UGH! WHAT A MESS!

BUT THEY'LL NEVER THINK OF

LOOKING FOR A FRESH CORPSE IN

THE COFFIN OF A MAN WHO

DIED IN 1867!
Artist of the Issue—WALLY WOOD

Wallace Allan Wood was born June 17, 1927 in Menahga, Minnesota, to a lumberjack father and a schoolteacher mother. With an ancestry of Finnish, Scots-Irish, and five other nationalities, Wally had, in his youth, brown hair, blue eyes, and an extremely slight stature.

During World War II, Wally joined the Merchant Marine and sailed to Eniwetok, Ulithi, the Philippines, South America, and Italy. After leaving the Merchant Marine, he enlisted in the Paratroopers and was stationed in Japan as a member of the 11th Airborne. Upon being discharged, he attended the New York Cartoonists and Illustrators School. Aside from this one short bit of training, most of Wally’s art ability came from innate talent and self-teaching. He broke into the comic field by becoming a letterer and quickly moved up to assisting established artists. It soon became apparent that Woody was capable of fairing nicely in the field on his own, and he made the fatal plunge. As Wally put it, “After being exploited by nearly everyone in the business, I finally found my home at good old E.C.”

When E.C. gave up comics entirely and concentrated on MAD the magazine, Woody became the star artist, adept at caricature and every assignment he was given. But he was ambitious to design and develop his own features, so went from the secure haven with Gaines and MAD to create his own characters and even his own magazine, Witzend, which introduced original creations by others in the field as well and became one of the first publications that led to the alternative press. Ahead of its time, there was no marketing strategy for such a curious title then, whereas today a direct distribution system supports dozens of independent publishers and a healthy industry eager to confront a new century.

During the 60’s and 70’s, Wood created many unique and successful characters including the Thunder Agents, Animan, Bucky Ruckus, The Misfits, Cannon, Sally Forth, and the whole cast of the Wizard King, an expansive fantasy world that he personally published as one of the first graphic novels.

For Marvel, he redesigned Daredevil and helped establish that character as a long-lived superhero for that company. For DC, he was the original artist on a variety of characters, as well as an important contributor to their MAD-inspired title, PLOP.

But somehow, he was always measured against his brilliant early masterworks for E.C., and finished his career on a downward path, disappointed by the unfulfilled promise of his past achievements, disabled by deteriorating health, dead by his own hand at the age of 52.

—Bill Pearson

The Haunt of Fear No. 2, July 1991. Published b-monthly by Gladstone Publishing, Ltd., 212 S. Montezuma, Prescott, AZ 86303 Application to mail at second class postage rates is pending at Prescott, AZ and additional mailing offices. Entire contents ©1991 by William M. Gaines, Agent. The Haunt of Fear No. 5 ©1978 by William M. Gaines, Agent, 1950 by Fables Publishing Co., Inc. Weird Science-Fantasy No. 29 ©1963 by William M. Gaines, Agent, 1955 by Fables Publishing Co., Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing herein contained may be reproduced without the written permission of William M. Gaines, New York, New York. Annual subscription rate $12.00 for six issues, $17.00 Canadian and foreign, payable in U.S. funds. Printed in the U.S.A. Postmaster: send address changes to The Haunt of Fear, P.O. Box 2078, Prescott, AZ 86302.
He could hear them now! The shouting of the enraged posse as they cursed through the brush... The slobbering bloodhounds' scent strong in their nostrils...

"The old house? If I can get... Gasp... there before they catch me... Gasp... I can escape..."

Suddenly the house loomed up ahead! Its rotted shutters hung crazily on windows whose panes had long since vanished! Its sagging roof leaned awkwardly! The crooked chimney was silhouetted against the cold moon...

"No one knows about the tunnel! No one but me!"
Bruno burst through the decayed door! The orash of the worm-eater wood echoed through the empty house... They're getting closer... but I've... I've beaten them!

He lay at the bottom... in the darkness... partings! His right leg throbbed with pain. It was broken! Above... the thumping of booted feet told him they were in the house...

They'll never find the entrance to this tunnel! It's my secret, all mine! Ooh! My legs...

The steps were there, just as he had remembered them. He stumbled downward. The rotted wood giving way beneath his weight! He plunged into the blackness...

The tunnel Bruno was in was old. It had been used as an escape from the house during the Civil War... part of the well-known underground railway! He dragged himself forward...

I wonder... how many others like me used this tunnel to escape from the authorities...

As Bruno crept through the black, thoughts flashed through his brain. Thoughts of why he was there. Of how it had all started? He remembered it all so well! Five months ago... that night at Ellen's house...

But, Ellen! You must decide between us! We both want to marry you! You've got to pick one...

I'm sorry, Bob! You're both sweet... you and Bruno... I can't decide!

Upstairs, he could hear the muffled voices. The confusion... the yelping of the hounds... As they searched the house before him, the tunnel stretched out into the gloom...

Got to get movin'! Got to get to the other end... to the river! What's this? A shovel? Good. I'll take it with me... in case...

But, Ellen! You must decide between us! We both want to marry you! You've got to pick one...

I'm sorry, Bob! You're both sweet... you and Bruno... I can't decide!
As Bob had passed the spot where he had hid, Bruno had hurled himself upon him...

He's coming... now! He'll never know what hit him.

Yes! Bruno remembered! There in the darkness of the tunnel he remembered his decision! He had decided to make up Ellen's mind! Settle it... once and for all...

Again and again the lead pipe had come down...

...until Bob had moved no more.

Now to dispose of the body! Some place where they'll never find it!

He had left the body and searched a neighboring farm! After having found what he was looking for, he had returned with the shovel! Then he began to dig...

