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HEH, HEH! SLIDE INTO THE SLOPPY SLIMY CRYPT OF TERROR, FIEND-FANS. THIS IS YOUR CRAVEN CARETAKER OF COLD CORPSES. THE CRYPT-KEEPER, ALL READY TO START THE BRAWL ROLLING WITH A WHALE OF A TALE OF TERROR... A BIT OF BILGE I DUG UP FROM AMONG A BILE OF OLD MANUSCRIPTS THAT WERE CLUTTERING UP A CLAMMY CORNER OF MY CADAVER-CAVERN. YOU'LL RETCH AT THE WRETCHED SAG PLAYED BY CAPTAIN MATT STARKE... A SKUNK OF A SEAMAN WHO IS WAITING IN EILEEN HARPER'S MODEST APARTMENT OVERLOOKING THE SAN DIEGO DOCKS RIGHT NOW TO BEGIN THIS ODOROUS OPUS I CALL 'FOREVER AMBERGRIS'!

Yeah! Starke's the name. Cap'n Matt Starke, skipper of the freighter Sultana. I'm ashore now... happy to be takin' my ease on this plush sofa... snug in this neat little harbor-apartment... blowin' billows of cool blue smoke from this Havana fifty-center... an' dreamin' of how I'll soon be master of the trimmest little gal in this or any port. I'm happy 'cause I love Eileen enough to have murdered a man to get her! And now... she's mine...
Yeah! That's right! I murdered... and there is nothin' anyone can do about it. Now, I've got the world. I'm rich, an' I'm waitin' for Eileen to come out of her room so's I'll have everything! Scuse me...

Hey, Eileen! Blast it! Hurry up! Stop torturin' me. Finish dressin' an' go' on out or I'll come in there an' get you ready or not!

Wait'll you see her! She's beautiful! Got the prettiest face in the world! An' her figure, well... just wait an' see! I ought to be happy, but somethin' keeps naggin' at me keeps botherin' me!

I can't figure out why that whale threw up right there, and then, just when I was watchin' him, I never saw a whale disgorge before, nor have I heard of anyone else that's seen it happen.

Now there's a queer combination of things for a man in love t' be thinkin' of—a gorgeous woman and... Ugh! Whale spew! But I can't help it. I got the same cold feelin' in my inwards as I get when my ship is nearin' a reef in a thick fog. I can't see the reef but instinct tells me it's there.

An' some kind of crazy instinct is naggin' at me right now. Maybe you can help me. Le'me tell you 'bout Eileen and me... and my ship... and the whale... an' the man I murdered.

But where to begin? On that warm spring mornin', I reckon, was the start of it. We'd dropped anchor here in San Diego and me and m' first mate, Ben Harper, were hurryin' down the gangplank...

I want you to bunk with us this time, Cap'n. I want you t' meet Eileen!

Another time, matey! I got some good addresses in Diego...

For seven months... from the time Ben Harper signed on my ship. All I'd heard from him was Eileen... how beautiful this bride of his was and how I had to meet her...

Well, have dinner with us then, Matt. At least that...

Well, all right, Ben. But just dinner then I'll be on my way!

With Ben Harper been' the kind of a chap he was... not at all on the rugged side... and not much on looks either. I never figured him to have landed anything like the beauty that greeted him when we reached their apartment.

Oh, honey, I thought this trip would never end.

It's good to have you home, Ben, darling.
'But I could see from the way that she turned her head so's he couldn't kiss her on the lips that Eileen wasn't as glad to see Ben as she made out. Fact is, as he was lovin' her, she kept lookin' past him to me...'

'She kept lookin' at me... talkin' with her eyes... first curiosity... then an invitation... Yeilding it was an electric thing that passed between us... something we both understood in those first quick moments without having spoken a word...'

'Ben introduced us, but I felt I already knew her better'n he did. I followed them into the livin' room, watchin' Eileen, takin' in parts movin' sensuously, there were pictures burnin' in my brain... tattooed with a white hot needle...'

'Matt's agreed to have dinner with us, hon... but he won't stay on with us. He's got other plans...'

'Ben moved off towards the kitchen...

'See if you can't do somethin' about gettin' Matt to stay with us while I go mix-up some drinks.'

'Sure, Ben...'

'Seven months at sea without so much as glimpsin' a woman makes a man act without thinkin', I guess. I had a frenzied impulse to throw my arms around Eileen... pull her tight against me... crush my hungry lips against hers, and suddenly, I was doin' it...'

'She pulled back at first, then changed her mind, and moved in tight. She melted... blended... like we were one. That's how quick we hit it off together, Eileen and me! I was pantin' heavy and wipin' her lipstick when she teased...'

'Why'd you do that, Matt?'
She knew why he did it, the tantalizing evil...so I gave her a flip answer just as Ben. Poor, stupid, lovesick Ben. Came in with the drinks.

I hadn't had a chance to kiss the bride before this! Hah! I told you you'd like Eileen, Cap'n! Go on, be my guest...I think I've talked Matt into staying, Ben...

Eileen, I'm goin' to have you someday, too! I don't know now, but I will! I swear it...

Ben makes good money. He never spent much before we got married! He meant security to me, Matt...a nice home, clothes, food...even this little car...

And now, now that you've met me? I can see the way you look at me. You're in love with me!

I do love you, Matt! I've never met a man I loved so much! But I want the things Ben's money gets for me.

And I want you, Eileen. I'm going to have you someday, too! I don't know, but I will! I swear...

The two weeks shot by and it was time to shove off again. I saw Eileen once more the way I did that first day...with Ben's arms around her...she lookin' over his shoulder. But this time, what she said was meant for me...

Be good, baby...Goodbye, darling! I'll be counting every second till you come back to me...

And later, Ben and I stood on the bridge of the Sultana, watching San Diego vanish into the mist. There was no talkin' between us...only our quiet thoughts, him rememberin' those snore nights with Eileen and me, hatin' him for them, knowin' it was me she wanted.

And I made up my mind right then that my first mate, Ben Harper, would not be comin' back from this voyage with me...

Y'know, Cap'n? You ought to have somebody like Eileen to come home to!

Maybe so, Ben...maybe so...
After a pleasant visit, I remembered other business that needed tending to. Shoes in hand, I padded over to a paper wall and called out: I'll meet you back at the ship, Ben.

I left the shoddy little shop and made my way back through crooked jammed streets toward the ship. My head spinning with thoughts of Eileen and Ben. And how he wasn't goin' to see her again... not if I got my buck's worth of information out of that hissing, grinin' old gent...

What're you talkin' about, Matt? Osaka was our last port of call.

