE!

WELL, MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT... ***I'LL DO IT!***

YOU'VE CONTACTED HIM, EH? NOW **YOU** MAY HAVE THE HONOR OF TRANSPORTING HIM TO THE SPIRIT WORLD!

HIS-- HIS WIFE'S WITH HIM---

HEY! WHAT'S **ROD** DOING ON THIS PROGRAM WE'RE WATCHING?

WHY, HE'S TALKING TO-- ***ME!*** WHAT'S THIS ALL ***ABOUT,*** ROD?

I'VE GOT A **SURPRISE** FOR YOU, JOE! YOU'VE LORDED IT OVER ME LONG ENOUGH! NOW IT'S **MY** TURN!

CLICK!

AN INSTANT LATER--

WHA---! HOW DID WE GET ***HERE?***

NEVER MIND THAT... YOU'D BETTER START WORRYING ABOUT HOW TO GET ***BACK!***

FEARFUL OF TREACHERY, ROD TURNED TO MORDO--

NOW-- KEEP YOUR PROMISE, AND SEND US BACK TO OUR OWN WORLD!

I'M TEMPTED TO KEEP YOU **BOTH** HERE, BUT I'LL SHOW YOU THAT **OUR** CODE IS MORE HONORABLE THAN **YOURS!**

YOU HAVE DECIDED YOUR FATE-- **BACK YOU GO!**

ROD-- I'M GETTING-- DIZZY---

AGAIN THE FATHOMLESS WHIRLPOOL, THE SWIRLING DARKNESS -- AND THEN--

DARLING-- **WE MADE IT!** WE'RE BACK IN MY APARTMENT!

I-- I'M GLAD... BUT I FEEL SO SORRY FOR JOE AND HIS WIFE---

I TALKED MY WAY OUT OF IT-- LET JOE DO THE SAME, IF HE CAN! NOW I'LL TURN OFF THE SET---

ROD-- I FEEL KIND OF-- **STRANGE!**

THEN, AS ENID TURNED, SHE SCREAMED-- A KNIFELIKE SCREAM THAT BESPOKE THE FARTHEST REACHES OF HUMAN TERROR!

ROD-- **L-LOOK!**

IN FRONT OF THE TV SET, TWO BODIES, COLD IN DEATH-- THEIR SIGHTLESS EYES FIXED ON THE BLANK SCREEN!

WE GOT BACK, ALL RIGHT-- AS **BODILESS SPIRITS!** NOW WE'RE LOST BETWEEN TWO WORLDS-- **FOR ALL ETERNITY!**

--AND FOR ALL ETERNITY, THEY ENVIED JOE GEER!

THE END

"TRUE" GHOSTS OF HISTORY

IN JANUARY OF THE YEAR 1066, A NEW KING OF ENGLAND WAS CROWNED... HAROLD, FORMERLY EARL OF THE WEST SAXONS! BUT KING HAROLD WAS DESTINED TO PERISH BEFORE THE YEAR WAS UP...AND TO BE-COME ONE OF THE FAMOUS **GHOSTS OF HISTORY!**

WHEN WILLIAM, DUKE OF NORMANDY INVADED ENGLAND TO SEIZE THE CROWN, HAROLD MARCHED FORWARD TO MEET HIM AT THE HEAD OF A GREAT ARMY OF ENGLISH FOOT-SOLDIERS!

ONWARD TO THE FOE!

HAROLD TOOK UP HIS POSITION ON THE HILL OF SENLAC NEAR HASTINGS... AND THE FAMED **BATTLE OF HASTINGS** BEGAN ON OCTOBER 14TH! **AGAIN** AND **AGAIN** THE NORMAN ARCHERS AND CAVALRY CHARGED THE ENGLISH LINES, ONLY TO BE HURLED BACK! BUT TOWARD EVENING, HAROLD WAS **MORTALLY WOUNDED** BY AN ARROW IN HIS EYE...

INSTANTLY, PANIC SWEPT THROUGH THE ENGLISH LINES...

THE KING IS DEAD! FLEE... BEFORE THE NORMANS SLAY US ALL!

HAROLD'S BODY WAS BURIED UNDER A CAIRN OF STONES ON THE SEASHORE... BUT ON OCTOBER 14, 1166, ENGLISH PEASANTS ON SENLAC HILL REPORTED THEY HAD SEEN THE SPIRIT OF THEIR DEPARTED KING LEADING A GHOSTLY ARMY THROUGH THE SKIES ATOP THE HILL!

MERCIFUL HEAVENS! IT... IT IS THE GHOST OF KING HAROLD!

EVER SINCE THEN, IT HAS BEEN SAID, THE GHOST OF KING HAROLD HAS APPEARED EVERY HUNDRED YEARS AT THE SAME SITE! THE NEXT APPEARANCE IS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 14, 1966.