The grave marker says: Thaddeus Godkin... died 1867! There shouldn't be much left of him...

Soon a hollow thud told Bruno he had struck old Thaddeus Godkin's coffin! He lifted the rotted lid... nothing but bones and shreds of clothing!

This will do fine...

Nothing but bones...
Of course they never found him. Bruno laughed to himself as he moved through the tunnel... Who'd have thought to look in the grave of a man buried in 1867?

Then Bruno thought of Ellen. What he told her after Bob disappeared!

He's probably run off, Ellen! Maybe to the big city! This ought to show you who loves you most!

I suppose you're right, Bruno. Almost to the end now! I remember... when I was a boy, this part passes beneath the old burial grounds!

The tunnel turned sharply! Bruno's leg pained him as he half-crawled, half-slid around the corner...

...And Ellen! He had married her soon after! He had been happy... so happy... until that morning...

Ellen! Why are you looking at me like that?

You... you talked in your sleep!

Fear had stolen into Bruno's heart! It had crawled up his spine like a sliver of ice... had pounded in his brain...

What did I say, Ellen?

Did you murder Bob?

Yes, Ellen! I killed him! But... you'll never tell anyone!

He remembered it so well! As if it were yesterday!

But... Bruno chuckled... it was yesterday! Bruno's brain... his thoughts reeled! He remembered how he had reached for her! How white her face had been... and her throat...
If you like the book you’re holding, then you’ll love this comprehensive collection of every E.C. New Trend and New Direction comic book, packaged in 13 deluxe slipcased sets, as illustrated above.

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Yes, her throat! Her soft white throat! How easily he had slipped his fingers about it! How simple it had been to close them...tighter...tighter... until... she... she's dead!

And Mrs. Lane? Praying, spying Mrs. Lane! She had been watching from her window! She dreamed! He couldn't stand dreaming! Enraged, he rushed from his house... snatching the bread knife from the table... you mustn't tell either, Mrs. Lane! You'll have to die, too!

Yes! it had been yesterday! He was sure of it now! Mr. Lane had seen him... standing over Mrs. Lane... and the knife... wet... sticky... red...

He killed her! God, Lord, you've got to stop him! He's mad! Mad!

Then... the posse! They chased him! He had hidden in the woods... but the bloodhounds found his scent! And then he had thought of it! The house... the deserted old house with the tunnel he had found... as a boy...

If... I can get there before they catch me... I can escape... through the tunnel...

And now he was there! Soon he would be at the end... out at the river on the other side of the burial grounds... the bloodhounds! They won't be able to follow my scent through the water! I'll wade downstream! I'll get away!

Suddenly, Bruno came to a stop! The tunnel! The tunnel ended... must have caved in! The heavy rains... the river overflowed two years ago...
Got to dig myself through the rest of the way! Lucky I brought the shovel...

Bruno bent to the task of clearing his way through the daved-in part of the tunnel. He laughed to himself. I'll bet the posse's lookin' for me back at the house...

The spade sank into the soft earth ahead? There wasn't much room to move around...

I'll have to switch the dirt from up ahead... to behind me...

Then the shovel struck it! It splintered under the blow! Bruno lit a match and peered at what he had found...

Wood... brass handles... studs! It... it's a coffin!

At first he was shocked... but then he remembered! This part of the tunnel did pass under the burying ground... I've got to get it out of the way... got to get by it...

The rotten and decayed wood gave way as Bruno pushed! His arm shot forward into the hole...

What the...? It feels like... like a head!

The stench reached his nostrils. Funny! Such an old coffin with a body not yet fully decomposed? His hand traveled over the features! They were pulpy and soft! Then the teeth closed down... it... it's got my hand! It's biting me!
The blood was flowing now! He could feel the warm liquid running down even his wrist... sinking deeper... deeper!

Bruno tried to wrench his hand free... to draw it forth from the coffin! But the teeth held fast... it... it won't let go...

He was screaming! No one would hear him! He knew that! But he screamed anyway! The pain was unbearable...

D'ya hear that, Jed? Sounded like a scream!

Up above... the posse was searching the burial grounds! The screaming drifted up... through the black earth...

Spun before his eyes? He was dying! He was bleeding to death! He could hear the blood gurgling in the mouth of the corpse... but still the teeth held... feel... faint... dizzy...

Suddn all was silent! Bruno was dead! The corpse relaxed its grip! Bruno's glazed eyes stared at the tarnished nameplate on the rotted coffin! It read, "Thaddius Godkin... died 1837!"

Nee, nee! And that's my tale, Dean Readers! And a tasty morsel if I say so myself! A story you could sink your teeth into! I hope the sharp climax didn't shock you! Especially the biting irony of it! Bob certainly got his last laugh, didn't he? You said a mouthful!
WELCOME, MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS! WELCOME ONCE AGAIN TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! I AM THE CRYPT-KEEPER. I SEE IT IS TIME ONCE MORE FOR ANOTHER BLOOD-CURDLING, SHIREE-TINGLING YARN FROM MY VAST COLLECTION OF HORROR STORIES WHICH I KEEP HERE IN THE CRYPT! THIS TALE CONCERNS A CARNIVAL... THE KIND THAT TRAVELS FROM TOWN TO TOWN! THE MANAGER OF THIS CARNIVAL WAS HENRY HASTINGS! LISTEN NOW AS THE STORY UNFOLDS IN HENRY'S OWN WORDS! HE CALLS IT... HorROR IN THE FREAK TENT!