Then I visited a certain toothy gent who could furnish a lot of information about a lot of things. Most of them unwholesome. He marked a crude black circle around a tiny dot on a greasy old map for which I gave him one crisp U.S. buck.

Plenty people on island. Yeah, Grandpa? Thanks!

I forget where I'm goin' yet. Ben's lyin' on his bunk, weary, but not too tired to talk about his favorite topic... Eileen. I sat at my desk. Studying the greasy old map.

'You don't know what a good feeling it is to be finally goin' home to her, Matt... Straight home to my waitin' darling..."

I elected Ben to take it ashore.

'Is there time for me to do some huntin', skipper?...

We reached the tiny speck of forsaken coral and lava the third night out. Except for a glimmer of light here and there in the blackness, there was no sign of life on the island. While the barrel of fuel oil was being loaded into the dinghy, I elected Ben to take it ashore.

'I'll wait for you...'
You'll have to doctor yourself, Ben. We're a thousand miles from the nearest port...

Can't pick myself up out of m' bunk, Matt. Hot... fever... chills. I'm sick...

I'm fedin' the whale, Cap'n Starke. He's been followin' us all mornin'.

I'd seen whales before but never so close as that great bull sperm. He kept up with the ship... openin' his yawnin' cave of a mouth to let the garbage in...

I know the symptoms... the scaly skin, poisonin' of the blood, and that cough. That's when it's dangerous. The plague is in his lungs now. A man can catch it even talkin' t' him...

Feddin' the whale, Cap'n Starke. He's seen followin' us all mornin', I see?

It was almost dawn when my first mate returned to the ship, exhausted but pleased with himself. He'd hunted down and gotten what he wanted. He'd gotten more than he wanted! It took two days, then broke out...

At the mention of the dread, highly contagious disease, the crew paled and shuddered as one man. It was part of my plan lettin' them know... remindin' them. But one day, they found somethin' else to occupy their minds. I found 'em tossin' garbage overboard...

What're you makin' doin'?

I'd seen whales before but never so close as that great bull sperm. He kept up with the ship... openin' his yawnin' cave of a mouth to let the garbage in...

What kept Ben Harper alive, I'll never know. Maybe he was racin' against death just to see Eileen once more. Anyhow, the next few days were tense ones and I tried to relax by tossin' chunks of moldy seef and other refuse to the whale tailin' us...

The whale stayed with us. Sometimes he'd roll and dive and we wouldn't see him for hours. Then somebodi'd yell, "Thar 'e blows!" and he'd be back chasin' another garbage feast...

To see whales before but never so close as that great bull sperm. He kept up with the ship... openin' his yawnin' cave of a mouth to let the garbage in...
At night I'd go out on deck, breathin' in the salty warm Pacific Air, and I'd think about me and Eileen. I was thinkin' of her the night one of the men came a-runnin' and screamin'...

"And then, I saw him! Ben was a walkin' death... his body a mass of black rot... small spongy chunks droppin' away with each stiff staggerin' step he took. His clothes were a tattered stinkin' mess of greenish ooze and congealed black blood. My dinner came up sour in my throat..."

I hollered for spotlights as he stumbled across the deck... men came runnin' with gaffs, their faces twisted in disgust. Ben kept shufflin'... comin' towards me...

Get him over the side, ya bilge lice! Dump him before he has us all wastin' away with the black rot!

They tried hookin' their gaffs into Ben, but the tips came away with horrible gobs of foul-smellin' rotted flesh. They tried shovin' with the poles. Ben got cut in two by the rail, with no more sound than if he'd been a jellyfish, as he went overboard...

BY MORNIN', I FELT BETTER ABOUT THE WHOLE THING. WE'D LEFT WHAT WAS LEFT OF BEN HUNDREDS OF MILES BEHIND US AND I'D COMMITTED A MURDER NOBODY'D BE ABLE TO PIN ON ME. I HAD MY MIND ON LOVELY EILEEN WHEN TOM BALLARD, MY SECOND MATE CALLED ME TO THE RAIL...

Our whale's still with us, Cap'n! That's right! But he's actin' queer... isn't he?

Ambergris! Floating gold! The spew of a sperm whale... needed for the best perfumes that foul-smellin', atty mess was worth a fortune!

Reverse engines! Prepare to lower away all boats! A hundred dollar bonus to each man who helps...

Let's get out of here, Cap'n! That stench is... choke...

NO NO, BY HEAVENS! That's whale spew. Ambergris!
I emptied a hundred barrels of my fuel oil cargo to hold my ambergris. A week later we docked in San Diego. Where I caught blazes from a Port Health Official... but not until after I disposed of the ambergris.

Eileen Harper comes out of her room now, grinning idiotically... The black spongy, rotting flesh dropping from her face. The white bone gleaming through here and there. Captain Starke screams in horror at the sight and stench of her.

Why not, Matt? It's such a lovely-smelling perfume, darling.

The perfume maker not only paid me sixty-two thousand bucks for my ambergris, but also sent me a flagon of the scent made from it, when I finally got out of quarantine, I brought it to Eileen.

I don't want to hear how Ben died, Matt! All I know is you are here... that's all that matters!

Here, baby! Here's enough perfume to bathe in! And it's only the beginning.

Ben! That blasted whale must have swallowed the black-rotted diseased remains of Ben Harper! That's why he threw up!

Eileen! Eileen, open up! Quick! Don't use that perfume, Eileen! Don't use it!

Heh, heh! And that's the lead-off yarn, yelp-hounds. Did you notice that Eileen really didn't like the perfume Matt gave her? Didn't you see the way her face dropped! Well, I got a date with my editors to play a game of Hearts. We use real dice. I'll be back later with another terror tome. Now I'll turn you over to the Vault-keeper. By the way, the whale in this yarn was sorry he brought the whole thing up. 'Bye now!'
You're name is Barney Hoag. You've always craved solitude and how you've found it on this bleak, lonely, windswept, sun-tortured Florida Key. This grim acre of unpeopled paradise, you guide your old car into a sandy, bristling palmetto patch, and you unload your gear...

It's...it's like another world. My own private world! It's just what I've been looking for!

Sweltering in a sea of sweat, sagging under the load of fishing tackle, bait box, food hamper and gallon jug of water, you find temporary relief in the shade of gaunt, long-needle pines as you trudge toward the glaring white beach.
You pass a line of silent palms left leaning landward by some long ago violent wind that had once roared by. And, unloading your equipment onto the burning sand, you study the curiously-shaped grotesque mangrove trees, their exposed snakelike roots intertwining, growing from the brine at the shore.

Beyond, the turquoise Atlantic rests tranquilly between tides. Soon, hook baited, feet bared, you tread far out over the sand and coral bottom before reaching knee-high water. You begin to surf-cast and all is peace and quiet except for the sound of a fish nearby, leaping from the sea.

