THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! BACK FOR MORE, FIENDISH FANS? WELCOME AGAIN TO THE CRAWLY CRYPT. THIS IS YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER... YOUR HOST IN HOWLS, MASTER OF SCARE-A-MONIES, AND A-TERROR-TALE-TELLER... READY TO REVEAL ANOTHER REVOLTING RECITATION FROM MY LIBRARY OF LOATHSOME LITERATURE. THIS SPINE-TINGLING SCREAM-STORY WILL BE TOLD BY A DR. CARL WINSTON, IN HIS OWN WHIMPERING WORDS. DR. WINSTON... IF YOU PLEASE... GO AHEAD WITH THE YELP-YARN YOU CALL...

DEAD RIGHT!

JOSEPH FAIRBANKS AND I HAD BEEN LIFE-LONG FRIENDS. WE'D MET IN MEDICAL SCHOOL, AND THROUGH OUR INTERNSHIP AND ON INTO OUR PRACTICING YEARS OUR FRIENDSHIP HAD GROWN. JOSEPH HAD BECOME ONE OF THE NATION'S OUTSTANDING SURGEONS, AND I'D ENJOYED NO SMALL SUCCESS AS A HEART SPECIALIST. NEITHER OF US HAD MARRIED AND CONSEQUENTLY, AS WE'D GROWN OLDER, WE'D SOUGHT EACH OTHER'S COMPANY MORE AND MORE TO FILL THE LONELINESS OF BACHELOR LIFE. WHEN OUR VIRILE DAYS HAD PASSED, AND A CONTENTMENT FOR JUST SITTING BY AN OPEN FIRE AND SIPPING BRANDY HAD COME UPON US, WE'D MADE IT A POINT TO VISIT EACH OTHER'S HOMES AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK... USUALLY ON FRIDAY NIGHTS...

GOOD EVENING, JOSEPH!

COME IN, CARL... COME IN!
Since neither Joseph nor I had families or close relatives, in deference to our close friendship we had arranged our wills so that we were each other's inheritors.

Yes, Joseph! Ahh... the fire feels good tonight. This damp weather always settles in my bones.

Sit down, Carl! Will it be the usual? Brandy?

I think that the older we'd gotten, the more childish we'd become about this continuous disagreement over Joseph's ridiculous theory. We'd come to fight about it as two children fight over who's to be 'it' in tag...

But isn't it possible, Carl, that the sensory functions of the body can continue after what we presumptuously call 'death'?

Ah... that is the point, Carl! Suppose the brain cells do not die minutes after the heart stops. Suppose they continue to live for hours... maybe days?

But we know that brain cells cannot last fifteen minutes without oxygen!

In their normal state... yes, but suppose that at the moment of heart cessation... whether through body injury or simple failure... suppose that the brain cells go into a state of shock... of reduced metabolism...

Reduced metabolism? Ridiculous! No! Possible? Very possible! In a state of shock, where the functions of the brain cell were curtailed, the little oxygen left in the protoplasm at the moment of heart failure would be enough to prolong the life of the cell for hours.

So a dead man is not really dead when he is pronounced dead, eh? He can still feel and see and near, although he cannot move...

Exactly! Think of the number of corpses you've seen whose eyes are still open... whose eyes we thoughtfully press closed with pennies or wads of cotton under the lids. Think of the horror of having your eyes forced shut and held shut... when your eyes can still see...

Joseph! This theory of yours is sheer poppycock!
As I said, we were just like children. I had to threaten to leave in order to get Joseph to stop his nonsense. The rest of the evening would be pleasant and we'd remain the best of friends. But last night was different. Last night was very different...

Don't bother trying any emetics, Carl. The poison is a fast-acting one. You'll be dead in a moment.
I was halfway across the room when I simply collapsed to the floor, I tried to move. I tried to speak. It was as though I were completely paralyzed...

Good-bye, Carl. Thank you for the inheritance.

Dead? How could I be dead? I could see... I could feel... I could hear Joseph dialing the telephone...

Hello, Norton Funer al Parlor? That you, Ben? This is Doctor Joseph Fairbanks. You'd better get over here and bring your wicker...

I heard Joseph hang up. I heard him approach and I saw his face when he leaned over me... his leering face...

Poor Carl! How we used to argue... about silly theories... theories that I didn't believe myself!

Oh, Lord, what he was saying to me... thinking I couldn't hear... knowing I was dead...

But I never could get you angry enough, could I, Carl? I never could get you so upset you'd drop dead! No! I had to poison you to get your money... your estate...

Then, a pain... a horrible excruciating pain in my chest... and Joseph grinning down at me and bragging...

It will be simple, Carl. I'm a physician. I'll sign the death certificate. Death by natural causes. No one would question a surgeon's word... ah. The bell! The undertaker is here...
I'LL GO WITH YOU, BEN! OH... SINCE I'M THE ONLY ONE IN THE WORLD CARL HAD... NO FAMILY, YOU KNOW... THERE'S NO USE DRApING THIS OUT. ARRANGE FOR A SMALL DIGNIFIED FUNERAL... TOMORROW...

SURE! WHY WASTE TIME? I GOT A WICKER IN THE TRUCK. 'CMON AND HELP ME...

YOU... YOU WHO ARE READING THIS STORY? HOW CAN YOU UNDERSTAND HOW I FELT? HOW CAN YOU KNOW THE HORROR THAT CREEP UP MY RIGID SPINE? I WAS DEAD... DEAD BY ALL STANDARDS. AND YET I COULD... FEEL... COULD HEAR...COULD SEE THINGS MOVE AS THEY LIFTED ME AND PLACED ME INTO THE WICKER...

LOOK, BEN. HIS EYES...

YEaH. I KNOW. THEY'RE OPEN, ALMOST LIKE HE WAS SEEIN' US, EH? WELL...

I COULd SEE THEM LOOKING DOWN AT ME. BUT I COULdn'T BLINK...COULdn'T MOVE AN EYELID... COULdn'T LIVE...EVER AGAIN...

EASY, NOW... WHY...? HE CAN'T FEEL THE BUMPS...