My name is Henry Hastings! I managed one of those two-bit carnivals that hits your town every now and then! You know the kind! Amusement rides... adobe... chisel... games! This particular carnival had a special attraction... a freak show... Step right up, ladies and gentlemen! See Fanny, the four-hundred pound fat lady...
The owner of the freak concession was a fat-faced character named Looney Glantz. But backstage, he was a rat! His freaks despised him! He treated them like dirt! There was Fanny, the fat lady...

For twenty-five cents, a fourth part of Adolphus, you'll see the greatest collection of freaks to even...

Yeah! You need me! Smile at the people, you overgrown cow! Don't just sit there... earn your keep!

...but backstage, he was a rat? His freaks despised him! He treated them like dirt!

What's the matter, Ketch? Don't you like your job? I watched your act! Stretch it... stretch it more...

And the poor pathetic case they called Corpus, the armless and legless boy! He had been born without limbs and was quite helpless! Glantz was particularly mean to Corpus...

Fanny! Don't feed him! Let him eat himself! Put the plate down in front of him...

Corpus was forced to eat like a dog... and Glantz roared with sadistic delight...

Hah! Hah! Corpus! If you had whiskers... hah! Hah! I could call you Fido...

Glantz never lost a single opportunity to inflict severe mental and physical torture upon his poor freaks! His perverted sense of humor kept him well supplied with ingenious methods...

Zolto was the sharp-eyed knife thrower! His act consisted of throwing knives, ice-picks, cleavers, and the like at his wife who stood spread-eagled about twenty feet away...

What is it, Mr. Glantz?

You're lying! It isn't true!

I just thought you ought to know! Your wife's been two-timing you! She's runnin' around with a concession owner...
Of course Glantz lied! But he had successfully instilled that spark of jealousy in Zolto's mind that causes the hand to tremble... ever so slightly...

Close, Mrs. Zolto, remember what I told you! Your husband would like you out of the way. There's a little dancing girl... down the midway...

Thunk

You... you're joking... aren't you...

Don't worry Zolto! I know where you can find a new partner for your act! There's a little dancing girl... down the midway...

Sob... sob... sob...

I'm telling you this, all of this, because I want you to know exactly the type of man Loey Glantz was! The little joke he played on the Zolto's had had its effect...

She's gone! Left me! Just because I slipped and nicked her arm... last night...

Haw... haw! She figured your knives were getting too close for comfort, eh, Zolto?

I'm sorry, Odnpus! Yes, Mr. Glantz! It was good of you to invite me to your chow table, Zolto!

It was good of you to come, Mh. Hastings!

How many times have I told you not to feed Corpus! Let him feed himself!

That's all right, Fanny!

She left the grounds crying! There was nothing I could do! Glantz's little joke had been carried to its extreme! She never came back! Even I began to dislike the evil freak-show owner! One evening...

It was good of you to invite me to your chow table, Zolto!

It was good of you to come, Mh. Hastings!

A few nights later, Mrs. Zolto returned to the carny... maybe to make up? I don't know! I saw her in the crowd and was at her side when Zolto went into his knife-throwing act...

The... the dancer... from down the midway! It's true... sob... true.

She's gone! Left me! Just because I slipped and nicked her arm... last night...

Haw... haw! She figured your knives were getting too close for comfort, eh, Zolto?

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Haw... haw! She figured your knives were getting too close for comfort, eh, Zolto?

Haw... haw! She figured your knives were getting too close for comfort, eh, Zolto?
I was horrified to see such inhumanity! But... when Glantz got up and...

FEED YOURSELF, CORPUS! LIKE THIS...

It was disgusting! Glantz had pushed that poor helpless boy's face into his plate! I started to object but Zolto acted sooner...

LEAVE HIM ALONE, GLANTZ! PUT DOWN THAT KNIFE, ZOLTO!

Don't you ever torment that boy again, Glantz, or I will put down this knife—right through your ugly skull...

I was dumbstruck with horror... powerless to move as I watched the ensuing scene! Glantz was infuriated! He had been made a fool of in front of the troupe! He rushed to a corner of the tent...

I'LL TEACH YOU!

We sat there... the freaks and I... as Glantz mashed the white-hot irons into Zolto's eyes! His shriek of agonizing pain echoed up and down the deserted midway...

YOU FOOL! YOU'VE BLINDED HIM!

It was all over before I could do anything! Glantz scooped up two irons that the fire-eater had been heating for the evening performance! They were white hot! He rushed at the paralyzed Zolto...

THEATER ME WITH A KNIFE... WILL YOU?

I'll teach you!

Zolto lay on the ground... his face cupped in his arms! He was screaming in agony! The smell of burned flesh was about us! I felt a wave of nausea come over me. As I left the tent for a breath of fresh air, I heard Glantz's hysterical voice...

GET OUT! GET OUT! YOU'RE THROUGH! YOU CAN'T DO YOUR ACT NOW... BLIND! GET OUT AND DON'T COME BACK!
The OLD WITCH’S NICHE

Hee Hee! Back for a second helping ofample delicacy of devilishness called The Haunt of Fear? T’riffic! I’m still giddy as a ghouf’girl over the liberation of my mag from under V.K.’s mangy thumb, and a lotus you tender lil’ lumpkins feel the same!

Dear Old Witch,
I am glad to hear that you are going to have your own comic. I best The Haunt of Fear will be just as good as Tales and Vault: Congratulations!
Rolando Fogarty
Rochester, NY

Congrats on your new mag!! Got a question for ya. Are ya gonna reprint the four issues you’ve already reprinted? May your eye forever bulge!
Julie Black

Not till I’ve reprinted all the other The Haunt of Fear issues, at least!