You turn at the sound and see no fish, but an almost-naked, bearded, berry-grown old man with grey hair down to his shoulders emerge from the depths and make his way toward the beach.

Then, Barney Hoag, you swear under your breath... because you are no longer alone. Your solitude is gone. You begin to reel in... to leave in disgust... when you feel the sudden, strong tugging on your line...

You stand, staring, as he moves soundlessly across the sand to the broken hulk of an ancient vessel that had been tossed, half-hidden, among the palms. As you wonder why you hadn't noticed this grizzled wreck before, the old man vanishes into it through a crude doorway cut into its rotting side.

You pack and leave your shattered paradise, gratified at least, that the old man hadn't seen you and subjected you to endless, boring talk. Suddenly, a long black shadow falls across your path. A thin, piping voice brings you up short...

The fish breaks water, struggling to spit out the hook and you see that it is a barracuda. Finally, you bring the vicious scoundrel of the sea to land. You stare down at your gasping catch, shiver at the sight of its bared rip-saw teeth...

Devil! Well, you're through scaring away good-eating fish!

Git! Git off from this propitii, mistuh! You don't belong here!
You turn now, Barney, facing the brizzled old man. Nude, except for a tattered filthy pair of duck pants that reek of dead fish, he points a rusty, aged musket at your chest...

You heered me, Mistuh! I come fust to this promity, so it's mine! Now bit, 'fore I blast yuh clean t' kingdom come!

There's a cold glint in his ice-blue eyes, and his sun-bronzed cross-hatched skin draws taut across his jaws. You relent in the face of the weapon in the old man's tightened grip and you move off angrily through the pines...

Boiling with resentment, you stow your gear into your car, then you gaze back towards the beach, unwilling to bow to the old one's ill will...

He bluffed me away, but I'm not leaving!

You pick up the glittering object. You study it, turning it over in your hand...

What...what's that? On the sand! It looks like a...a...

Slowly, silently, stealthily you make your way back to the barnacle and salt-encrusted wooden carcases of half a once-proud vessel. You're filled with vindictiveness and curiosity. You stop outside the rotted door. A metallic gleam catches your eye...

Your fright of this frizzled old man with the ancient weapon gives way to anger at having been cheated of your longed-for solitude...

I was going, you dirty old coot...but now I got a mind to stay! Try stayin', Mistuh, an' I'll be cuttin' yuh up fer shark bait!

I'll show that old crank. I'll burn 'im out. I'll set fire to that filthy wreck he lives in and I'll burn him out for good!

It is! It's a gold coin! Real gold!
Your first reaction is to get away with your prize. You hurry, stumbling, to your car. The ancient gold doubloon clutched tightly in your sweaty palm. You drive hastily off the lonely key speeding northward across the Overseas Highway bridges...

Maybe this coin's been there all the time and the old coot never noticed it...

You ease up on the gas, you stop running. You think some more as you cruise slowly northward. Soon, you reach another key, roll up to an eatery there, and walk towards it...

What if the lunatic is sitting on a fortune in gold? What good would it do him? He's too old to enjoy it!

Your arrival at the Overseas Eats key lime pie beer bait & tackle... You sit at a fly-flecked counter... staring at the menu, hardly seeing it.

Quiet whisperings in the pines accompany your slow approach to the beach. The elegiac chirps of cicadas surround you. Within, you feel the rapid thumping of your heart. A rising gibbous moon lights your way to the sad Hulk among the palms or the beach...

Isn't that ridiculous, Barney? Think again. That's it! Now you've got it...

...Or maybe. Maybe he's got more hidden in that wreck? A fortune in gold... maybe...

What if the lunatic is sitting on a fortune in gold? What good would it do him? He's too old to enjoy it!

And who'd believe him if he babbles to the law about his gold being missing? For that matter, who'd miss the old man?

Quiet whisperings in the pines accompany your slow approach to the beach. The elegiac chirps of cicadas surround you. Within, you feel the rapid thumping of your heart. A rising gibbous moon lights your way to the sad Hulk among the palms or the beach...

So, Barney Hoag, greed and determination etch themselves into your face as you make your decision...

I'm going back there... What'll it be, Mister? And if he's got more gold, I'm going to get it!
NOW YOU ARE THERE, BARNEY, YOUR HEAVY BREATHING BLENDING WITH THE BREEZE BLOWN PALM FRONDS THAT SOUND SO MUCH LIKE A SUMMER SHOWER, AND WITH THE GENTLE LAPPING OF THE SURF UPON THE NEARBY SHORE. A SOFT ORANGE LIGHT GLEAMS THROUGH A CRACK IN THE DOOR.

YOU PEER IN.

YOU SEE HIM IN THE FLICKERING CANDLE GLOW, HIS MAD EYES GLEAMING AS HE LETS A TRICKLE OF GOLD COINS FALL THROUGH HIS GNARLED FINGERS INTO A WOODEN BOX ON THE ROUGH TABLE AT WHICH HE SITS. THE FAINT CHING OF CLINKING METAL INVITES YOU IN.

THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE, BARNEY? SLAM OPEN THE DOOR! THAT'S IT! SCARED ALMOST OUT OF HIS WITS, THE OLD MAN DROPS HIS TREASURE INTO A DIRTY WRINKLED CLOTH AND BALLS IT UP IN HIS TREMBLING HANDS.

YEWW, WHAT ARE YOU TALKIN' 'BOUT, MISTHUN? WHAT YUH WANT HERE?

YOU STEP TOWARD HIM. THE OLD MAN DROPS HIS RAG-WRAPPED TREASURE OF DOUBLOONS TO THE FLOOR. THEN, BENDING AS THOUGH TO RETRIEVE THEM, HE COMES UP AGAIN. THE RUSTED OLD MUSKET IN HIS BONY PAWS POINTED AT YOUR HEAD.

SEE, MISTHUN? I'VE BEEN WAITIN' FOR YUH FOR YEARS! I KNOW'D YUH COME AN' TRY AN' STEAL MY TREASURE, SO I PREPARED, I PREPARED EV'YTHIN'.

NO' WAT? ODN'T YOU'RE DAID NOW, MISTHUN! I DONE SHOT YUH GADO! AN' NOW I GOTTA BURY YUH, I BEEN READY! I

WHY, YOU. YOU'RE CRAZY AS A BEDBUG, YOU SMELLY OLD GOAT!

YOU LEAP AT HIM, BRINGING THE IRON JACKHANDLE DOWN ON HIS SKULL, FEELING THE CRUSHING OF BONE.