I COULd HEAR THEM GET IN THE FRONT...HEAR THE ENGINE START...FEEL THE MOTION OF RIDING...RIDING INTO TOWN TO THE FUNERAL PARLOR...
I could hear the back doors open again. I could feel the wicker being lifted and carried into the cold white room with the needles and tubes. I could smell the perfume that tried to hide the formaldehyde odor...

I could hear the rustling whisper of hoses, the sharp clinking of bottles, the hum of pump-motors starting...

First...we drain the blood.

I felt what must have been a needle entering my arm. But there was no pain. Joseph had been wrong. There was no pain, even as the last drop of blood dripped out of my body and I heard it gurgling down a drain somewhere...

Put it down here.

I'll get things ready! Care to watch?

I don't mind...

Another pump, another needle pressing against my dead flesh. More gurgling...

I'll see about a coffin! Not too expensive, now!

I was being lifted again. Now I could feel the smooth satin against my dead hands. The camphor smell of newness. I was being put into my coffin...

Joseph didn't want to see his money wasted. Not too expensive. I wanted to scream. But how could I? Dead men don't scream. They only lie stiffly...listening...feeling...and crying inside...

This one will do! Reasonable, too?

Help me get him into it!

Fine...

Now...you'll arrange everything...the funeral...the plot?

Now...you'll arrange the funeral. The plot...
How long I lay there I do not know. Perhaps time, to one dead, is immeasurable. The lid was slamming down...

Let's go.

Being nailed...

The chapel is filled. They're waiting...

I was being moved again, a voice... eulogizing me... my funeral oration. I was hearing it all...

And so, in parting, may I add... Carl Winston lived... he died. But his memory. His work... lives after him...

And now, the shoveling has stopped. There is laughter and voices...

That's enough...

All right... open it up...

The lid is creaking open. A rush of fresh air caresses my face...

Carl! Are you convinced? Are you? Open his eyes...

A motor. The coolness of open air. I was being lowered into the grave. The voice...

Ashes to ashes... dust to dust...

The hollow boom of dirt crashing down upon the coffin lid. The horror... the screaming silent horror of it...
A finger touches my eyes. The night stars twinkle down at me. Joseph's face cuts across them, blocking them out...

You're paralyzed, Carl. You're not really dead. It's a new type anaesthetic? I put it into your brandy!

Then we brought you back to the house... into my office. We pretended it was the funeral parlor...

I lent Doc Fairbanks a few of my pumps for sound effects... and this coffin...

It was a gag, Carl. I wanted to show you that my theory could be right! You almost believed it, didn't you Carl? Didn't you?

Doc. It's five-thirty! Shouldn't he be coming out of it?

Then we staged this, Carl... It isn't Ben and I, together! Morning you're in the garden yet, Carl! Out in back of my house...

The drug will be wearing off soon... We didn't even go to the funeral parlor! I just drove you around!

Heh, heh! So next time you meet a corpse, kiddies, be careful what you say, eh? You might hurt its non-feelings, and now that you've finished telling us your little tale, Carl, you can go crawl back into your coffin again and I'll tuck you in with a blanket of grave-gravel. While I'm shoveling, fiends, why don't you shovel along to the vault-keeper who, breathlessly and dripping drool, awaits with his guest-spot gore-tale, complete with guaranteed accompanying nightmare. I'll dig you later!

It's morning now. The stars have gone and I feel the sun on my face. Joseph is pleading with me... tears in his eyes. Ben Norton's face just gets paler and paler...

Carl! For God's sake, Carl! Come out of it! It's a gag, Carl. Come out of it... please...

Oh, Lord help us...

Poor Joseph and his theory. He wanted so much for me to accept it. And now I have accepted it! Only he won't know he's right! Not until he goes through what I've gone through. For I am dead. I died of a heart attack just before the undertaker came!
There is a crawling fear in you, Felix Purdy. You stand below the towering windswept trees and the clouds above loom like mysterious ghost-shapes that hurry by below a cold moon. Your hands tremble and your blood runs cold. Your heart throbs wildly in your chest. And then you hear the inhuman howl...

What's that? It... it sounds like a wild animal...
Sheer terror roots you to the spot and you sway like the trees that surround you...waiting...listening...as the howling thing comes closer, and then it bursts from the black overgrowth, and the ghost-clouds part so that the cold noon illuminates it...

"Good Lord!" It...it's a WEREWOLF...

Suddenly your legs are rubber collapsing beneath you and you sprawl on the ground. The werewolf is over you, its blazing eyes staring down, a low triumphant growl erupting from its heaving chest. It hesitates, waiting while you scream and cower behind upraised protecting arms...

And now you're running, Felix, and screaming, and the inhuman wolf-thing is loping after you, fangs bared and spittle drooling from its flame-red mouth...

HELP ME...SOMEONE! OH, LORD.* PLEASE...HELP ME...

Suddenly there is blackness around you, ending the pain, ending the horror. And then the blackness fades and you are standing in an alleyway between tall buildings with boarded windows and locked doors and you are afraid again...

KEEP AWAY! NO! NO!

You know you are Felix Purdy and you know you are a high-school teacher. But you cannot remember anything of your past...your childhood...last year...last month. You've suddenly found yourself...and you are you...and there is no yesterday...and now you are in an alley...and footsteps approach...

He's out there...in that deserted street. Coming this way...

You run till your heart is a hammer slamming inside your chest. Now you can feel the hot foul breath of the werewolf close behind you...

I...I can't...run...any...more...

And then it springs upon you, and its razor-sharp claws are tearing at your flesh and its knife-like fangs are sinking into your body and pulling and ripping and slashing...

Suddenly you are standing in an alleyway between tall buildings with boarded windows and locked doors and you are afraid again...

NOW WHERE AM I? NOW WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME?
A shadow leaps across the gaping entrance to the alley. You cower back into the gloom. It peers in, its slanted eyes glowing, its needle-like fangs glittering...

A breeze stirs, rustling papers on a trash pile behind you, spinning up the alleyway, carrying your scent to the vampire’s sensitive nostrils. It lifts its arms and the black cape drapes from them like bat-wings and there is a dull beating sound as it seems to glide toward you...