Dear Old Witch,
You truly deserve your own mag, and to ventum out of your miserable drab surroundings. Away from the Crypt-Keeper and the Vault-Keeper. Your stores keep me on the edge of my seat. Put away, you old hag and keep them mags rolling.
Michelle Lee
Morphett Vale, South Australia

You tell the greatest stories. I read them before I go to bed. I especially liked “Reunion.” She must have been really crazy to kiss a living corpse. How do you come up with these stories? Can you send me a picture of you? A REAL picture of you?
The Mistress of Horror
Bloomington, MN

Thing is, M.H., no camera can survive snapp- ing my hideous visage—the lens shatters and the film jumps out and exposes itself!

To that gruesome goblin, the Old Witch,
Morton Macawber from “For the Love of Death” (The Vault of Horror #4) sum had a peculiar hobby, but it still isn’t quite as strange as my collection of human heads!
Dan Heckbart
Brookfield, WI

Heckbart, Heckbart... . . . sister witch of mine is planning to tie the knot with a fine young zombie named Heckbart. Must be from a branch of your family that undied out!

Dear Old Witch,
Did you ever think about having T-Shirts? If so, I’d be the first to wear it! I really liked your story “For the Love of Death.” I loved it to death!
Angela McAley
Worth, IL

How come in The Vault of Horror #3 in Grim Fairy Tales on the second page on the top left on the wall the words are upside down?
Jerome Barnett
Tyndale Air Force Base

So folks, like you will spend 25¢ to write in and ask such questions!

Dear Old Witch,
Why can’t I ever find The Haunt of Fear in any of the stores anymore? Sometimes when I’m reading Tales From the Crypt or The Vault of Horror, I think, whatever happened to The Haunt of Fear?
Grusomely yours,
Lane Dixion
Murfreesboro, TN

I dunno, Lane. I thought we’d just started? I’d say time’s moving backward them in Murfreesboro.

Dear Old Witch,
I’m going insane! In issue #4 of The Vault of Horror, the last story, “Wolf Bait,” who did they throw out to be the sacrifice? My guess is it was the brat.
Jon Kiemen
St. Paul, MN

The story “Wolf Bait” in your section of The Vault of Horror #4 was truly disturbing. Ever since I read it I’ve been trying very hard to figure out who was most likely to become “Purina Wolf Chow.” It’s taken me a lot of time but I think I know who it was: the old one. After all it was his meat that they threw to the wolves and he was the oldest except possibly for Ivan but if they threw Ivan to the wolves who would drive the sleigh?
Grim Steve Singer
White Oak, PA

I got a recipe I would like to share with you. It’s call- ed Radish Rodent. First you cut two radishes, then you get two rat heads, spill their guts all over, then fry.
John Martinez
Corona, CA

Sounds like a good recipe for the Oogled Gourmet, my favorite show on ZBS (Zombie Broad- casting System!)

And now, dearies, it’s time you get back to the real reason you’re pawing through this pulpy periodical; the stories! But keep piling on those cards and letters to;

The Old Witch’s Niche
P.O. Box 2079 • Prescott, AZ 86302 • (602) 776-1300
I thought of calling the police, but I knew that it would do no good! Glantz had acted in self-defense! And he had the freaks so terrorized, they would be afraid to testify to the contrary! A few weeks later...

Zolto! What are you doing hiding in here?

Yes, Zolto! It is I, why are you hiding?

Yes! They bring me food... and they hide me from Mr. Glantz!

Oh, no! We're working on that...

But... you can't go on like this forever, Zolto!

I'm sorry and I'm teaching you an act?

It's easy! They just face me toward the board... and I try to visualize my partner...

Panthen?

Duh, of course we're only using a dummy, when I get really good, then... maybe...
Zolto was like a little boy again! He bubbled and chattered about his new act and how good it would be! I felt so sorry for him... so you won't tell Mr. Glantz about it, will you, Mr. Hastings? At least not until I'm ready!

Ready to show it to him, of course! Then... maybe he'll forgive me... and take me back?

Yes, Zolto! Matsee me... will... forgive you!

I felt as if I wanted to cry! The freaks had done wonders with Zolto! He bore no malice! And he had such confidence in himself...

I wonder if it could be possible... if he really could go on again... throwing knives... bling!

And then... one right about a month later...

Zolto stumbled into my office...

Tonight, Mr. Hastings! I'm going to perform tonight! Shan't I? Mr. Glantz would see my act tonight!

I'll be there, Zolto! I wouldn't miss it for anything!

Bravo, Zolto!

Good shot! A little higher this time...

And I meant it! That night I made my way to the freak tent. I guess the auditor had already started, for I heard laughter and applause as I entered...

Zolto threw the ice pick! It made a dull sound as it hit! Zolto was smiling too, although it was a blank smile! A face without eyes lacks so much expression...

Good, Zolto! Hah, hah! Goodo!

Another Zolto! Another... this time higher... and to the right...

I watched fascinated! I had come in behind the backboard so that I could see their faces! They were smiling! It had been so long since I had seen any of them smile...

Now, an ice-pick, Zolto! To the left this time... just about an iron...
The second ice-pick was thrown! It, too, hit true! They roared with delight! I applauded too, although I could not see from my vantage point how close it came...

Someone's there! Behind the board!

Is that you, Mr. Hastings?

Yes, Zolto! It is I!

The second ice-pick was thrown! It, too, hit true? They roared with delight? I applauded too, although I could not see from my vantage point how close it came...

They roared with delight? I applauded too, although I could not see from my vantage point how close it came...

I'm showing Mr. Glantz my act! Can you see well?

Well enough, Zolto! Go ahead!

I did not want to move! I had not seen such happiness among the freaks for so long that I wanted to stay where I could see their faces... Not the board...

Now a cleaver, Zolto... a cleaver...