I'M PREPARED! I UNHNNNG 666

AGAIN AND AGAIN YOU STRIKE, UNTIL HE SINKS LIFELESS TO THE FLOOR. THEN, ONE MORE TERRIBLE BLOW AS HE LIES THERE, JUST TO MAKE SURE, AND HIS BRAINS SCATTER ABOUT THE WORM-EATEN SCABROUS

YOU PICK UP THE BUNDLE AND EMPTY THE COINS INTO THE MISER'S BOX—THROWING THE RAG AWAY.

THE FAINT CHING OF CLINKING METAL INVITES YOU IN.
THERE MUST BE MORE? "THERE'S GOT TO BE MORE? THAT'S WHAT HE WAS DOIN' WHEN HE WAS COMIN' OUT OF THE WATER. HE WAS BRINGING BACK THESE COINS FROM THE SUNKEN HALF OF THE WRECK! IT'S OUT THERE!"

BUT YOU'VE GOT IT ALL, BARNEY, AND KNOWING THAT, YOU SAG TO THE FLOOR, SICK AND TIRED WITH DISAPPOINTMENT. BUT THE OLD MAN'S PIECE OF DIRTY CLOTH CATCHES YOUR EYE... DOTTEO LINE... MARKED "110 YAROS"... TO A BIG "X"... FROM A LINE MARKED "LOW TIDE"... AND AN ARROW MARKED "N"! BY GAD! IT'S A MAP!

WELL, I'LL BE... IT'S A TREASURE MAP THE OLD MAN MADE. IT MUST BE WHERE THE OTHER HALF OF THIS SHIP IS. THAT'S WHAT IT MUST BE! YEAH! SURE! A PIRATE SHIP, BROKEN IN TWO BY A HURRICANE! HALF SUNK! HALF WASHED A Shore... THIS HALF!

THAT'S WHAT HE WAS DOIN' WHEN HE WAS COMIN' OUT OF THE WATER. HE WAS BRINGING BACK THESE COINS FROM THE SUNKEN HALF OF THE WRECK! IT'S OUT THERE!

SLOWLY, BARNEY, SLOW NOW THINK IT OUT. YOU'RE ON TO SOMETHING. JUST THINK IT OUT CAREFULLY. BLOW OUT THE OLD MAN'S LANTERN THAT'S IT! NOW GO OUTSIDE. LOOK OUT THERE... AT THE SEA...

I'M NOT MUCH OF AN UNDERWATER SWIMMER! BUT I MAY BE ABLE TO RENT A DIVING SUIT SOMEWHERE! YEAH! I'LL DRIVE TO KEY WEST...

SO YOU DRIVE ALL NIGHT, BARNEY, AND YOU'RE IN KEY WEST WHEN DAWN LIGHTS THE SKY. BY LATE AFTERNOON, YOU'RE BACK AT THE "OLD MAN'S KEY" WITH A DIVING SUIT, ENOUGH HOSE TO GO OUT 110 YAROS, A GASOLINE-DRIVEN COMPRESSOR, THE WORKS. BREATHING WITH EXCITEMENT, YOU TAKE A SPACED REPEATER AND START PACING OUT INTO THE SURF.

DEEPER AND DEEPER YOU GO... OUT UNDER THE ROLLING BREAKERS, OUT INTO THE SEA. AND THE SEA IS ALIVE AROUND YOU, BARNEY. ALIVE AND FRIGHTENING...
You go out past the map's 110 yards and the sea around you is full of wonders, Barney. But no broken pirate hull. No submerged half-hulk do you see...

I must've been crazy to take that old coot's map seriously!

With your space, you scrape off the green algae and moss and slime. And you turn cold, staggering back in a frenzy at what you see...

No! No! Good Lord!

Pinning you down into the hole you've dug... pinning you down into your grave. For you know that before long, the gas in the compressor out on the shore will run out and the air will be gone and you'll suffocate, the old man. The crazy old man! He was right! He did know! He was prepared! The letters cut into the marker laugh at you.

There, six fathoms down, before the algae and moss-encrusted marker, you begin to dig. You dig down and you dig out... an oblong, empty hole with no coins, no chest, nothing. You climb out, bitter with frustration...

Maybe the marker shows which side to dig on. I'll just scrape off the slime...

Your airline fouls around the marker, stopping you from running, terrorized, you yank at the rubber tube. The marker tilts forward, slowly... falling as if in slow motion.

Heh, heh! Like they say, kiddies! Barney dug his hole... now he's dying in it. He thirsted after gold and settled for a bellyful of salt water. Well, that's my treasure-terror-tale for this issue of O.K.'s Morbid Mag. Now I'll turn you back to him for a tale about a blonde flirt who finally made some dessert. Curious? Good! I'll see you next in my mag, the Vault of Horror... bye, now!
With the cardboard carton propped against the wall, Ed Grant pressed the door buzzer: chimes rang inside the apartment and footsteps scurried toward him. The safety latch scraped open, the door swung wide and Ed Grant stepped into the apartment, pushing the carton in front of him. "What... what's this?" the woman asked in surprise, pointing to the carton.

"Delivery," Ed Grant answered, kicking the door shut with his heel. He slipped the latch into place and dumped the carton on the floor. "B-But I didn't order any..." the woman protested. Then she saw the gun Ed Grant held. "You... a..."

"A guy working his way through college," Ed Grant said flatly. "Don't make me flunk you on this test, lady... I want all the cash and jewelry you got here!"

Grant heard a high-pitched voice coming along the corridor from one of the bedrooms, and he turned warily. A tow-headed five-year-old careened into the room, deeply involved in banking an imaginary aircraft he was piloting. He stopped in his tracks, his mouth gapping. "Hey!" he whinnied. "Who's this, mom?"

"L-Look, mister," the woman pleaded. "We don't have much money, see? My husband's only a lab assistant at the chemical plant on River Street. He just got outa school himself, and..."

"Can it!" Ed Grant snapped. 'C'mon... the CASH! Where's it at?"

The kid, who had sauntered over to the foyer table, suddenly pulled a cap pistol from a toy holster slung over the chair and whirled toward Ed Grant. His finger squeezed the trigger and his high-pitched voice exploded in a series of raucous gunshot sounds. Ed Grant started at the sound, then began to laugh deep in his throat. "The kid's a lil' whacky, ain't he?" he snickered. Then, nudging her toward the kitchen with his gun, he added, "Let's find that dough, sister!"

While the woman nervously pulled a purse from a kitchen drawer, the kid grabbed a tiny telephone buried in a toy box and yelped into the receiver. "Sheriff! Amble over here pronto! Varmint's robbin' my mom!"