...SO IF YOU'RE NEAR HASTINGS ON THAT DATE, DEAR READER, PERHAPS **YOU'LL** SEE THAT **FAMOUS GHOST OF HISTORY!**

THE END

The FLOATING COFFIN

MANY PEOPLE HAVE FEARS AND DISLIKES THEY CAN'T EXPLAIN -- AND MAYBE IT'S JUST AS WELL! WHO KNOWS HOW MANY OF THESE CASES ARE ROOTED IN FORGOTTEN HORROR -- A HERITAGE OF DREAD THAT MAY LEAD TO A DISCOVERY AS GRISLY AS THE FLOATING COFFIN?

AS THE FINAL CURTAIN FALLS ON A BROADWAY MUSICAL COMEDY--

HONEY, THIS IS THE BEST BIRTHDAY I'VE HAD IN YEARS! FOR A FEW HOURS, IN FACT -- I'VE ALMOST BEEN ABLE TO FEEL *NORMAL!*

BUT YOU *ARE* NORMAL, KENT! YOU MUSTN'T GET BITTER ABOUT A QUIRK YOU'RE BOUND TO OUTGROW!

KENT -- WHAT'S WRONG?

THE SAME OLD THING.. A NAMELESS HORROR CREEPING ALONG MY SPINE -- *AND IT'S BEING CAUSED BY THAT MAN RIGHT THERE, IN THE TWEED JACKET!*

EXIT

EXIT

BUT THAT'S ALL NONSENSE, KENT! THESE PEOPLE ARE COMPLETE STRANGERS-- YOU'D HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING!

THAT'S JUST THE POINT-- I'VE LEARNED TIME AND AGAIN THAT I HAVE A WAY OF KNOWING! WHY DON'T YOU TEST ME-- BY ASKING THE MAN'S NAME?

PARDON ME! I'VE BEEN TRYING TO RECALL YOUR FACE-- AND WONDERING IF WE HAVEN'T MET BEFORE!

ENTIRELY POSSIBLE, YOUNG LADY-- CONSIDERING THE LARGE NUMBER OF PATIENTS I'VE HAD IN THE PAST TWENTY YEARS! I'M JOHN SAUNDERS, M.D.!

YOU'RE RIGHT, KENT-- HE IS A DOCTOR! AND THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY YOU COULD HAVE GUESSED-- TELEPATHY!

IT'S MORE THAN THAT, JEAN-- IT'S LIKE AN ANCIENT MEMORY I CAN'T LIVE DOWN!

MAYBE SOMETHING MORE IS INVOLVED! IT'S STRANGE ENOUGH THAT YOU CAN INVARIABLY IDENTIFY A DOCTOR-- BUT WHY SHOULD YOU BE ALMOST REPELLED BY THEM?

I DON'T KNOW! THERE'S NOTHING HORRIBLE TO ME ABOUT MEDICAL SCIENCE-- BUT THE MINUTE I'M NEAR A DOCTOR, I FEEL A VAGUE AND UNEARTHLY CHILL-- A DREAD THAT STRIKES SOME HIDDEN ROOT OF TERROR!

GUESS I SHOULDN'T HAVE EXPECTED MY LIFE-LONG PHOBIA TO EASE OFF-- EVEN ON MY BIRTHDAY!

DARLING-- LET'S FORGET ABOUT IT! I'VE HIDDEN A BIRTHDAY PRESENT IN YOUR APARTMENT-- AND IT'S YOURS IF YOU CAN FIND IT!

HMM, LET'S SEE-- THERE'S SOMETHING OVER IN THAT CORNER-- BEHIND THE RADIO!

YES-- YOUR PRESENT! AND DON'T PRETEND YOU DIDN'T PEEK WHEN I PUT IT THERE!

WELL? DO YOU HAVE TO BE COAXED TO ACCEPT A PRESENT FROM THE GIRL YOU'RE GOING TO MARRY?

YE GODS-- AM I GOING COMPLETELY OFF MY ROCKER? I KNEW THE BOX WAS THERE THE INSTANT I OPENED THE DOOR-- AND IT GIVES ME THE SAME SENSATION THAT OVERPOWERS ME IN THE PRESENCE OF DOCTORS-- REVULSION!

FOR A GRUELING INSTANT, KENT STEELS HIMSELF-- AND THEN--

GOOD HEAVENS-- WHAT'S THE MATTER?

JEAN-- TAKE IT AWAY-- HIDE IT!

OHH! YOUR PRESENT!

CRASH!

AS KENT STARES AT THE GLITTERING DROPLETS ON THE FLOOR--

WHAT'S COME OVER YOU? I GOT SOMETHING I WAS SURE YOU WOULD LIKE -- A DESK THERMOMETER.. AND NOW IT'S BROKEN!

THERMO-METER...?