Down a little this time...

And even to the right, an inch...

Where's Loopy? Zolto!

He's watching... Isn't he?

Sure... Zolto... Sure he is...

I looked for Glantz! I wanted to see his expression! I knew he would go for this act! But... he was not down in the seats...

Glantz was gagged, and tied to the board! And Zolto's aim had been horribly bad... on good as the case may be! He had barely missed! The freaks had guided him well! I breathed a prayer as I left.

Yes! He's watching, Zolto!

Another cleaver and your act will be over...

Lord have mercy on on them...

Heh, heh! And that's Henry Hastings' story! Striking tale, eh? Piercing finish? Well, old Loopy certainly had it coming... and it came! Ice-picks... knives... cleavers! Oh, that last cleaver was the topper... heh, heh... get it? After that, Glantz lost his head! Well, see you in my own magazine, Tales From the Crypt!
THIS TALE IS ACTUALLY ABOUT TO HAPPEN TO YOU! I CALL IT... A TASTY MORSEL!

You peer through the blinding downpour at the sign! The headlights of your car reflect on the water-soaked wood! You can barely make out the faded letters! They read...

"End-of-the-road inn! Thank goodness! I couldn't go on much further in this storm!"

You turn into the tree-lined road! Up ahead, you can see the lights of the inn shining through the heavy rain! You pull up to the door...

I hope there's a room available!
In answer to your feverish knocking, the door is opened by a large ugly-featured man...

Yes? I... I was caught in the storm! I was wondering if I could find lodging here... for tonight!

His ready eyes follow you as he steps aside and you enter the gloomy interior...

Is there a room for me? I think I have one vacant!

You study your host! He is tall...

Almost oversized! He steps behind the desk and pushes a battered book... its pages yellowed with age... forward...

If you'll sign the register... of course!

Then the innkeeper takes a key and leads you upstairs to your room! As he opens the door, the musty odor of foul air sears your nostrils...

If you need anything, just let me know! Thank you! I will!

The room is cold and dark! You search the closet for a blanket! There is none! The single thin bed spread will not be enough! You look for the house phone...

Blast it! Guess I'll have to go downstairs and ask him for a blanket!

He leaves! You listen as his heavy footsteps descend dark stairs and fade out of earshot! You look about you! The room is sparsely furnished! A thick layer of dust covers everything!

WELL? I GUESS I'LL TURN IN! DRIVING THROUGH THE RAIN HAS TIRLED ME!

The room is cold and dark! You search the closet for a blanket! There is none! The single thin bed spread will not be enough! You look for the house phone...

Blast it! Guess I'll have to go downstairs and ask him for a blanket!

You open the door of your room and look out! The hall is dark and deserted! You go downstairs! The light from the fireplace casts dancing shadows through the lobby! There is an eerie strangeness about it! And the innkeeper is nowhere to be seen...

H-M-M-M? Guess I'll have to wait until he comes back from wherever he is! This chair looks inviting...
You sit down. The warmth of the crackling fire feels good. You gaze at the licking flames... wonder where he can be...

The fire leaps upward. The burning logs spitten and snap. You sigh. Yes, the drive through the rain has exhausted you.

So just as soon spend the night down here before this fire! It's so... warm!

Suddenly the blood freezes in your veins! From out of the darkness comes... a moan! Good... what a horrible sound!

You jump to your feet! You strain your ears... listening! Then you hear it again! An agonizing moan! It makes the hair on your neck crawl... it's coming from behind that door!

You steal your way down the oom. You reach out cautiously and twist the knob! It swings open! Steps lead down into the darkness! From down there... in the blackness... you hear it again... but weaken...

I've got to see what it is! Perhaps the innkeeper...

You move slowly down rickety steps. All is silent now! You listen! Then another sound resonates your ears! A steady drip... drip... like drops of water, falling into a bucket...

You curse yourself for not bringing a flashlight! The drip... drip... dripping is closer now! You're almost upon it! Then you hear the whimpering. The weep and whimpering... you scavenge your pockets for a match! You find one! You strike it! The cellar fills with light...

Oh, Lord!
It is a man! Not the innkeeper! He lies on a table... tied there by ropes! His eyes are wide in horror as he stares at the burning match! Then you look down... a pan! A pan half-filled with... blood!

Your stomach heaves! You wretch with nausea! The man's arm hangs limply... the wrist slashed! The blood trickles down his fingertips and drips into the pan! He whimpers... like a dog that has just been struck by a car...

You hide! You cower behind a pile of boxes! A man thumps down the steps! He carries a lantern! His eyes gleam in the flickering yellow light... the innkeeper!

The match burns you and you drop it in pain! The darkness closes in! The steady dripping continues! Suddenly... the cellar door! Someone's coming!

You watch, too frightened to move! He approaches the man tied to the table! The whispering has ceased now! Even the dripping has slowed considerably! A creeping horror tells you...

You start toward the stairs! You avoid looking at the pan on the floor! Then, you stop... started! A motor has started! It throbs... matching the racing beat of your own heart! Your eyes follow the sound...

You... you've got to get away from here! The innkeeper... he... he's a maniac!

The man... it looks like a frozen-food locker!
It was obvious that he was a goner and would be dead within five minutes. His coat and shirt were slashed brutally and blood came pouring out of him in torrents. His eyes were wide and glassy, his mouth moved instinctively but the only sounds which came to his greyish lips were gurgled and incoherent. And then suddenly his body stopped quivering for a moment and he looked up with a glint of recognition at the Police officers surrounding him.

"Out at Fairview..." he whispered, and the Police Stenographer pressed closer, notebook ready. "F-Fairview... the cemetery," continued the man with the knife slashes draining his lifeblood away. "The headstone... it's marked... P-Paul Kleeg..."