A... VAMPIRE...

No! Oh, God... No!

For a moment you stand cringing, flattened against the building wall like a yellowed poster, watching in morbid fascination as the blood-hungry beast moves toward you...

And then horror strikes at you, sending you flailing down the alley... down into the shadows running from the hideous thing behind you...

K-K-KEEP AWAY...

Help me! Oh, Lord... Help...

And now the vampire is bending over you and you can feel its needle-fangs sinking deep into your throat and its dry lips sucking around the wounds, drawing in the red life-fluid it craves...

The board fence is high and flat and expressionless. You fall against it sobbing. It’s a blind alley, and you are trapped... and the beating sound is behind you, closing in on you. You sink to your knees...

What did I do? What did I do to deserve this... sob... this torture...

And now everything is fading and there is darkness again and you are standing in a graveyard and your eyes are filled with tears. You are Felix Purdy, school teacher, with no yesterday and no tomorrow, and only the horror of the present to live for...

Why? Why all this? What does it mean? Why must I suffer like this?

E E E E E... G G G H...
The graveyard echoes with the silence of death and the tombstones are blank faces that do not smile or cry or show pity for you. The mounds are heaped high over the late and departed and their grass is yellowed from winter’s chill. You stand and wait, half-expecting, half-knowing.

And then you hear the dragging sound... the sound of feet long dead and decomposed and crawling with decay and the slime of the grave. You hear the dragging footsteps in the chill of the night, moving slowly, painfully, upon the mounds and around the grave markers and over the dry grass. And you wait...

Why should I run? What good will it do? I’ll get to the cemetery gate and it will be locked and...

The graveyard echoes with the silence of death and the tombstones are blank faces that do not smile or cry or show pity for you. The mounds are heaped high over the late and departed and their grass is yellowed from winter’s chill. You stand and wait, half-expecting, half-knowing.

This is what I am living for! This is why I am here! I have been created... so that I can die... die a hundred horrible ways!

Your eyes bore into the darkness and you see the rotting foul-smelling corpse stumbling toward you. You grit your teeth, fighting off the revulsion that sweeps over you...

Hurry! Come quickly! Do what you must do! I choke... I am ready...

But your life does not fade. Only the scene fades once more, and you still exist. The blackness descends like a curtain and lifts, and the guillotine rises into the moonlight...

What more? What else... after this?

You are Felix Puro, high school teacher. You are resigned to your role in this gory matinee. You walk to the guillotine-steps as if you have rehearsed this action well...

How will it end? How long will this horror go on?

And now the thing is upon you and its odor sears your nostrils and your stomach heaves and you hold your breath so as not to suck the fetid stench into your lungs. You feel the putrid arms around you and the moldy flesh falling away and the bone fingers crushing the life from you...

G-g-g-n-n-n-g-g-g-g!

You look up at the gleaming blade hanging between the tracks that climb toward the starless sky. You kneel... resigned...

What fiend has devised this... this existence for me?
You place your head in the hollowed knife-bed and you stare down at the woven basket waiting patiently to receive its due. You hear the blade squealing downward and an involuntary cry escapes your quivering lips.

And now you are behind the black curtain again, waiting for the next torturous scene to be unveiled. You float in a sea of darkness... crying, waiting, spinning...

Why can't I remember anything before this? It's as if I never existed before this!

And yet, you seem to recall a room... long ago... far away... a room with white leering faces... little monsters... and a little evil thing that sat and stared at you... and... but it is only a faint recollection... as though it never really existed...

And now the curtain is lifting and the sea of darkness is receding and you are standing in an open field with fog clinging to the hollow places, and there is a giggling. Faces... white, leering faces... surround you...

What, what do you want? Who are you?

Hee, hee... Eh, eh, eh... What, what do you want? Who are you?

And then you see the yawning pit behind them and you see the shovels in their hands and they close in on you... giggling...

What are you going to do to me? No... no...

Little clawing hands seize you, push you, and you stiffen. But there are many hands and you skid toward the gaping hole... so long... so narrow...

So dear...

You're going to bury me alive! Oh Lord, no! I can't stand any more of this!

Now your feet are at the pit-edge, sliding, the dirt chatters as it drops in, and the many hands push, and you are falling... falling...

Don't! Don't! Yaaaaaaaaaagh...
You lie in the moist cold earth at the bottom of the hole and you look up at their grinning faces. Then, you hear the crunching sound as a space dies into the mound of soil beside the excavation...

The dirt crashes down on you, and the giggling grows louder. Spaces fly... earth falls. You scream... and the laughter screams back at you...

Yaaa ahh... ha-ha-ha...

You are Felix Purdy, high school teacher, floating in darkness, listening to laughter... enthusiastic, effervescent laughter. Young laughter. The laughter of...

You are Felix Purdy. With no past and no future... a creature born of now... born to suffer... to die a million times in one brief span of existence. And somewhere, reality is laughing at you...

Oh, Lord! I know! I know who I am!

HA HA HA

You have died many times in this, your brief life-span, Felix Purdy. You have died in many horrible, vicious ways. But now you know...

In a moment... in a moment I'm going to really die!

Yes, Felix Purdy. Somewhere, reality is laughing at you. The reality that surrounds your creator...

I'm a dream... a character in a dream. I live in someone's mind.

And the laughter is destroying you, Felix. Even now you can feel yourself fading...

And he... the sleeping one... the one who is dreaming of me... is waking up!
For this, then, is your real death, Felix. This then is the horror of all the horrors... more horrible than your dreamer has conceived in any of his wild wish-dreams. In a moment, sleep will vanish, and so will you...

No! wait! Sleep some more! Don't listen to them! Wait...

But it is too late, Felix Purdy. The laughter is loud. The dreamer stirs. There is a blinding light that is like white-hot liquid metal, cascading at you and dissolving you in its brilliance...

EEEEAAAGHH...

Now you are gone, Felix Purdy. You exist no longer. Now you are really dead. You hear no more laughter. Daylight has blanched you away. But the dreamer hears the laughter...

The boy looks around. His teacher stands over him, fuming...