IN AN INSTANTANEOUS FLOOD OF AWARENESS--

GOOD LORD, I'VE FINALLY LEARNED WHAT ACTUALLY STIRS THAT DARK RESPONSE IN MY SOUL -- MERCURY! THAT EXPLAINS MY VAGUE TERROR OF DOCTORS -- THEY'RE THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO INVARIABLY CARRY THERMOMETERS!

KENT, I'VE ALWAYS TRIED TO PLAY DOWN WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU -- BUT NOW I KNOW WHAT A TERRIBLE STATE YOUR NERVES ARE IN!

MAYBE IT'S NOT NERVES, HONEY! FEAR AS ACUTE AS THIS MAY BE TRACE-ABLE TO SOME DARK INFLUENCE THAT REACHES FAR BACK INTO MY ANCESTRY! IF THAT'S THE CASE -- MAYBE WE'LL FIND A CLUE IN THE FAMILY TREE I'VE HARDLY EVER LOOKED AT!

LATER--

THE CHART TRACES THE BULLARDS BACK TO AN OLD ENGLISH TOWN IN 1476 -- BUT FOR SOME REASON THE NAME OF THE FIRST BULLARD HAS BEEN BLOTTED OUT!

THAT'S A STRANGE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE VERY FOUNDER OF THE FAMILY -- UNLESS IT INDICATES SOMETHING MY ANCESTORS WANTED TO FORGET -- A MEMORY THEY TRIED TO EFFACE BY OBLITERATING A NAME!

DARLING -- YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND!

YEP... I REMEMBER MY GRANDPARENTS MENTIONING THAT BULLARD MANOR IS STILL STANDING! WHY DON'T WE FLY TO ENGLAND -- AND SEE IF THE OLD PLACE HOLDS THE SECRET OF WHAT'S TROUBLING ME?

DAYS LATER.. ALONG THE HEDGEROWS OF THE ENGLISH MIDLANDS--

THOSE HOUSES SEEM PRETTY ANCIENT! BET SOME OF THEM HAVE BEEN HAUNTED AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER!

YEP--BUT NOT FOR A LONG TIME, ME LAD! A GOOD MAGICIAN DROVE OUT THE GHOSTS CENTURIES AGO--- EXCEPT FROM ONE PLACE!

NO ONE'S KEPT TRACK OF HOW MANY TENANTS HAVE RENTED **THAT** HOUSE --AND LEFT THE NEXT MORNING TREMBLING LIKE LEAVES! THAT OLD MAGICIAN COULD USE HIS WHITE MAGIC TO DRIVE AWAY **ORDINARY** GHOSTS---**BUT NOT THE STARING TERROR THAT GLIDES LIKE A RESTLESS CURSE IN BULLARD MANOR!**

VERY INTER-ESTING! I PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE MENTIONED **THAT'S** WHERE WE'RE GOING -- AND THAT **MY** NAME IS **KENT BULLARD!**

WHOA! DON'T WANT TO GIVE OFFENSE, SIR.. BUT I'VE ALWAYS STAYED CLEAR OF THAT PLACE-- AND I'M NOT CHANGING MY MIND **NOW** TO TAKE A BULLARD THERE!

IF I WERE YOU, KENT, I WOULDN'T FEEL TOO SENSITIVE ABOUT A LOCAL SUPER-STITION ATTACHED TO YOUR NAME!

NO USE KIDDING MYSELF-- I WOULDN'T HAVE COME TO ENGLAND IF I HADN'T SUS-PECTED SOME-THING SINISTER ABOUT MY NAMELESS AN-CESTOR! WE'VE GOT A LONG WALK AHEAD OF US, JEAN.. BUT MAYBE IT'S JUST AS WELL! WE'LL LEARN THE TRUTH THAT MUCH SOONER BY REACHING THE MANOR **AFTER DARK!**

HOURS LATER-- LOOMING IN THE CON-GEALED HUSH OF CENTURIES--

BULLARD MANOR! I WOULDN'T EXACTLY CALL IT QUAINT, DARLING-- BUT I'VE MADE UP MY MIND NOT TO BE FRIGHTENED BY THE EVIL REPUTATION OF THE OLD PLACE!

WAIT UP! I'M ALMOST CERTAIN I SAW SOME-THING COMING ALONG THE PATH!

OUT OF THE SHADOWS LIKE A CREEPING MIST--

HELP ME, BULLARD! HELP ME--SO THAT I MAY HELP YOU!

GREAT GUNS! SEEING A GHOST IS **ONE THING -- BUT HOW DOES IT KNOW MY NAME?**

KENT-- COME ON! I DON'T CARE WHAT'S **INSIDE** AS LONG AS WE GET AWAY FROM **THAT** THING!

INSIDE THE MUSTY MAIN HALL--

HEAVENS, I DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE A GHOST **THIS** SOON! BUT SOME-HOW I DON'T THINK IT WAS THE SPIRIT OF YOUR ANCESTOR, KENT-- BECAUSE IT USED YOUR FAMILY NAME AS A **STRANGER** WOULD-- IMPERSONALLY!