Ed Grant tilted his head far back, opened his mouth and roared with delight till tears came to his eyes. For several minutes he shook with uncontrolled mirth. Subsiding slowly, he wiped his eyes with the back of his hand. "The lil' nut," he chortled. "A real character, ain't he? Right outa television!"

The kid's face clouded and he ran from the room. A moment later, as Ed Grant peered into the purse he had grabbed, the boy returned. He held a small water pistol. Ed turned, started to guffaw again. "Jerko, here," he exploded. "A reg'lar half-pint hero, ain't he?"

The boy's face tightened, he squeezed the trigger and a stream of smoky fluid sprayed into Ed Grant's face. He dropped his gun and a shriek of horror poured from Ed Grant's scared lips. He staggered backwards, his eyesockets raw cavities where the eyeballs had just been burnt out of his head. One trembling hand went to his face... passed over the runned flesh, which, was curling away with a bubbling sound, revealing stark yellowish bones beneath. Ed Grant shrieked in agony, his face already a ghastly oozing wound. He sagged to the floor.

The boy felt his mother's arm tugging him sharply, as she yanked the water pistol from him. "Just wait till I tell your daddy what you just did!" she snapped. "He told you a hundred times never to fill your gun with his sulfuric acid!"
NOW...IF YOU JOIN...YOU GET THE BULLETIN...FREE!

ER... YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS WAS LISTED IN THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB BULLETIN. YOU, YOU GOT BACK ISSUES?!

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* * * * * * *

FOR AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP, WHICH INCLUDES KIT AND FREE SUBSCRIPTION, FILL OUT THE COUPON AND SEND IT IN, TOGETHER WITH 50¢. IF FIVE OR MORE OF YOU WANT TO JOIN AS AN AUTHORIZED CHAPTER, ENCLOSE EACH MEMBER'S NAME AND ADDRESS ALONG WITH 50¢ FOR EACH NAME AND INDICATE THE NAME OF THE ELECTED CHAPTER PRESIDENT. WE WILL NOTIFY EACH PRESIDENT OF HIS CHAPTER NUMBER. EACH MEMBER, CHAPTER OR INDIVIDUAL, WILL RECEIVE HIS KIT DIRECTLY... PLUS EACH ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN AS IT COMES OFF THE PRESS.

* (SO WHO'S GONNA FROST THE BULLETS FOR THE BULLETINS, US!?)

(SURE WE HAD TO RAISE THE PRICE! SO SUE US!)

THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
ROOM 106
225 LAFAYETTE STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y.

So here's my 50¢! So I could've joined for half the price a couple of months back. So now I get a bulletin subscription. So who says I want it. So I'm a sucker. So put me down and send me the stuff what the kid's wearing and the bulletin I don't want but I'm paying for...

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY
STATE
ZONE NO.

* (NO 25¢ MEMBERSHIP WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER JUNE 1, 1954)

(0) (0) (0) (0) (0) (0)
THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Heb, heh! Here comes our morbid mailman with the latest rack of sordid stamped squares containing crude correspondence from you creeps. So I'll just stick my honey paw into the 'YEEEBOWWW' Hmmmph! Very funny! Somebody sent a large scorpion in a small envelope. A stinging truck! Where was I? Oh, yes... so I'll just stick a pair of tweezers into the old mail sack and press a few poems and stuff for your perusal.

Imre Horvath of The Bronx, N.Y. pays this Putrid Parody to the tune of 'I'm Looking Over A Four Leaf Clover':

I'm running you over With a sharp lawn mower That I never used before. The first blade's for chopping The second will hack, The third will disjoin Your head from your neck. No need explaining, The one remaining You won't hear anymore I'm running you over With a sharp lawn mower That I never used before.

From the creative claw of John M. Guite who lives in a box in Waterville, Me comes this Scary Song Sugar of the tune 'Heart of my Hearts':

Part of my heart, I love that arthone Part of my heart, Bring back a vein to me When we were kids On the corner of the street We were rough and ready guys, But oh, how we could handle knives Part of my heart Meant friends were getter then Too bad we had to part I know a tear would glister If once more I could listen To that gang that are part of my heart.

This next Ludicrous Lyric is the brainwork of Conrad J. Polk, of Chicago, Ill who pokes fun at the tune 'Singing in the Rain' with these warped words.

I'm swinging, swinging in the rain, Just swinging in the rain What a ghastly old feeling, My neck's stretched again My eyes bulge with pain, As I gargle this refrain I'm swinging, swinging in the rain

Clara Etelle Crossland of McKeesport, Pa. who claims to be a poet in the strictly artistic sense of the word, submits this lovely little sentiment to pluck your heart strings:

My boyfriend is a charming thing I love him 'cause he is so sweet One side of his ugly face is gone, The other hangs with rotten meat

Raymond Newman of Chicago, Ill writes these poetic wishes:

Oh, for the life of a vampire, That's what I really crave To prowl the face of earth at night, And sleep each day in a grave

John Neubokwits of Maspeth, N.Y. desires his face with this gem:

Blood and Guts All over the street, And me without A spoon to eat

Paul Block and Douglas Tuchman (they had to collaborate on this epic, yet) of Elmhurst, N.Y. knock a famous nursery rhyme with:

Hickory Dickory Dock The man went down the croc

Well, enough art Now for a letter.

Dear Crypt Keeper,
I was walking down the street reading my latest E.C., when all of a sudden there was a scream, a scream, and a man lay on the road. He had been hit by a car. The car sped away. I ran over to see what I could do. The man lay there and said, 'I'm dying! Help me!' So I helped him. My sentence is going to be carried out next Monday.

Bob Wilson
Niagara Falls, N.Y.

And now, in the space left, the commercials. A subscription to this mag will set you back $1.00 for eight issues. manila envelopes - and all that rat. The address for all orders, poetry, comments, and criticism is:

The Crypt-Keeper
Room 706, Dept. 44
225 Lafayette Street
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.
Here's a terror-tale of a chick who finally wormed the proposal.

Pearl had always liked living in the best of style... with fine clothes, jewelry, a Park Avenue apartment, and a chauffeured Cadillac. And Pearl had always managed to find rich husbands who would be willing to keep her in the style to which she'd become accustomed, like Freddy Howell, for instance. Freddy Howell was Pearl's latest rich-husband-bankroll. He was, that is, until he announced...

We're through, Pearl. I'm going back to my wife. Gasp! Why, you cheap no-good...

Now, Freddy was gone. Pearl had lost another bill-paying husband, and the wolf was at the penthouse door. Pearl was desperate. A dozen desperate plans were formulated in her pretty red head and discarded before she remembered the quiet, gentle, lonely man across the hall...

Of course! He must have money, or he couldn't afford to live in this glorified cave. He'll be a pushover for little Pearl...