I. I'm sorry, sir! You should be. You haven't even touched your exam paper... and the period is over!

A boy. A boy lifts his head from his high-school desk and rubs his eyes, sleepily. His classmates surround him...

Have a nice nap, young man?

Golly...

The boy grins sleepily. The teacher deftly applies a red pencil to the bare examination paper, swinging it in a large circle...

Zero for you, young man! I hope your little nap was worth it!

Yes... Mr. Purdy!

HEH, HEH! So now you know how it feels to be the main character in a dream, eh, friends? A character that your dreamer particularly dislikes... heh, heh... like his math teacher... or is it Latin, or maybe English, in your case? Well, that's my tale for this issue of C.K.'s Mag. I'll dream up another nightmare when next we meet. Now, C.K. awaits, so I'll turn you back to him. G'night! Pleasant... heh... heh... dreams?
Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I watch your show on HBO. And I buy your comics. I have also seen both your movies (DEMON, BORDELLO). I love the story in CRYPT 20 "How Green Was My Alley." Please print my address and could you send me some CRYPT stuff? Your #1 fan,

Petro (Coffin-Keeper) Boucvalos II 35 School St Saco, ME 04072

I was wondering if you could send me some drawings (Like the wax exhibits in the story "The Works...In Wax!") if you can I would appreciate it. Thank you,

Darren Toland Claysville, PA

Freebies, freebies, freebies! Nobody ever went broke underestimating the taste of the public, and nobody ever got rich giving freebies! 

-I-

I'm a big fan of everything of yours, your action figures, comics, movies, everything. I was wondering if you could tell me where I could get your comics, movies, and toys. In Phoenix or Payson, AZ. Your big fan,

Joey Kellogg Payson, AZ

How come you don't have a fan club? There are a lot of toys and collectibles that I missed in stores, is there any sick-twisted way you could come out with a catalog?

Are you and Elvira ever going to make a movie? I love everything you do or make! Please print address.

Alex Harrow 14455 SW Sexton MTN DR #7E Beaverton, OR 97008

Now, here are boys ready to take part in a market economy! We'll rely on our readers to tell us about Arizona comic shops, but we offer many EC items (mostly 2D) by mail order ourselves. Writer for details.

Closest I've got to a fan club is the EC fanzine HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR; issue #9 is still available for $10 from Bill Leach, 203 Bemauer DR, Pittsburgh, PA 94565. He has other goodies, too! 

-I-

I am one of your ghoul friends! I can't stop reading your terror-bast comics and videos! They rule!!!! Keep up your witchy work! Your Ghoulish Murder,

Freddy Kruger Elm ST, USA

Hi! My name is Shaunna. Most people call me "Crypt" because all I do is talk about you! I've seen every single show you've made. I also have seen and still see your new show "Secrets of the Crypt-Keeper's Haunted House." I love horror

My brother hates you. He says he's sick and tired of watching your show and hearing my laugh (oh I know how to laugh your laugh!). My Mom likes you too. We've watched both your movies DEMON NIGHT and BORDELLO OF BLOOD. They were great! Please print my address. Frightfully yours,

"Crypty" 2144 S 15th ST Shaunna Van Els Pa Philadelphia, PA 19145

What use are brothers, anyway (not counting target practice)?

-I-

When I was a child in the fifties—after the comic book code had banished CRYPT and other EC publications—a few of us had issues of the magazine handed down to us by our older siblings. These were cherished archival possessions.

Imagine my delight to find issue #19! It was a wonderful nostalgic trip back to my early childhood. After forty years I still vividly remembered those stories and hoped that I'd be able to read them again sometime. Thanks for the mummeries!

Richard H. Bush Meriden, CT

And burning lips and burning ships and burning toast and prunes.

-I-

It's me again, The Zombie Master. I would just like to ask if on VAULT 32, your #21, is the guy on the front going to have the meat cleaver hanging in his hand. Also, I think that the rule for sending in your real name and address really bits some big. Also my friend and I draw our own Horror Comics. My friend draws just as good as the drawers for EC. (Print my address)

The Zombie Master 14 Howard AV Arnold, MD 21012

If that rapid Vault-Keeper doesn't chicken out, you'll see that cover uncovered next month. But did you know MY next issue will receive its first uncensored showing just 3 short months from now?

After reading the first 19 issues of CRYPT and the other EC horror titles, I began to wonder if they hadn't been so bad after all, that maybe all the criticism they received in the prudish 50s was unwarranted. Thus, I had been providing my children with inexpensive 64-page reprints (after careful screening, of course). Then I got CRYPT 20 and read Ghastly's horrifying "The Handler!! WOW!

At last I had found material so objectionable that there's no way in HELL I'll let my kids see it until they're 18! None of us want to think about what a moronic might do to us when our time comes to be prepared for our crypt, but
this story sure fuels our worst fears! The scene that was
the nail in the coffin is what was done to the old maid
( "Hands end things". ...EWWW! ! Naturally, I loved the
story. Keep up the good work on the reprints, and thanks
for the chills
Donald P Deaton
Fort Wayne, IN
PS) To all of you underage readers out there Close this
comic IMMEDIATELY and take it to the nearest adult for
review and potential censorship (They're not paying
attention, are they? Well, I hope it scares the living CRAP
out of them)
Just like to keep you on your toes! —CK
I happen to be a big fan of yours. I would first off like to
say Johnny Craig is the best EC Comic artist. Your comics
keep me entertained and I am going to subscribe. I also
want to say your story in VAULT 18 ("Let's Play Poison")
was the best I would like to list my 5 favorite stories from
your bone chilling collection
5) "The Maestro's Hand!", 4) "Ghost Ship!", 3) "Let's Play
Poison!", 2) "The Hungry Grave", 1) "A Mute Witness To
Murder!"
This summer I'm to work up at camp. I'll make sure to
have an EC comic book in my hand
John Aiken
Centerville, VA
Especially during latrine breaks! —CK
Your stories are the best! I love your TV shows and movies
I was wondering if you could send me one of your best
horror stories, maybe the ones about vampires or
zombies. Your bloodsucking tale,
John Farren
Austin, TX
My name is David Harte and I really enjoy reading your
comics, and collecting them. CRYPT 19 was brilliant, a real
horror issue
"Midnight Messi" was my fave story, the artwork was class
One thing, though. Page 2, panel 7. When Harold was
seated in the restaurant why didn't the vampire waiter
notice that Harold has a reflection, or Harold notice that
the waiter has no reflection, in the mirror? Was the man
sitting at the table a vampire, 'cos he had a reflection?
Send some free comics. Please print my address! I want
to hear from other EC fans. E'ing you,
David Harte
S Shannon Tie
Limerick, IRELAND
In the daytime, the restaurant was all nonvampire; at
night, vice-verse! The landlord collected double-rent (the
lousy bloodsucker)! TANSTAAF! (There ain't no such
ing thing es e free comic!) —CK
You're genial. You're perfect. I love your comics and of
course I love you, too. I'm sorry that my english sucks but
I'm a 15 years young girl from Germany
I'm one of your greatest fan (atiker). I think you looks very
nice. I've got three questions to you. Do you feel real
Love? Can I have an autograph from you or something like
that? (Please) Do you like all your fans? (I think the first
question sounds silly, but this is serious.)
And I think your friends (Sorry, friends) looks not very
clever, too. But all your friends are my friends (friends)