SORRY YOU GOT SUCH A TURN, HONEY-- BECAUSE I'M PRETTY SURE WE'LL BE SEEING THINGS FAR WORSE! MIGHT AS WELL LIGHT THESE CANDLES-- TO AVOID BEING TRICKED BY THE DARKNESS!

MY PLAN IS TO CHECK THE PLACE ROOM BY ROOM! WE'VE ALREADY SEEN ONE OF THE ***ORDINARY*** GHOSTS THE OLD CART DRIVER MENTIONED -- BUT WHAT ***I'M*** INTERESTED IN IS THAT ***STARING TERROR*** HE TALKED ABOUT!

KENT--THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE CANDLES! THE FLAMES ARE RISING-- ***AND COMING TOGETHER!***

THE DULL RED GLOW CHANGES TO GREEN-- AND THE POINTS OF LIGHT BECOME THINGS THAT GLARE FROM THE EVIL VOID!

THEY'RE EYES-- HIDEOUS EYES GLINTING WITHOUT A BODY!

GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF, JEAN! ***THIS*** IS WHAT I CAME TO FIGHT-- ***AND YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME!***

STARING TERROR OR NOT, I'M A BULLARD-- ***AND I'M NOT GOING TO BE COWED BY THE THING THAT CURSED MY NAME!***

HA HA HA!

IN THE NEXT SECOND--

THEY'RE GONE! GUESS THE FIRST ROUND BELONGS TO ***US,*** HONEY!

IT'S TRUE WE CAN'T ***SEE*** ANYTHING -- BUT LISTEN! THERE'S A SLOW THUD COMING FROM THE NEXT ROOM-- ***THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS!***

NO QUESTION ABOUT SOMETHING PACING AROUND IN HERE-- ***BUT WHERE IS IT?***

THERE--THERE! CAN'T YOU SEE THEM-- MOVING ACROSS THE FLOOR?

THUMP! THUMP!

STEP BY STEP-- IN A FORMLESS STRIDE THROUGH THE MOONLIT ROOM--

THEY'RE LIKE IMPRINTS IN THE DUST, BUT THEY KEEP MOVING -- ***THEY'RE THE MARK OF GHOSTLY FEET!***

WATCH! NOT EVEN A PHANTOM CAN KEEP GOING-- ***ONCE IT REACHES THAT WALL!***

SUDDENLY THE MUFFLED TREAD FADES OFF-- AND RISING FROM THE CLAMMY FLOOR--

GOOD LORD! THE FOOTPRINTS HAVE CHANGED INTO A GLOW-- ***AND IT'S TAKING SHAPE AS A GNARLED HAND!***

A HAND'S SOMETHING THAT CAN REACH OUT, KENT -- SOMETHING THAT CAN **TOUCH-- I CAN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF IT!**

WAIT! THE HAND'S STAYING RIGHT THERE AT THE WALL-- **SCRAWLING A MESSAGE!**

While thrice

SECONDS LATER-- AS THE HAND FADES IN A SHIMMERING GLOW--

IT **SOUNDS** GHASTLY-- BUT WHAT DOES IT **MEAN?**

I'LL SAY THIS MUCH, JEAN-- **IT'S THE KEY TO WHAT I'VE COME TO FIND OUT!**

While thrice supports my iron bier, This House shall know Eternal Fear!

WE'VE SEEN SPECTRAL EYES AND FOOTSTEPS-- WE'VE READ WORDS LIKE THE CHALLENGE OF EVIL-- **AND I'M READY TO MEET THAT CHALLENGE!** WHATEVER IS LURKING IN BULLARD MANOR-- **LET IT SHOW ITSELF!**

THEN ALL THE TERROR OF THE OLD HOUSE-- ALL THE DREAD OF BYGONE CENTURIES--GATHER TOGETHER IN A SINGLE SHAPE!

YOU MEDDLING FOOL! YOU'VE DARED TO SUMMON ME--- **NOW GAZE UPON MY HORROR!**

YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN SATISFIED WITH MERE **HINTS** OF MY PRESENCE -- INSTEAD OF FORCING ME TO REVEAL MY FULL TERROR **TO MY OWN FLESH AND BLOOD!**

THAT'S JUST WHAT I WANTED! NOW THAT I'VE FELT THE EVIL THIS PLACE EXUDES, I'M NOT LEAVING UNTIL YOU'VE BEEN **DESTROYED-- AS COMPLETELY AS YOUR NAME WAS STRICKEN FROM THE FAMILY RECORDS!**

YOU'VE SEEN THE WORDS I WROTE! AS LONG AS THEY HOLD TRUE--- **MY POWER SHALL LAST!**

IF YOU'RE CONFIDENT YOU CAN'T BE HARMED-- **SUPPOSE YOU TELL ME WHAT THE WORDS MEAN!**

While thrice supports my iron bier, This House shall know Eternal Fear!