She wrapped her flimsy black negligee around her shapely figure and stepped boldly into the hall as Howard Ellis locked his apartment door behind him and turned to the elevator...

I beg your pardon, but do you have the time on my watch seems to have stopped... It's gulp. It's nine-thirty!
Pearl inwardly cursed the high speed conveyance that had rushed upward through the steel throat of the building and interrupted her progress. She turned and glided back to her apartment as the elevator doors closed. She closed the door, leaned distractedly against it, and frowned.

I wonder if I overplayed my hand walking out like this? I wouldn't want him to think I'm a cheap female on the prowl. He looks so proper and prudish, I wouldn't stand a chance if he thought that!

She stopped at the desk, her mind racing... scheming, planning her next move. She fingered the disposable notice she'd received in the morning mail... they'd given me a week to fork over three hundred dollars rent, or out on the street I go. And I haven't got it... I haven't got half that much!

Then Pearl grinned, she walked slowly across the living room, her voluptuous figure swaying sensuously...

But he is a man! He's got all of the instincts of a man. I'll bet he can't get me off his mind!

Pearl pondered her problem another moment and then, with her lovely face assuming a determined air, she hurried into the bedroom to dress...

Mr. Howard Ellis is my only out! I've got to get him... one way or the other!

The elevator operator eyed her up and down and grinned lasciviously when she asked him the information she needed. It was obvious he'd heard of her plight... I'd like to find out what Mr. Ellis does for a living? What firm he works for? Why don't you find out what I can do, instead, honey?
Pearl knew when to act haughty and ignominious. Under other circumstances, the elevator operator might have aroused her interests, but now...

Why, you fresh...

She stood proud and triumphant as she ran his beet-red cheek where she'd slapped it. Then, she coldly repeated...

I asked you if he knew Mr. Ellis's business! I think he was his own firm!

Pearl crossed the lobby to the phone booths and scanned the city directory...

Ellen...Eller...Ellis, ah, here it is! Howard Ellis and Associates, Inc., stock brokers, investment counselors, 231 Wall Street...

Outside the luxurious apartment, Pearl contemplated hailing a cab, then considered her waning finances, and walked up the side street to the subway. She rode uncomfortably in the crowded roaring chasm, her dainty nose twitching scornfully at the suffocating scent of the humanity surrounding her. She tried to lose herself in her plan of strategy...

I'll wait for him outside the building at lunch hour. Of course it will be an accidental meeting...

At noon, Pearl was at the entrance to 231 Wall Street, her campaign for the conquest of the unsuspecting Mr. Ellis crystal-clear in her mind...

I'll con him into taking me to lunch and he'll see I'm no cheap dame! He'll see I got high-class tastes! He'll...on-oh! Here he comes...and here I go...

I beg your pardon, ma'am! I didn't see... I'm sorry! It was all my fault! I...why, it's Mr. Ellis!

Mr. Ellis! This is a coincidence, running into you like this. Oh, but you don't recognize me in my clothes, do you? I mean these clothes. Remember this morning? Pearl Drake? The penthouse apartment across the hall?

No, it was all my fault?
Before Howard could object, Pearl steered him to a taxi, took his hand, and led him into it after her...

You do remember! Well, I owe you something for being so kind this morning, Mr. Ellis. I'm taking you to lunch, the Plaza, driver!

By the time they'd plowed uptown through the traffic and arrived at the swank Plaza dining room, Pearl's ebullient disposition has warmed the shy millionaire...

The Plaza! But that's way uptown, Miss Drake...

Vichy soisse, Howard, and the roast pheasant under glass sounds delicious. Have you got that, waiter? I'll have a ham sandwich on whole wheat toast and a glass of milk...

Through the meal, Pearl carefully encouraged Howard. By dessert, he was struggling to say something. Byousse-cafe, he'd finally summoned up the courage to put his hand on hers and blurt...

Pearl...gulp... may I take you to dinner and a show... tonight? Oh, I'd adore that, Howard!

And that night, after their date, they returned to the penthouse floor of the lush Park Avenue apartment house. Pearl opened her door and spoke temptingly in a soft honeyed tone...

Won't you come in for I have a board meeting in the morning and I must get to bed...

So after a quick "goodnight", Pearl found herself alone in her apartment, frustrated and annoyed...

I must be losing my touch...

But Howard Ellis phoned Pearl the next day from his office and her confidence in her eventual success was restored...

Well, Pearl? What? It's such a lovely night, Howie, I'd rather not be indoors. Let's take a Hansom through the park!

Pearl knew where to find atmosphere congenial to romance. The ride through the park in the Hansom was just what the doctor had ordered. Soon, Howard was holding her hand and whispering softly...

It is a lovely night, Pearl... but why, Howard... not nearly as lovely as you are!
Soon they were back outside her apartment. Pearl leaned against her door, fingering Howard's coat lapel and gently drawing him against her quivering body... whispering...

Pearl was an old hand at this game of trapping a man. She knew how to press her advantage... how to move her soft full-lips close to his inviting:

Oh, Pearl!

And she knew how to act shy and coy and surprised when he'd finally fallen into her little trap...

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to... I shouldn't have done that... I'm very fond of you!

She kissed him with moist ravishing hungry lips. She kissed him as she knew he'd never been kissed before, and then she left him standing there... limp... trembling... gasping for breath. She locked the door between them and stood in the darkness of her apartment, grinning with satisfaction...

Once more like that and he'll be begging and it's better be soon! I've only got a few days left before I get kicked out!

It was warm the next evening. There was no moon and the sky hung dark overhead. Pearl could sense the deep tension in Howard as they walked home. She waited patiently. Finally, he stopped beneath a lamp post and he saw a new eager determined look in his eyes...

Pearl! I... I need you! I... want you!

Oh Howard! If you only knew how much I need you!

This was beyond Pearl's wildest dreams. Had she heard right? Was this a proposal? How it was Pearl! Howie had done that... I'm sorry, Pearl. I shouldn't have done that...

Howard, aren't you sure? You don't know me! I know you well enough to want you for my wife, Pearl!

She watched this wealthy mild-mannered pull himself together manfully. She listened, shocked, to the words he carefully enunciated in a firm, almost formal manner...

Pearl, I want you for my wife!

What?!
WILL YOU COME UP TO MY APARTMENT, PEARL?

ESTHER?

WHO'S SHE?

I BROUGHT ANOTHER ONE...

IT TOLD YOU I WANTED YOU FOR MY WIFE! NO! NO!

OH, LORD!

HOWARD PUSHED PEARL TOWARD THE FROTHING, CRAVING, HIDEOUS CREATURE.

I TOLD YOU I WANTED YOU FOR MY WIFE!