Hey, CK! Can I talk with you a while? Eh, you're the only
one with whom I can talk about my problems. My school
sucks, and my parents suck, too. Sometimes I feel like a
loser.
And sometimes I think there is no normal human on the
earth, too. Oh, what can I do? The people in my village
tease me every day. And tell lies about me. I feel so
unhappy. Oh, eh, I think I get on your nerves with my long
letter, don't I? OK, I say Good Bye!
Stefanie Muller
Bad Endbach, GERMANY
Although the anonymous editor fixed a few words in your
letter, he left most of It intact to share the charm of your
necesfer English. I'm continually emezeed by my foreign
readers' English skills! (I know a little Spanish: "Dos
cafes, to vamoose!")
I really love all me fans. I will consider buying e pencil, so
I can do autographs. How do you spell "CK"? —CK
In CRYPT 20, "The Handler" (last story), page 3, panel 7,
there's a gravestone with the inscription "In Memory of
Gaines...97 to..." What is the first name, it looks like it starts with the letter "p"? The date of birth must be
1897 and the only number in the date of death that I can
clearly read is the last number which appears to be a 3. I
know that Bill's father Max died in the late 1940s in a boat-
ing accident and his mother was alive when the artwork
was done. Who can shed light on this? Puzzled,
David Dellano
Kensington, CT

Perhaps this photomicrograph will shed some light, and
likely cause you to rethink your conclusions. A hint: see
WEIRD SCIENCE 21, available now! —CK
I love your mag! It's so cool. I always go on the net and
look for your web site. But the bad news is that issue 19
was my first mag. Can I have the mags 15 and 15? I
promise if I get them I'll get all the mags you make. I'll buy
back issues, too. Put my address down because I want a
pen pal.
Matt Lancy
426 Sunset RD
Skillman, NJ 08558

ATTENTION: CHARLES DRAGOO!
I am writing concerning Charles Dragoo who wrote in #19.
I am a comic book artist who would like to illustrate
CELLAR DWELLER. I am 13 years old. I've made 10 comic
books, 3 of them horror books. I have collaborated with a
writer on one of them PSYCHO BILLY. Please print my
address! I would like to get in contact with Charles Dragoo
very much.
Brian Dishon
19122 Matthew CIR
Huntington Beach, CA 92646
The stories [in CRYPT 19] offered a thought provoking progression family tree of undead: brother werewolf, sister vampire, voodooied wife, and, or curse, a mummy (no relation to the scheming archeologists)!

This issue was originally available Apr/May 1953. When did MAD first use its “Humor in a Jugular vein” motto? Is it fair to say that this was inspired by the scene where the hero of “Midnight Messi” got tapped outside the vampire restaurant?

In “This Wraps It Up!”, Professor Thomas Steel’s patronym should have been Steal!

Issue 20. After perusing the verbose initial title, “Fare Tonight, Followed by Increasing Clotyness”, I debated weather or not to proceed. Fog goodness sake, I’m glad I did.

In “Curiosity Killed”, the evidence was destroyed a smidgeon per pigeon. In “How Green Was My Alley”, it was good to see a left-hander in action. Amy puttering.

Was naming the protagonist Mr. Benedict in “The Handler” a reference to Benedict Arnold? As an honored and trusted Revolutionary War colonel, his betrayal became thereby more heinous. Similarly with Satan, who was once the highest-ranking angel. Please print address Bob Gorby 1363 Sunny LN Camarillo, CA 93012

MAD #1 was released in October, 1952; but who says life is fair?

Ah! My new CRYPT just arrived and I must say, you didn’t disappoint. Firstly, I would like to address some of the very kind people who mentioned me The Crazy Corpse, Grousey Reaper, and most of all, Jessica Meador, to whom I dedicate this letter. Thank you for your support.

I personally don’t think that either the Dark Demon or Blue Demon is Robert Borruso. Philip Smith, but not Borruso Borruso had some interesting things to say, while Smith was just rather upther about everything, going on incessantly about who CRYPT’s No. 1 fan is, as if the fate of the world depended upon it. Robert Borruso’s not like that.

Grave Digger, don’t bother with the Demons. They’re not worth the time or effort. By the way, I agree, “Horror We? How’s Bayou?” was a wonderfully-drawn tale.

And so, on to the contents of [号19.]

“By The Fright Of The Silvery Moon!” Excellent, one of the ultimate classics. The cover depiction was absolutely stunning “Midnight Messi!” The best story in the book, or at least I thought so. Perhaps, being a hardcore vampire addict, I’m biased “Busted Marriage!” Sorry, not into the voodoo thing. Too many voodoo stories in the early issues. They do become rather tiresome. “This Wraps It Up!” This story was at least better than its title. It was better than I expected.

I’m shocked, astounded, and aghast and not in a good way, either! In CRYPT 20, which I received not five minutes ago, I see that you have printed my address as “Rockville, IL”. I do not now live, nor have I ever lived, in Illinois (though it’s a nice place to visit). My address is still RR 4 Box 141, Rockville IN 47972 and shall be for several years to come. Please rectify this error and hopefully, we can put this all behind us.