THEY'RE TIED UP WITH THE CURSE WHICH HAS BLIGHTED YOUR LIFE! MORE THAN THAT--- **YOU'LL NEVER KNOW!**

DON'T WORRY, JEAN! WHITE MAGIC WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO SEND **OTHER** GHOSTS IN THIS VICINITY BACK TO THEIR GRAVES-- **AND I'LL FIND SOME WAY TO GET RID OF THIS ONE!**

NEVER! THE ANCIENT MAGICIAN WHO PITTED WHITE MAGIC AGAINST THE FORCES OF EVIL THOUGHT **HE** WAS CLEVER, CASTING A SPELL THAT DESTROYED ALL PHANTOMS WHOSE COFFINS RESTED ON ANY SUBSTANCE THAT WAS SOLID OR LIQUID! BUT **I** FOUND A WAY TO DEFEAT HIM--- A SUBSTANCE THAT COULD **STILL** SUPPORT MY COFFIN!

LOOK.. IT'S FADING OFF IN A SWIRLING MIST!

YEP-- AND NOW I'VE GOT A RUGGED IDEA OF WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST!

IT'S UTTERLY BAFFLING TO *ME*, KENT! HOW CAN THE GHOST'S COFFIN BE SUPPORTED BY A SUBSTANCE *NEITHER SOLID NOR LIQUID?*

REMEMBER HIM SAYING THAT THOSE WORDS ON THE WALL WERE TIED UP WITH THE CURSE THAT'S BLIGHTED MY LIFE? *THAT* GIVES ME THE HINT I NEEDED! HIS COFFIN MUST BE WELL HIDDEN, BUT IF IT RESTS ON WHAT I THINK, *I CAN FIND IT WITHOUT EVEN SEARCHING!*

THEN--THROUGH THE MUFFLED DEPTHS THAT SEEM TO SHRINK FROM THE INTRUSION OF THE LIVING--

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, KENT! YOU'RE NOT EVEN HESITATING.. *IT'S JUST AS IF YOU KNEW YOUR WAY EXACTLY!*

THERE'S *ONE* THING I ALWAYS *COULD* FIND WITH MY EYES CLOSED-- AND EVERY STEP MAKES ME MORE AND MORE CERTAIN OF WHAT IT IS!

FOR A SECOND, KENT AND JEAN PAUSE AT THE DOORWAY IN DOUBT-- AND THEN--

OHH!

HERE IT IS, JEAN--- THE THING THAT LED ME UNERRINGLY TO THIS SPOT--- *THE GHOST'S COFFIN!*

AND HERE'S THE SUBSTANCE THAT SUPPORTS IT AND THAT LED ME HERE--- *MERCURY!* NEITHER SOLID NOR LIQUID--- BUT A MATERIAL HEAVY ENOUGH TO *FLOAT AN IRON COFFIN!* IN *THAT* WAY, HE GOT AROUND THE OLD MAGICIAN'S SPELL THAT DESTROYED ALL THE OTHER PHANTOMS!

MERCURY! WHEN I THINK THAT THIS GLEAMING POOL HAS BEEN HERE FOR CENTURIES-- THAT ITS DIABOLICAL FORCE HAS CLOUDED YOUR LIFE-- I

I'M AFRAID YOU'RE RIGHT, JEAN! HOW CAN WE COMBAT A COUNTERCHARM LIKE *THIS*-- WHEN THE MAGICIAN FAILED TO FIND THE ANSWER HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO?

KNOW WE'RE PITTED AGAINST AN EVIL WE'LL NEVER OVER-COME!

KENT-- WHAT ABOUT THAT SPECTER WE MET OUTSIDE? DO YOU SUPPOSE *THAT* WAS THE MAGICIAN WHO WIELDED THE WHITE MAGIC?

GREAT GUNS-- WHO ELSE? WHAT IT TOLD ME DIDN'T MEAN ANY-THING *THEN*-- BUT I KNOW NOW WHAT IT MEANT WHEN IT OFFERED TO HELP ME!

A MOMENT LATER--

THERE IT IS-- STILL PUSHING THAT SHINING BLACK BOULDER!

I'VE GOT A HUNCH ABOUT *THAT*, TOO -- *AND IT'S GOING TO BE A JOLTING SURPRISE TO THAT CREEP IN THE FLOATING COFFIN!*

YES, YOU HAVE GUESSED THE ANSWER! I KNEW THAT SOME DAY A BULLARD WOULD RETURN-- AND MY SPIRIT WAITED-- BARRED FROM ENTER-ING THE MANOR BY THE PERVADING POWER OF EVIL!