The Homicide Captain leaned over the dying man. "Who are you... how did you get to Police Headquarters? Who stabbed you... where are they?"

The man's mouth moved convulsively and his words were barely audible. "M-My name... Weldon. T-Two days ago... got out of State Prison. Came here to see Kleeg's grave... open it... make sure he was dead like papers said. Kleeg was in on bank job with me ten years ago... I was grabbed... he got away. Then I heard he died... eight years ago... came to make sure!"

A bubble of blood burst on the man's lips and a shudder passed down his body, but after a moment he continued: "Opened his grave... c-case all rotten and full of weeds... only a skeleton left there... grinning as if Kleeg was laughing at me! I bent over skeleton... to see if he was buried with ring or any other jewelry I could use... when his hand reached out and grabbed me! I-I couldn't move... then he stabbed me with some kind of blade he had... some kind of knife..."

The man's head fell back and a last tortured gasp escaped him. He was dead. The Captain gave his orders in a hushed voice: "Have the Morgue pick 'em up right away! Name's Weldon, eh? Must be the one listed among this month's releases from upriver. Come on... we'll saunter over to Kleeg's grave out at Fairview! Craziest story I ever heard... imagine, a skeleton stabbing a man to death!

The circle of Police stared into the opened grave. The Captain spoke first, as he moved down to it, past the cemetery workmen who had shoveled away the dirt that covered it. "A skeleton... just like Weldon described it. And it looks as if it has been dug up very recently..."

"Craziest story any of us ever heard!" a Sergeant said aloud. "What probably happened is that Weldon went off his rocker and stabbed himself! Who ever heard of a skeleton...?"

At that moment the Captain looked up from the decayed coffin, his face chalk-white. "His story is crazy," he said, "and only an insane man would believe it! But just look at THIS!"

The officers craned forward. There, grasped in the fleshless hand of Paul Kleeg's skeleton, was a blade several inches long. Rusted so completely that it had almost merged with the long tapering bones which clutched it! And covering the entire length of that corroded blade was a sticky dark brown substance. Blood, just beginning to dry!
A morbid curiosity drives you forward! You hesitate before it... but then you lift the lid...

"Lord! No! Lord... Lord, no!"

Inside the refrigerated locker is a baleen... a barrel of reddish-brown liquid! A barrel of blood! You slam the lid shut and turn... leaning on the locker for balance...

"He... he's a vampire! He collects the blood of his victims!"

You start toward the stairway... but then you hear the innkeeper returning! You just have enough time to hide! He enters the room... his eyes gleaming... his lips moist! He picks up the pan of red liquid from the floor...

Then... as you watch in terror... he opens the freezer and pours the contents of the pan into the barrel...

Then he begins to shut the lid. He stops! He opens it again! His cruel lips spread in an evil grin! He reaches for a tin cup hanging on the wall...

He stoops down, leaning into the barrel. You hear the splashing of the sickly red-brown liquid as he dips it into it...

"He... he's going to..."

You watch in horror as he drinks the liquid. A small stream trickles down his chin... you dream...

"Yaaaaaahh!"
It is too much for you! You dash toward the stairs shrieking! Your head spins...the stairs seem to melt before you! You sprawl, half-way up!

You...you've been spying on me!

In a flash he is upon you...his strong hands holding you! You're weak with fear and nausea! You cannot fight him...

I haven't planned on another victim tonight!

He carries you to the table! He ties you down! You scream...

It is useless to cry out! We are quite alone in the inn! I was the only other guest...

You watch, wide-eyed, as he brings the pah and places it under the table...under your hanging arm...perhaps?

You...you're inhuman...a mad fiend!

The knife blade glitters in the lantern light! He comes toward you...squeezing it...

Have pity...sob...pitt...

I need your blood! I must save it...

The knife burns as the cold blade slices into your wrist! Your head swims! You can hear him talking...and the steady drip...drip...

Sometimes I have no guests for weeks! But I don't have to worry! I have my supply...there...ready when I need it...

Your head pounds now; the room weaves before you! You feel yourself slipping...slipping into the blackness of unconsciousness...weak...dizzy...the drip...drip...drip...
Suddenly you open your eyes! You squint! The fire is low now... but glowing warm! You are in the chair before it...

You breathe a sigh of relief! You'd been dreaming the whole thing! You look up! The innkeeper is smiling down at you...

Oh, God! It was only a dream! A horrible nightmare!

I didn't have the heart to disturb you!

You should have! I had the most hideous nightmare! I...

Suddenly you hear it! The steady dripping! You start to rise! You cannot move! You're tied to the chair! And beneath your slashed wrist is a pan... half-filled with blood...

It's true! My dream... you are a vampire!

The innkeeper's smile vanishes as he scowls at you! There is disgust on his face...

How dare you call me a Vampire?

You're draining my blood! You're going to put it in the barrel... downstairs... in the freeze-chest! You are a vampire...

You're wrong, my friend! I am no vampire! I hate blood! I can't stand meat that tastes of blood! I am a ghoul! I live on bloodyless flesh! I have a freeze-locker downstairs... but it's well stocked with dead human flesh!

A ghoul! The dream... reality... the same... yet different! The blackness is closing in on you now! The dripping is slowing up! Perhaps this too is just a dream! Perhaps you will wake up from this nightmare, also! The last thing you see... before everything fades... is the innkeeper... and his meat cleaver...
Heh, heh! An increase in the population of a great city's teeming millions is of great importance to the statistician... but to the sanitation dept. it means only that much more garbage to collect...