Now to address some other matters. Firstly, I would like to say to Grave Digger that there are no hard feelings. I’ve never been one to hold a grudge, especially against a person who is big enough to apologize. As of the time of this printing, Grave Digger, you have probably already received a letter from me stating this, but I would just like everyone else to know that there is peace between us.

As for the stories, “Fare Tonight” was excellent. I see your mag was plugged on pages two and seven “How Green Was My Alley” was brilliant. The best story in the entire mag. Not to be outdone, Bradbury’s “The Handler” was ingenious, as are all of his works. Ingels did a nice job on the artwork.

In closing, I say this: Buy CRYPT THE OFFICIAL ARCHIVES! It’s worth its weight in plasma. Gravely yours,

Myron James Rockville, IN

I miss Philip Smith, and hope he’ll write again. Is the correct response to perceived uptightness more uptightness? I say no!

—CK

NEXT ISSUE

Also available this month are WEIRD SCIENCE and PANIC Watch for VAULT, WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED next month. Don’t forget HAUNT, FRONTLINE COMBAT and CRIME! Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic)!

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THIS COMIC REPRINTS TALES FROM THE CRYPT #37 (#21, AUG/SEP 1953) COVER by Jack Davis "Dead Right!" Jack Davis "Pleasant Screams!" Joe Orlando "S troi! You're Killing Me!" Bill Elder "The Rover Boys!" Graham Ingels

We welcome letters of comment. We cannot promise to acknowledge or answer letters. We edit for clarity, accuracy and length. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. Pseudonyms may be used if you provide us with your authentic name and address. We attempt to acknowledge publication of letters to do so we need your address on the individual letter.
Old Dan Harper was sitting in his usual wicker armchair reading his usual daily paper and smoking his usual corn-cob pipe when they came into the Lyndale Fire-house. He looked up from his paper to see grim-faced Mayor Witter and the stranger in the blue uniform with the gold buttons and the dazzling white cap...

Alfred Dan Dunlop's replacement? Not exactly, Dan. This is Lyndale's new fire chief! Now that Clem's retired, the city council's decided to modernize the fire department, so we hired Mr. Miller here... Frank Miller.

Old Dan couldn't believe his ears. For seventeen years, he and Clem Dunlop had comprised Lyndale's two-man fire department. Now that Clem had retired, Old Dan had expected the town fathers to hire a replacement for him, but he'd never expected them to hire someone who'd be Old Dan's superior...

New fire-chief? But I don't understand! I'm senior member now!

Times have changed, Dan. Methods of fighting fires have changed too! Chief Miller will be in full charge from now on. What he says goes.

Mayor Witter turned to Chief Miller, smiling...

Well, sir, this is it. Let me say that any improvements you wish to make, the council will gladly consider. I have to get back to my desk, so...

Of course, Mayor Witter. Good afternoon, Mayor...

I'm sorry...
Mayor Witter left and Lyndale's new fire chief looked around...

'The boss is a bit of a stickler, Mr. Harper. He wants the old engine to look its best for the big parade. We'll need to clean it up and put some polish on it.'

Chief Miller waved his hand at the old fire-engine.

'First of all, we're going to paint and polish that old engine till she sparkles. It's in terrible condition! Look at her!'

'Can we change the paint?'

'No, paint her red. She'll look great in the parade.'

Chief Miller waved his hand at the old fire-engine.

'Wicker chair...'

Chief Miller's face grew very stern... 'Look here, Mr. Harper. I'm in charge now, and what I say goes! And I say we're going to polish and shine that fire-truck... and keep it polished!'
LOLLIN' AROUND! LOOK HERE, YOU YOUNG SQUIRT. I WAS FIGHTIN' FIRES BEFORE YOU WERE OLD ENOUGH TO PUSH A TOY FIRE TRUCK. AN' I BEEN LOLLIN', AS YOU CALL IT, IN THAT WICKER DOWN HERE ALL THAT TIME. AND...

FROM NOW ON, WE REST UPSTAIRS, MR. HARPER. I INTEND TO INSTALL A COT AND A RADIO AND OTHER COMFORTS...

AND HOW YOU 'SPECT WE'RE GONNA GET DOWN WHEN AN ALARM COMES IN? JUMP? OR ROLL DOWN THEM BACK STAIRS?

I INTEND TO INSTALL A DESCENT-POLE, MR. HARPER. A WELL-POLISHED POLE, UPON WHICH WE WILL SLIDE DOWN FROM UPSTAIRS IN A SPLIT-SECOND. BUT ENOUGH TALK. THERE'S WORK TO DO...

AND SO, OLD DAN AND EAGER NEW CHIEF MILLER SET TO WORK PAINTING AND POLISHING THE OLD FIRE-TRUCK UNTIL IT GLEAMED LIKE NEW...

THERE! THAT LOOKS BETTER!

Now we're getting somewhere...

Quite a change, eh?

Hmmph!

AND A DESCENT-POLE WAS INSTALLED...

Hmmph!

Then the fire house was scrubbed and painted...

So Old Dan Harper was forced to work his heart out for the new chief. He polished and painted till his old bones ached. For there were two things that had meant everything in the world to Dan: his job in the fire department, and the small house just outside of town to which he now returned, exhausted, each night...

Whew! Lord, I'm done in. That young eager-beaver's tryin' to work me to death!

Old Dan's little house was his pride and joy. And his job with Lyndale's fire department had been his whole life. But now, Chief Miller had come upon the scene, and Old Dan's job had become a NIGHTMARE for him...

If you're too old to come down that pole properly, then you're not fit to be a fireman. Puff... puff... okay! Okay! I'll try it again...
Although Lyndale's fire department was rarely called upon because of its small population (452, last census), Chief Miller had instituted a two-shift, twenty-four-hour-a-day policy...

There were times when Old Dan had the urge to chuck the whole deal. The constant pressures exerted on him by the new Fire Chief certainly made him miserable, but he'd gritted his teeth and stuck doggedly to the job...