IT'S AN EVIL THAT HAS RUN ITS COURSE! ONCE I ROLL THIS THING INTO THE MANOR-- *THE HAUNTING CURSE OF THE BULLARDS WILL BE BLASTED TO PERDITION!*

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO, KENT? *YOU'VE PUSHED THE BOULDER DIRECTLY ABOVE THE CHAMBER THAT GUARDS THE FLOAT-ING COFFIN*-- BUT WHAT GOOD WILL *THAT* DO?

THERE'S NO TIME TO EXPLAIN *NOW*, JEAN! IT'LL TAKE EFFECT WITHIN A MINUTE-- *AND I WANT TO BE ON HAND DOWN-STAIRS TO WATCH THE RESULTS!*

AT THE INSTANT THE PORTAL OF HORROR IS FLUNG OPEN --

AAGHHH!

GOOD HEAVENS-- WHAT'S HAPPEN-ING TO THE GHOST?

THAT BOULDER'S A *MAG-NETIC LODESTONE*--- POWERFUL ENOUGH TO RAISE THE COFFIN OUT OF THE MERCURY THAT SHIELDED IT! IN A MOMENT, IT'S GOING TO TOUCH THE CEILING--- REST AGAINST SOMETHING *SOLID*--- *AND IT SPELLS DOOM FOR THAT FIEND!*

LATER-- ABOARD A TRANS-ATLANTIC PLANE --

DARLING-- THANK GOODNESS WE CAN FORGET THE FLOATING COFFIN! I WANT TO DREAM ABOUT THE FUTURE-- AND WHAT WE CAN GIVE EACH OTHER!

IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT WEDDING PRESENTS, HONEY-- MAKE *MINE* A DESK THERMOMETER!

END

Eternal peace -- that is my dream -- and I, **Don Harvey,** can bring it to the world! I can wreak havoc and terror on the warring nations, rendering them helpless! **How?** From the unknown, mystic sands of Arabia, I shall bring an age-old legend to life -- and **Horror** will stalk the ranks of evil!"

- FROM THE DIARY OF DON HARVEY.

The FIREBIRD'S LAST FLIGHT!

GO BACK -- ALL IS LOST! THE FIREBIRD HAS DESTROYED OUR ARMY!

TO BEGIN DON HARVEY'S FANTASTIC STORY, WE JOIN HIM ON THE STREET OF A LARGE CITY--

PEACE HAS BECOME AN OBSESSION WITH ME! SURELY THERE MUST BE SOME WAY TO PREVENT ANOTHER WORLD WAR -- AND MAN'S DESTRUCTION!

MOMMY -- THAT MAN'S TALKING TO HIMSELF!

CHAS. B. [illegible] & [illegible]

Sale

HMM -- MAYBE A LECTURE WILL TAKE MY MIND OFF THE WORLD'S TROUBLES...

LECTURE TONIGHT

SUBJECT: LEGENDS OF THE EXOTIC EAST

... AND NOW WE COME TO THE MOST INTERESTING TALE OF ALL -- THE ***LEGEND OF THE FIREBIRD!***

I'M BORED -- WONDER IF I SHOULD LEAVE---

YES, DON HARVEY -- YOU **SHOULD** HAVE LEFT! THEN, THE MOST AWESOME CATASTROPHE IN WORLD HISTORY WOULD NEVER HAVE OCCURRED! BUT -- YOU STAYED!

"... IN ARABIA, CENTURIES AGO, THERE LIVED A VAST WINGED CREATURE CALLED THE PHOENIX, OR ***FIREBIRD*** -- A FEARSOME MONSTER FORMED OF LIVING FLAMES!"

THE FIREBIRD! TO THE OASIS, QUICKLY, OR WE'LL BE BURNED TO DEATH!

"IT IS SAID THAT EVERY FIVE HUNDRED YEARS, THE FIREBIRD PLUMMETED TO ITS DEATH IN THE DESERT SANDS--"

GRASH!

"-- ONLY TO FIND ***NEW LIFE*** IN ITS OWN ASHES!"

AH, MAKTUB -- IF WE COULD FIND A WAY TO CONTROL THE FIREBIRD -- WE WOULD ***RULE THE WORLD!***

HMM-- PERHAPS THERE ***IS*** A WAY!

BUT IF MEN ***DID*** LEARN TO CONTROL THE PHOENIX, THE SECRET IS LOST IN THE VEIL OF TIME, FOR THERE THE LEGEND ENDS!... LIKE MOST SUCH LEGENDS, THIS ONE IS DOUBTLESS BASED ON ***TRUTH!***

SUPPOSE THE STORY IS TRUE -- AND THE BIRD COULD BE RE-VIVED! WHAT A MARVELOUS INSTRU-MENT IT WOULD BE -- TO PRESERVE ***PEACE!***

AFTER THE LECTURE--

I APPRECIATE YOUR INTEREST IN THE FIREBIRD -- BUT I CAN TELL YOU NO MORE ABOUT IT!