OH, LORD!

SO POOR PEARL FINALLY FOUND HER LAST HUSBAND-SUCKER! ONLY IN THIS CASE, IT WAS THE HUSBAND'S WIFE WHO WAS THE Sucker... BLOOD-SUCKER, THAT IS! HEH, HEH! WELL, THE OLD WITCH AWAITS WITH ANOTHER OF HER CREEPY CAULDRON-CONCOCTIONS SO I'LL STEP ASIDE... WHILE SHE SLINGS SLIME AT YOU. BY THE WAY, I HEAR SOME PEOPLE FINALLY JOINED THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB. THAT'S GOOD NEWS! I WAS BEGINNING TO BE AFRAID THE MEMBERSHIP WAS GOING TO BE LIMITED TO ER... THINGS, SHALL WE SAY? SEE NOW, PEOPLE TOO! WELl, WHAT'D'YA KNOW? "BYE!"
HEE, HEE! COME IN, CREEPS. YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT PLACE FOR RETCHING... THE HAUNT OF FEAR, AND... NON DIES? (THAT'S FRENCH, PIENOS!) HAVE I GOT A REVOLTING TALE FOR YOU. WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S COOKING IN MY CRUDDY CAST-IRON CAULDRON? WELL, YOUR OLD WITCH HAS A GORY SLAB OF GRISLY GAB ABOUT A TERROR TIME AND A FAST OPERATOR WHO BROUGHT A MESSY MATTER TO A HEAD AND CUT IT OFF THERE! SO WIPE THE DROOL FROM YOUR CHINS, BEND YOUR FLOPPY EARS THIS WAY, AND LISTEN TO THIS DELIGHTFUL TALE OF BUTCHERY CALLED—

The Sliceman Cometh

THAT 10TH OF MARCH, 1793, WAS GRIM AND GREY WITH RAIN THREATENING IN THE OMNIOUS BLACK CLOUDS THAT BILLOWED OVERHEAD. A RAW WIND howled furious about the crimson-stained guillotine, but it could not clear the befouled air of its abattoir aroma. Underfoot, cobblestones were slippery with concealing gore, while fresh warm blood bubbled in a constant flow down the gutters as the great blade hissed down again and again, heaping the basket with wide-eyed noble heads there, calmly stood the man of the hour, the executioner, ANDRE VACHE, amid the jeering, hooting, red-bonneted citizenry, reading an urgent message just handed to him...

'AND IF A THOUSAND GOLD LOUIS INTEREST YOU, THEN VISIT ME AT 48 RUE OUDUIS.' 'HMM! PIERRÉ, I MUST LEAVE! CARRY ON FOR ME, EH?'

AS ANDRE HURRIED AWAY FROM THE AWFUL SCENE... HIS BLOOD-SOAKED SHOES LEAVING RED IMPRINTS ON THE PAVING STONES—HE EAGERLY RE-READ THE NOTE HE'D RECEIVED...

A THOUSAND GOLD LOUIS! SACRE BLEU!
SOON, THE EXECUTIONER WAS BEING USHERED INTO A SPACIOUS ROOM OF 49 RUE DUBOIS BY A VENAL-LOOKING MAN WITH AN UNTACTIOUS MANNER ABOUT HIM.

AH, M'SIEU VACHE! I AM JEAN COURBEAU. IT IS A GREAT HONOR INDEED TO HAVE AN IMPORTANT AND DISTINGUISHED VISITOR AS YOU IN MY HOME.

YOU MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT ONE THOUSAND GOLD LOUIS, CITIZEN COURBEAU THAT IS WHY I AM HERE.

YOU WANTED ME TO RIDE YOU OF YOUR BROTHER, CITIZEN COURBEAU? SAPRISTI, YOU INSINUATE I WOULD MURDER A MAN... EVEN FOR THAT MUCH GOLD?

NOT MURDER, MON AMI, MERELY AN ACCUSATION TO THE RIGHT PARTIES AND THE HEAD OF ANOTHER ROYALIST SYMPATHIZER WOULD ROLL INTO YOUR BASKET.

AH, THAT IS A DIFFERENT STORY, M'SIEU COURBEAU. IF YOUR BROTHER IS ONE OF THEM... A ROYALIST THEN I WILL BE GLAD TO EXPOSE HIM. IT WOULD BE MY DUTY!

YOU ARE A WISE MAN, M'SIEU VACHE. DO NOT THINK I AM NOT FOND OF MY BROTHER, BUT THERE ARE TWO THINGS I LOVE MORE: FRANCE AND MONEY!

HERE IS HALF THE PAYMENT... 500 GOLD LOUIS. YOU WILL RECEIVE THE REST WHEN I HAVE PROOF THAT MY BROTHER HAS BEEN EXECUTED! SO MANY HEADS FALL THESE DAYS...

YOU SHALL HAVE UNDENIABLE EVIDENCE, CITIZEN COURBEAU. I WILL SEE TO IT! AND NOW, BON SOIR.

AND SO... THAT VERY DAY, ANDRE VACHE MADE HIS ACCUSATION...

I HAVE IT FROM HIS OWN BROTHER'S LIPS, CITIZEN MARAT! CLAUDE COURBEAU IS IN FULL SYMPATHY WITH THE NOBILITY, DESPISES THE NEWLY-FORMED REPUBLIC AND WOULD BETRAY IT AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY...
The next day, citizen Marat and six other judges of the Commune looked down coldly and impatiently at the accused...

I am not an enemy of the Revolution when an innocent man can be dragged from his home on the flimsiest of pretenses, accused of treason without a shred of evidence, and sent to the Guillotine by such a lie... then this is not a trial, but wanton butchery!

Citizen Marat held up his hand and a hush fell over the chamber. Then, scowling darkly at the accused, he whispered...

This is your defense, M'sieu Courbeau... that we are butchers because we destroy our enemies?

Andre Vache led Claude to the monstrous machine as knitting needles clicked and the throbbing jeered.

Somehow, you lying dog, justice will be done!

You delay the performance, M'sieu. Madam la Guillotine must not be kept waiting!

Citizen Marat raised his hand and dropped a square of black crepe and with this symbolic gesture, the crowd roared its approval...

The verdict, Claude Courbeau, is death on the Guillotine!

The red-bonneted crowd waited in tense silence as the heavy knife was hoisted high between the slotted parallel beams. Then, with a whining crescendo to accompany the razor-sharp blade's descent, the crowd exploded in a lusty cheer as it hit—cutting through flesh and bone, slamming into the block.
Andre caught Claude's head in a sack as hot blood spurted from the severed veins and arteries of the decapitated body, spraying his face and clothes. He held up the head-heavy sack with a triumphant grin. The crowd screamed...