The city has a huge, efficient system for the removal of trash, and one of its most respected assets is its fleet of streamlined trucks!

These proud vehicles cover every part of the metropolis, and there are but few items that cannot be crushed, broken and hacked to bits by their gleaming, whirling blades...

Having eaten their fill of garbage, they at once travel to the city dump and purr contentedly while they discharge their cargo.

Here is where every bit of the city's collected waste is brought. And it is here, in this scavengers' paradise, that one may find...

...Almost anything!
HEH, HEH! QUITE A SHOCKING THING TO FIND, ISN'T IT? NATURALLY, THE MAN ALMOST FAINTED UPON VIEWING HIS HORRID DISCOVERY! BUT HE RACED MADLY TO INFORM THE Polícia... AFTER HE HAD REMOVED THE RING AND STUFFED IT INTO HIS POCKET. OF COURSE! HOW, YOU MAY ASK: DID THE HAND HAPPEN TO BE LYING IN THE CITY DUMP? HEH! HEH! WELL, THEREIN LIES OUR STORY! IT'S A GRIPPING TALE AND I CALL IT...

SEEDS OF DEATH!

LET'S GO BACK IN TIME TO WHERE OUR STORY REALLY BEGAN... TO A SMALL FARM ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE LARGE CITY.

ON THIS PARTICULAR FARM LIVED THE OWNER, BASIL WOODS... HIS WIFE CONNIE...

...AND A HIRED HAND NAMED CLIFF!

OH, CLIFF... CLIFF! HE'S SO CRUEL!

CONNIE, DARLING, IF HE HITS YOU AGAIN... SO HELP ME, I THINK I'LL KILL HIM!

HMPH! THE FOOLS! THEY THINK I DON'T KNOW THEY'RE IN LOVE! THEY THINK I'VE BEEN BLIND TO WHAT'S GOING ON BEHIND MY BACK!
No man can take my wife from me and live! I'll fix the dirty home-wrecker when the time comes!

Heh, heh! well, that's the situation, dear readers... the eternal triangle! Time passed... and Basil waited patiently, until one day...

Cliff, while you're in town today, would you buy me some gardenia seeds? I want to plant them in the garden!

Sure, Mrs. Woods!

He'll be in the city all day... won't be back till late tonight! And he'll probably take the short-cut 'cross the field to the house... hmm-m...

... and so, late that night...

'Evening, Cliff! Did you get my wife's gardenia seeds?

En? oh... Hi, Mr. Woods! Yes, I have them right here!

Here they are! Want to take a look?

Gasp! There... it's done! Now to bury him... Gasp!... right here! Hee, hee! In time to come, his body'll make fine fertilizer for this field!

Thwink!

Gasp!
Heh, heh! Yes, the deed was done! Now Basil Wood's felt certain his wife would soon forget her silly love affair. The next morning...

I can't understand it! Cliff hasn't returned from the city yet! I hope he's all right!

Cliff hasn't returned? Tch, tch!

Ha, ha! She's worried! But as the days pass, she'll forget him... she'll forget!

Well, the days did pass, but Connie didn't forget! And one evening as Basil returned from the fields...

Connie? Connie? Tarnation! Where is that wadman? Wha... a note?

Basil—

Forgive me, I have gone to the city to search for Cliff. I simply can't stand worrying about him any longer. I must find him. Connie.

That blasted no-good! I'll teach her to run off like this! I'll go to the city and drag her sack by the hair of her head!
A RARE E.C. OFFER

Seventeen years ago a small publishing company called East Coast Comix reprinted a number of the original E.C.'s in full color as regular 32-page comic books. Without national distribution the market was not able to sustain their continuation. Shortly after they ceased production we bought the remaining stock, realizing that they would become real collector's items someday. With the return of E.C. through Gladstone, that day has come! None of the material in these 1973 and '74 reprints has appeared or is scheduled to appear in any Gladstone title. The Shock SuspenStories comics also have no place on our schedule. The following are available individually while the very limited supply lasts.

**Shock SuspenStories 12**
December, 1953
$6.50

Drug abuse is dealt with for one of the first times in comics in the powerful Joe Orlando effort, "The Monkey." Reed Crandell's "The Kidnapper" generated mail from many parents. Wally Wood touches on suicide in "The Fall Guy." And a murderous alcoholic is portrayed in "Deadline" by Jack Kamen.

**Weird Fantasy 13**
May, 1952
$5.50

Special issue with two tales illustrated by Wallace Wood, including "Home to Stay," an unforgettable adaptation of two Ray Bradbury short stories. E.C.'s science fiction and horror editor/artist Al Feldstein has a bio with photo.

**Crime SuspenStories 25**
October, 1954
$5.50

Jack Kamen's lead deals with multiple murder; Reed Crandell's story involves a knife and some "cutting up" during a prison break; Bernie Krigstein's effort chronicles madness; and George Evans' yarn weaves brutal fiction of a sadistic police lieutenant.

INSTRUCTIONS: Prices quoted include postage. List each comic on individual orders by title and number of original publication, as indicated above. Each comic will be shipped individually bagged and securely wrapped. Make checks or money orders payable to Bruce Hamilton, Inc., and mail to:

Rare E.C. Offer • Bruce Hamilton • P.O. Box 4235 • Prescott, AZ 86302
GOODBYE, MY CHILD. I'M SORRY I COULDN'T BE OF ANY HELP, BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN MY SON FOR QUITE SOME TIME!

THANK YOU... GOODBYE...

YAS, IT'S ME! OIOJA THINK IT WAS GONNA BE YOUR PRECIOUS CLIFF?

BASIL!

BASIL, PLEASE! DON'T HIT ME!