THEN WHO CAN? I ***MUST*** KNOW!

THERE'S ONE GREAT AUTHORITY -- AN OLD ARAB NAMED ***KASTA!*** IT'S RUMORED THAT HE KNOWS FAR MORE THAN HE WILL ADMIT -- STRANGE, OTHER-WORLD THINGS THAT NO MAN SHOULD KNOW! BUT YOU'LL NEVER GET ANYTHING OUT OF ***HIM!***

I'LL TAKE THAT CHANCE!

SO, A FEW WEEKS LATER--

THERE IT IS -- ***ARABIA!*** SOON I MAY REACH MY GOAL!.

AT LONG LAST, DON STOOD BEFORE AN OLD MAN WHOSE FACE BESPOKE AN OCCULT WISDOM DENIED TO ORDINARY MEN--

-- AND THAT, KASTA, IS WHY I MUST LEARN THE ***SECRET OF THE FIREBIRD!*** WITH IT, I MAY END WAR -- AND SAVE MANKIND FROM DESTRUCTION!

I BELIEVE YOU -- AND I WILL HELP!

SUPPOSE WE BEGIN BY FINDING THE PLACE WHERE THE FIREBIRD LAST PLUNGED TO EARTH?

GOOD -- I'LL GET AN EXPEDITION TOGETHER AT ONCE!

A FEW DAYS LATER, A DESERT SAFARI PUSHED INTO THE TRACKLESS WASTES --

NOW THAT WE ARE ON OUR WAY, IT IS TIME YOU LEARNED THE ***REST*** OF THE FIREBIRD LEGEND!

"THE ANCIENT STORY TELLS THAT THE FIREBIRD PERIODICALLY EXPIRED IN ITS OWN FLAMES -- AND COULD BE REVIVED ONLY BY THE EVIL PRIESTS OF THE ***JACCA CULT!*** THEY THEN USED THE BIRD TO BURN AND PILLAGE --"

Kadar el sherif! WITH THESE SACRED JACCA LEAVES, I COMMAND THEE, O PHOENIX OF THE FLAMING WINGS -- ***ARISE!***

LOOK -- THE BIRD RISES FROM ITS ASHES -- ***ALIVE AGAIN!***

"AT LAST, A GOOD AND POWERFUL KING DROVE THE WICKED PRIESTS INTO HIDING --"

SEE -- IS IT A METEOR, OR --- ?

NO, ALAS -- IT IS THE ***PHOENIX*** IN ITS DEATH DIVE -- AND WE ARE NOT THERE TO GIVE IT NEW LIFE! I FEAR IT HAS PERISHED -- ***FOREVER!***

THAT WAS COUNTLESS CENTURIES AGO! BUT IT IS SAID THE ***JACCA CULT*** STILL EXISTS -- WAITING TO FIND THE LOST GRAVE OF THE FIREBIRD, SO THEY CAN BRING IT BACK TO LIFE -- FOR THEIR OWN EVIL PURPOSES!

UTTER NONSENSE, OF COURSE!

BUT A PAIR OF LOWLY CAMEL MEN LISTENED --

THE OLD FOOL HAS TOLD THE AMERICAN ***EVERY-THING!***

AS A PRIEST OF THE JACCA CULT, I SWEAR THAT HE SHALL DIE -- ***TONIGHT!***

THAT NIGHT, A SINISTER SHADOW FELL ACROSS THE TENT OF OLD KASTA--

IT IS WELL THAT I JOINED THIS ACCURSED EXPEDITION WHEN I LEARNED ITS PURPOSE-- **YOU** MIGHT HAVE SPOILED OUR PLANS!

AGHHH!

IN THE MORNING--

HE'S-- **DEAD!**

AT THAT MOMENT--

EFFENDI -- I THINK WE HAVE FOUND THE RESTING PLACE OF THE **FIREBIRD!**

TAKE ME THERE-- AT ONCE! I'LL CARRY ON **ALONE!**

IN THE DESERT BELOW-- A VAST DEPRESSION!

IT-- IT'S SHAPED LIKE THE BODY OF A HUGE BIRD! THIS **MUST** BE THE PLACE WHERE THE FIREBIRD LAST FELL TO EARTH!

BUT NOW A BITING DISAPPOINTMENT GNAWED AT DON--

TO HAVE NEARLY ACHIEVED MY DREAM, AND NOW-- KASTA IS **DEAD!** I CAN'T REMEMBER THE INCANTATION HE TOLD ME ABOUT, OR WHAT THEY CALL THOSE LEAVES THAT'LL REVIVE THE FIREBIRD!---

EFFENDI-- LOOK OUT!

AIEEE!

YANKEE DOG-- YOU KNOW TOO MUCH! NOW-- **YOU DIE!**

I WOULDN'T BET ON IT!

SEE WHAT I MEAN?

ARGHH!

BANG!

BANG!