He moved through the silent deserted streets, hearing the cheers from the guillotine square and thinking only of the gold he had earned. Before long, he arrived at 49 Rue du Bois...

You asked for proof, citizen Courbeau? Ah... you brought my brother's clothes?

Andre vache reached into the sack, pulled forth its contents, and held it dangling by the hair.

Better than that... I brought this? Look!

Jean Courbeau turned sickly green. He whimpered softly...

Take your money! Here! Gasp! Get... get it out of here! Choke... get rid of it!

Andre went light-heartedly through the evening streets; the gold jingling in his pockets, the sack swinging merrily at his side. A coach rumble by, and he playfully tossed the red-soaked bag through its window...

The coach stopped. A tall man got out and carried the gory bundle back to Andre...

Do you take our revolt so lightly that it amuses you to throw about the head of an enemy?

Take care, citizen! You speak to vache, master of the guillotine! And I, citizen vache, am master of France. Thorough pardons, your excellency!

The coach rumbled off and Andre walked on, determined to rid himself of the head, as he crossed one of the stone bridges he tossed it over the parapet.
Andre did not see the sack land in the bottom of a skiff that came from under the bridge arch. The head rolled out and the fishermen gasped.

Andre hurried out into the street with the blood-soaked bag. He stopped over a sewer-grate. .

Andre stood over the grinning head, hiding it from the cart-driver's view. .

I'm in no hurry, Vache! Let us stop for a drink! Our headless friends can wait!

Andre returned to his rooming house. He was greeted by his landlady, Madame Barette.

The head dropped to Andre's feet as it tore through the sack's blood-rotted bottom. The cloth disappeared into the dank-reeking darkness. Andre hesitated, stupidly, as an ox-cart, heaped with headless corpses, rounded the corner.

Andre hurried out into the street with the blood-soaked bag. He stopped over a sewer-grate. .

Eh, bien, Claude Courbeau! So they play games with us! Well, perhaps the rats down there will find you tempting. .

The head dropped to Andre's feet as it tore through the sack's blood-rotted bottom. The cloth disappeared into the dank-reeking darkness. Andre hesitated, stupidly, as an ox-cart, heaped with headless corpses, rounded the corner.

Andre stood over the grinning head, hiding it from the cart-driver's view. .

I'm in no hurry, Vache. Let me alone, Bodin! Go bury your foul-smelling dead!

Andre hurried out into the street with the blood-soaked bag. He stopped over a sewer-grate. .

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I'm in no hurry, Vache. Let me alone, Bodin! Go bury your foul-smelling dead!
The executioner came upon a market open late and lit dimly by oil lamps. He passed the stalls of fruits and vegetables and smiled at the joke he made... 

Claude Courbeau's head grinned up at André from among the vegetables Madam Barette emptied out onto the kitchen table...

The landlady moaned and turned away, sick André, shaking uncontrollably, flung open the shutters and threw the gargoyles-like skull into the dark street below...

A moment later, Monsieur Etienne, another boarder, entered... on his sour face, a look more of pathos than anger... in his hand, the head... it is not that you struck me with this, vache! It is that you have so little respect for the dead that worts... 

André fumed, the blood draining from his face. He seized a cleaver from the table... then turned and snatched the head from Monsieur Etienne... I'll destroy it! I'll chop it to bits! There'll be no head to return when I'm through with it!
An hour passed. Paris was asleep. The night was still, except for an ox-cart that rumbled by below. Andre stirred at its noise and sat up. He listened to the front door open, the heavy dragging footsteps on the stairs. The knob of his own door turned... and then...

Andre stumbled to his room and with a rage that verged on madness, he kneeled on the floor and hacked at the lifeless flesh and bone until he'd reduced it into an unrecognizable heap of mince-meat.

Now, let's see you come back! Now! NOW!

Then, weak and exhausted, his intestines roiling and quivering like jelly, the executioner sank on his bed in a coma-like stupor.

The headless corpse stumbled toward Andre, its hand gesturing toward its neck, pointing...

Your head? You've come for your head? Oh, Lord... Cho! I can't give it to you there... on the floor... there is what's left of it.

The decapitated body hesitated, as if bewildered as to what to do. Then it dragged forward again... reaching for Andre... reaching... reaching...

No! No! Keep away-y-y-y-y-y...

Madame Barette heard the ear-splitting scream that echoed through her boarding house and rushed to Andre's room with a candle. But as she reached the door, it opened. The body of Claude Courbeau stumbled out, and on its shoulders, crimson dripping from its torn and ruptured blood vessels, sat the savagely torn-off head of Andre Vache.

Hee, hee! Well, that's one way to get ahead in the world, eh, kiddies! And now, it's time to close E.C.'s Muck-Mag for this issue. Hope you weren't gored stiff. We'll all see you next in the Vault of Horror when we'll be heading back your way with more top horror yarns! Till then, think about joining the E.C. Fan-Addict Club! Don't be a sucker and do it! Just think about it!
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I Can Make YOU a New Man, Too, In Only 15 Minutes a Day!

CHARLES ATLAS
"The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

PEOPLE used to laugh at my skinny, shorn body. I was ashamed to strip for sports or for a swim. Girls made fun of me behind my back, THEN I discovered my body-building system, "Dynamic Tension." It made me such a complete specimen of manhood that I held the title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

What's My Secret?

When you look in the mirror and see a healthy, husky, fellow smiling back at you — then you'll be astonished at how fast "Dynamic Tension" GETS RESULTS! It is the easy, NATURAL method and you can practice it in the privacy of your own room — JUST 15 MINUTES EACH DAY. Just watch your scrawny chest and shoulder muscles begin to swell... those spindly arms and legs of yours bulge... and your whole body starts to feel "alive," full of zip and go!

Thousands are becoming husky — my way. I give you no gadgets to fool with. With "Dynamic Tension," you simply utilize the dormant muscle-power in your own body — watch it grow and multiply into real, solid LIVE MUSCLE.

FREE My 32-Page Illustrated Book Is Yours — Not for $1.00 or 10¢ — But FREE

Send for my book, Everlasting Health and Strength 32 pages of photos, valuable advice Shows what Dynamic Tension can do, answers vital questions! A real prize for any fellow who wants a better build. I'll send you a copy FREE. It may change your whole life. Rush coupon to me personally. Charles Atlas, Dept 164 F, 115 E. 23rd Street, New York 10, N.Y.

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Send me Absolutely FREE — a copy of your Instruction Book Everlasting Health and Strength — 32 pages saturated with photographs showing vital questions, and valuable advice. This book is mine to keep, and mailing for it does not obligate me in any way.