Chief Miller finally went to see Mayor Witter...

Fire-fighting is a young man's profession, Mayor. Mr. Harper is too old.

Sorry, Chief. Miller. I couldn't fire him.

But, he's a hindrance more than a help. I've tried to discourage him...

If he won't quit, then you just have to keep him on till he reaches retirement age...

But that's not for another five years! I know that, Chief Miller. Maybe you can figure out a way to convince him...
IT WAS WHILE CHIEF MILLER WAS ON THE NIGHT SHIFT THAT THE ALARM CAME IN...

215 ELM. HURRY! THE HUM? OLD PLACE IS BLAZIN'! DAN? OLD I THINK OLD DAN'S TRAPPED INSIDE... I'LL BE RIGHT THERE...

CHIEF MILLER LEAPED FROM HIS COT. THEN, HE STOPPED...

OF COURSE? WHAT AM I RUSHING FOR? NOW I CAN GET RID OF THAT OLO CODGER ONCE AND FOR ALL...

SLOWLY, DELIBERATELY, HE DRESSED IN HIS FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT...

HEH, HEH! TRAPPED... EH?

JUST BEFORE PUTTING ON HIS RUBBER BOOTS, THE CHIEF LIT A CIGARETTE...

THAT'S TOO BAD...

HE SMOKED A WHILE, THEN PUT THE CIGARETTE OUT AND DONNED HIS BOOTS... I CAN KILL TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE! I'LL SAY THE OLD FIRE-TRUCK WOULDN'T START!

HE SLID SLOWLY DOWN THE POLISHED DESCENT-POLE...

I'LL GET RID OF OLD DAN, AND I'LL CONVINCE THE TOWN COUNCIL THAT THEY NEED A NEW FIRE-TRUCK... BOTH AT THE SAME TIME!

CHIEF MILLER UNLOCKED THE HOOD OF THE FIRE-TRUCK AND GRINNED IN AT THE ENGINE...

I WONDER WHY IT WOULDN'T START... HEH, HEH...

THEN HE STROLLED TO THE FIRE-HOUSE DOORS AND SWUNG THEM OPEN...

WELL. THAT OUGHT TO DO IT! IT'S BEEN FIFTEEN MINUTES SINCE THE CALL CAME IN...

THE OLD FIRE-TRUCK LEAPED FROM THE FIRE-HOUSE, SIREN SCREAMING...

HEH, HEH...
When the fire-truck finally arrived on the scene, Old Dan's house had burned to the ground with Old Dan inside it...

I couldn't get the old engine started! It was awful... He. He could've been saved if you'd gotten here right after I called...

Of course, no one suspected Chief Miller of deliberately stalling in getting to the fire that had killed Old Dan. They believed his story... and a month later, the new fire-truck arrived...

He rushed to the descent-pole, wrapped his arms and legs around it, and plummeted downward...

Oh, Lord! I know! I know whose voice that was! It was his! Old Dan Harper's! No! No, it couldn't...

The next morning, they found what was left of Chief Miller lying beside the new fire-engine at the bottom of the descent-pole in a pool of drying blood. His arms and legs had been severed from his body and his torso nearly split in two. Someone... or something... had replaced the descent-pole with a steel strip, sharpened to a keen razor-edge...

Which brings my tale to a cutting climax, eh, fiends? Can you picture sliding down a fifteen-foot knife blade? Quite a stretch of the imagination, eh? Wasn't that a gem of a yarn? I'll razor 'nother one next time we meet... in K.K.'s sharp mag, the vault of horror and now, the Old Witch awaits with her hone-cooked yarn. 'Bye, now... by the way, Gilette the cat out tonight? 'Bye!
HEE, HEE. SMELL THE CONCOCTION I’M COOKIN’ IN MY CRUDDY CAULDRON? IT’S A REEKING RECIPE OF REVOLTING REVELRY THAT I’M SURE YOU’LL ENJOY. THIS IS YOUR HOSTESS IN THE HAUNT OF FEAR, WAITING TO DISH OUT ANOTHER OF HER LURID LUNCHEONS. READY? THEN I’LL START FEEDING YOU THE FOUL FARE I CALL...

The ROVER BOYS!


WNOA THERE, BOY! WNOA...

STORY: DOCTOR SHELDON REMSEN STOOD BEFORE THE FIVE GRIM-FACED MEMBERS OF THE STATE MEDICAL BOARD LISTENING TO THE CHAIRMAN’S COLD AND EXPRESSIONLESS VOICE MOUTHING THE WORDS THAT MEANT THE END OF EVERYTHING FOR HIM...

AND SO, DOCTOR REMSEN, IT IS THE DECISION OF THIS BOARD, IN VIEW OF THE EVIDENCES PRESENTED HERE OF CONDUCT UNBECOMING A MEMBER OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION, THAT YOUR LICENSE BE REVOKED AND THAT YOU BE BARRED FROM EVER PRACTISING MEDICINE AGAIN.
The chairman looked around. The members of the board rose silently and filed from the room. Dr. Sheldon Remsen lifted his hands in a final pleading gesture...

I'll have my revenge.

You'll be sorry... all of you!

Dr. Remsen darted forward. He clutched at the sleeve of the last departing board member...

Don't do this to me. Medicine is my life! Please...

Won't you reconsider? The decision is final, Dr. Remsen. If you please...

I'm sorry! Please...

I beg you for leniency! I made a mistake!

He moved up the crowded streets. He was jostled and pushed and carried along by the jabbering throng. But he felt and heard nothing. Dr. Remsen's mind was far away, planning, dismissing, and planning again...

I hate them! I'll get each of them... one by one! But how? How?

A shadow fell across him, blocking the sun. Dr. Remsen looked around. He was under a marquee... a theater marquee. The colorful billboard blinked at him...

Hmmm. Captain John Smythe and his trained seals. See them perform. They're almost human!

The last line screamed. The words seem to light up...

They're almost human! Of course...

Doctor Remsen stood alone in the board room. Faint laughter drafted through the door beyond which his judges and condemners had disappeared. He cursed...