"THEN-- THE DYING WORDS FATED TO CHANGE THE DESTINY OF THE WORLD!

HE THINKS HE'S WON-- BUT THE JACCA LEAVES-- ARE EXTINCT! AND ONLY WE-- HAVE THE INCANTATION! HE'LL NEVER-- MAKE THE FIREBIRD RISE AGAIN---

I'LL PROBABLY FIND THE INCANTATION SOMEWHERE IN HIS BAGGAGE! BUT WITHOUT THOSE JACCA LEAVES-- I'M AFRAID I'M-- **SUNK!**

AT THE TENT OF THE CAMEL MEN--

IT MUST BE HERE-- SOMEWHERE!

SAY-- WHAT'S **THIS**? THESE DRIED, YELLOW LEAVES, NEARLY WITHERED TO DUST! THEY'RE INCREDIBLY OLD, HANDED DOWN THROUGH THE GENERATIONS, BUT THEY MAY BE-- **THE JACCA LEAVES!**

-- AND THIS SCROLL-- IT CONTAINS THE MYSTIC INCANTATION! NOW I HAVE EVERYTHING NECESSARY TO **REVIVE THE FIREBIRD-- AND CONTROL IT!** FORTUNATELY, I CAN READ ANCIENT ARABIC!

YET-- WHAT IF SOMETHING SHOULD GO **WRONG?** IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE THE LAST JACCA RITUAL WAS PERFORMED! BUT NO-- I CAN'T LET ANYTHING INTERFERE WITH MY GREAT PURPOSE! I'LL PERFORM THE RITUAL-- **NOW!**

AND SO--

Kadar el sherif! WITH THESE SACRED JACCA LEAVES, I COMMAND THEE, O PHOENIX OF THE FLAMING WINGS-- **ARISE!**

AND THEN--**A DREAD CALAMITY BEFELL MANKIND!** FOR CENTURIES, THE CONSTANT WINDS HAD BORNE THE FIREBIRD'S ASHES TO EVERY CORNER OF THE EARTH! NOW, FLAMING INTO NEW LIFE, THEY RETURNED-- FIERY MISSILES SCATTERING **DEATH AND DESTRUCTION EVERYWHERE!**

FROM THE BEACHES--

EEYAAHH!

ARGHH!

FROM THE CITIES--

WHA---!

UGHH!

FROM THE PLAINS AND FORESTS--

IN A MOMENT OF SEARING AGONY, DON REALIZED HIS AWFUL MISTAKE--A VICTIM OF HIS OWN AMBITION!

I SHOULD HAVE-- KNOWN-- NO MORTAL MAY INTERFERE WITH--THE FORCES OF **DESTINY!**

EVEN AS THE FIREBIRD STIRRED, BURST INTO LIVING FLAME--

And for five hundred years, the firebird soared in lonely flight--above a blackened cinder that was once the earth!

Don Harvey had achieved his goal-- ***Peace*** had come to the world!

The End

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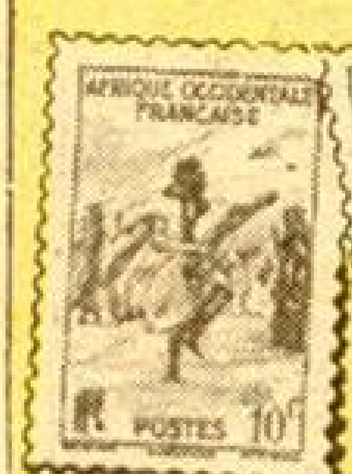

TIMBUCTOO — Shows native of French Equatorial Africa in frenzied war dance.

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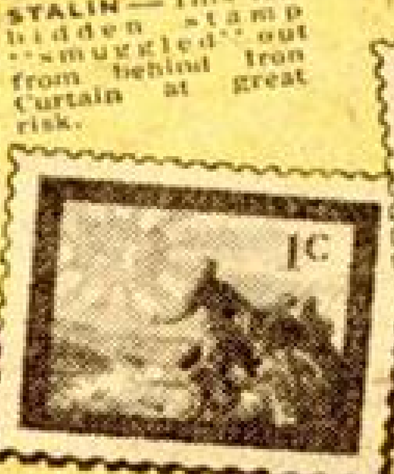

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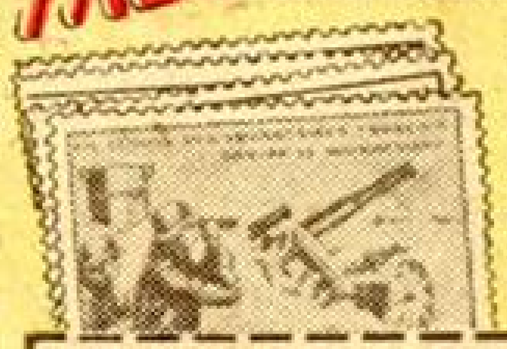

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