Go ahead. You righteous old ***!s! Laugh! Laugh at me! We'll see who has the last laugh...
The doctor slid the money under the box-office glass and held up his index-finger...

Laughter erupted from a hundred mouths as he moved softly down the carpeted aisle. On stage, a clown was cavorting...

The clown somersaulted off into the wings amid cheers and applause. Dr. Remsen sat down...

...and now the Palace Theater proudly presents Captain John Smythe and his world famous trained seals...

The curtain went up, the glimmering black seals barked and swayed. Their uniformed trainer began the act. Dr. Remsen's grim mouth slowly stretched into a leering grin.

That's it. That's the answer. I'll have my revenge and take care of my future, too!

The act was over. Dr. Remsen left the theater. His evil plan was forming in his hate-filled mind...

It will be the greatest animal-act the world has ever seen!

The pet shop smelled of flea-powder and animal sweat and bird-seed and echoed with the squeals of monkeys and parrots and the howling of dogs...

Yes, sir! Can I help you? I like to buy five dogs!

We have some fine thoroughbred boxers... or would you prefer French-poodles...

No! Nothing like that! Cheap dogs... mutts... all I ask is that they be large dogs...
A knock resounded through the laboratory. The dogs began to yelp. Doctor Remsen went to the door and opened it... "You! Remsen! So this is where you live now? But I thought..."

You thought you were paying a house-call on a sick man, eh, Doctor Hale? That's what I wanted you to think!

Doctor Remsen waved the small pistol at the surprised Board-Chairman...

Inside, Doctor Hale! And don't try anything. I won't hesitate to use this... What's the meaning of this, Remsen?

It means, my dear Chairman of the Medical Board, that I am going to take my revenge upon you and your fellow Board-members for having excluded me from your profession!

Perhaps, Doctor Hale! And now, if you will remove your coat, we will get on with the operation.

Do? Why, I am going to remove your brain, Doctor, and substitute it for the inadequate brain that now rests in the cranial cavity of one of those miserable dogs there!

Remsen! For God's sake! Put down that hypodermic!

Outside the old house into which Doctor Remsen had moved his laboratory, the wind sighed, carrying the echo of Doctor Hale's scream across the deserted countryside...
On the nights that followed, one by one, the other members of the State Medical Board came to the lonely house on the outskirts of the city...

Upon entering, Remsen said, "Welcome, Doctor Simpson!

On the nights that followed, one by one, but none went away. On the fifth morning, five fresh-dug graves lay silently in the dawn-light behind the house...

Inside, in the laboratory, five dogs with human brains were being behind the mesh-wire doors of their kennels...

You will perform as you are bid. My friends, even in your alien bodies, you still have the desire to survive...

And you will survive so long as you cooperate! If you don't... you will die! And now... we must begin rehearsing our act!

And so, silently, with tails between their legs, and a growing hate gleaming in their eyes, the five remarkably intelligent canines went through the motions of learning their fabulous act...

My dear Doctor Hale. Perhaps a day without your rations will convince you that I mean business! When I call 'Rover!', you bark the answer...correctly!

Finally, the time came. Under an assumed name, Dr. Remsen made an appointment with a theatrical agent and proudly auditioned his animal act...

Amazing, Mr. Sheldon! Amazing! I'll book your act in every vaudeville house in the country! You're made...

And so, in the very same theater where Dr. Sheldon Remsen had seen the trained seals that had given him his fantastic and diabolical scheme, Sheldon's dogs made their theatrical debut...

Ladies and gentlemen! The greatest animal act to ever perform upon any stage. Sheldon's intelligent dogs, they count... they spell... they do everything but talk!
Dr. Remsen's animal act gained immediate success. His amazing dogs astounded people. Dogs could be trained to appear intelligent, but his...

**Your question, sir! What year did Columbus discover America?**

The dogs actually picked out cards containing the correct answers to mathematical problems, historical dates...

1492! Quite amazing! Incredible! Bravo!

---

The dogs manipulated alphabet blocks to answer questions given them...

Bowser says the name of the President during the First World War was W-I-L-L-S-O-N, sir! Does that answer your question?

**I'll wow! say!**

Finally, due to the gruelling schedule of travelling the vaudeville circuits, Dr. Remsen returned to his lonely house on the outskirts of town for a brief vacation.

Heh, heh! Well, my little pets! Thanks to you, I am getting richer each day!

---

The night that Dr. Remsen made his startling pronouncement as to the future of the human-brained canines, he carelessly left one of the wire-mesh kennel doors unlocked. After he'd retired, a sleek form moved from kennel to kennel, unlocking the other doors...

---

Doctor Remsen had been right. The desire to survive was indeed strong...even for imprisoned human brains. A low growl awakened the doctor and he sat up in bed staring into five pairs of blazing eyes...

One of the remarkable dogs held a hypodermic in its slobbering mouth...
Toward morning, an old horse on a nearby farm was attacked by a pack of yelping wild dogs and driven toward the old house...

And dawn found a sixth grave added to the silent five...

The farmer who owned the horse found it wandering miles from the farm the next day...

There you are, boy! Get along home, now. That milk company man's comin' to buy you!

And five dogs were seen often in later weeks, yelping and racing through the streets of the city.

The milk company received numerous complaints about the new horse from its driver...

Crazy, that's what he is. Always snortin' and whinnyin' and stampin' his hoofs... like he were tryin' to tell me somethin'!

Epilogue: The dawn sky is like a grey blanket. A milk-wagon careens over the cobblestones, its horse galloping madly. A pack of stray dogs...five of them...slobbering and barking... leap and scramble, nipping and clawing at the frenzied animal. Its flanks are scarred and bleeding...its eyes filled with terror, and the yelping dogs seem to be laughing at it...

Whoa there, boy! Whoa!

Hee-hee! So Doc Remsen, cause he horsed around with brains, ended up with his in one. Well, kiddies, next time you see a pack of howlin' mutts chasin' an old horse up the street, think of this terror-tidbit I've just fed you. Don't laugh! They might be the State Medical Board hounding Doctor Sheldon Remsen! Hee, hee, well, that about winds up C.K.'s mag. I'll be cookin' again in the vault of horror!