HIT YOU! WHY, I'LL BEAT YOUR STUPID HEAD IN! I'LL TEACH YOU TO RUN OFF!

DON'T TOUCH ME!

YOU AND YOUR PRECIOUS CLIFF! WELL, YOU'LL NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN!

YOU STAY AWAY FROM ME! DON'T TOUCH ME!
OH, GOOD LORD! WHAT HAVE I DONE? (SOB) HE'S UNCONSCIOUS!

(SOB!) I'm... I'm so confused... so frightened! what's that noise?

A TRUCK, COMING DOWN THE STREET! IT'S STOPPING! GOOD HEAVENS! I CAN'T LET THEM FIND ME HERE! WHAT'LL I DO?

WAIT! I KNOW... I'LL JUST DRAG BASIL... (UNH!) OVER HERE BY THE WALL. (GASP!)

(UH!)... AND STUFF HIM INTO THIS... (GASP!) THIS BIG CAN! THEY WON'T SEE HIM HERE... (GASP!) PUT SOME PAPERS OVER HIM...

AND WHILE THEIR BACKS ARE TURNED...

...I'LL CALMLY WALK AWAY...
Heh! Naturally, Connie was unaware of her husband's fate, and for the next few weeks, she searched the city in vain... for Cliff...

Sob! It's no use... I'll never find him! He... he just disappeared!

She stood transfixed in horror! Before her, not ten feet from where she stood, was a mound of gardenias! All at once, there came the shocking realization that at last she had found... her precious Cliff.

Sob! Heh, Heh, Heh! I thought that climax was a bit flowery, didn't you? But the rest of the story certainly had some grinding, tearing moments! And Cliff... he really got a short-cut when he took the short-cut! But don't feel too sad about him! Heh! Not every murder victim carries his own bouquet of flowers to his grave! Well, that's enough of that! I don't want you to die laughing while reading a horror story! Heh! Heh! Heh!

The End
Frazetta's unretouched cover illustration as it was originally drawn (and rejected) for Famous Funnies #217
I had been asleep, but my sleep had been fitful, filled with the vague, formless stuff of troubled dreams. Beside me, my wife breathed softly. In the next room, my son slept peacefully, his dog at the foot of his bed. All seemed well...as it should be. Yet, the thin tenor of the fears with which I had lived for so long pulsed at my brain. I arose and went to the window, as if something...some sixth sense...drew me there...

How shall I describe that awful moment, I saw the ball...a glowing shimmering sphere of light...hovering over the lawn of my suburban home. I saw it settle lightly, and I thought that I was still dreaming...

GOOD LORD!

As I watched in disbelief and terrorized fascination, I saw two people with limbs like liquid silver and faces like the faces of angels emerge from the glowing ball...
It was no dream. I knew that now. I slipped into a robe and went to meet them...

We must be swift! We must take him and go quickly!

I heard. Their lips did not move and yet I heard their voices, as if their thoughts leaped over invisible wires from their minds to mine. I heard and I knew why they were here. They'd come for my son...

No! No! You can't take him! I won't let you! You won't!

There is no choice. We must!

His call reached out to us... across the endless seas of space... from his world to ours, we could not deny that call.

No! This is some kind of monstrous practical joke? There are no other inhabited worlds! Nothing... nothing can reach across space!

Words... words... I spoke them, and yet I did not believe them as I spoke; I knew. I had known for some time. And the eyes that looked at me were soft and filled with pity...

Our ship has crossed space as his call crossed space. You know that he does not belong in your world! That much we can grasp from your thoughts, jumbled though they are!

They say that in a crisis, a man's life flashes before his eyes in a moment's time. I hesitated then, in my crisis... only for an instant... and in that instant, it was as if time rolled backwards... ten years...

You're... you're certain, Doctor? I'm... still normal? It would appear so, Professor Fuller!

With us, he would be among his own kind. He would be happy. Would you deny him happiness?

Do not fear for him. We will give him all the love which you could give him... and more. For his sake, let us pass!

As far as tests and physical examinations can show, you are quite normal. But beyond that...

Beyond that, you wouldn't take an oath on it. You wouldn't swear that the unborn child my wife is carrying will be... like other children!
We know so little. We toyed with giant forces and we lived in fear. At least, I lived in fear, but there was nothing I could do. So I waited. I went back to work, and even as I worked, I prayed that my work had not made my child a monster...

I prayed... and at first, it seemed to me that my prayers had been answered. When my son was born, he had no extra limbs, no visible deformities.

The doctor says he's perfect? isn't... isn't he beautiful, Henry?

Yes, Laura, he's... beautiful!

No, my son was not deformed, but... how many infants look up at you out of eyes that seem to see through you? How many children walk at six months... speak at one year... read at the age of two?

Really, Henry? I know how proud you are of Bobby! But, reading! Come, now! He was just looking at the pictures, dear. How could he know how to read?
I don't know how, but he does. Laura, he's... he's not like other kids. The way he speaks, the way he watches everything, you must have noticed!

Of course I've noticed. Bobby is exceptionally bright for his age, but don't you dare tell him so, Dean. You'll spoil him!

Laura had never begun to understand. But I was right. A mutation is not always of the body. Other boys played, other boys romped, but not my son. His interests were of the mind...

Bobby, it's such a nice day. Wouldn't you like to play ball with the other boys?

Ball? Not particularly, Dad!

But you have no friends. You never bother with other children, don't you ever get lonely?

No, Dad! I don't get lonely. I'm perfectly happy!

My son was so... so cold. Can you understand? There was no miracle. He didn't suddenly reveal his genius. He was too clever for that. But I knew what lay behind those icy eyes of his...

Well, why don't you get lonely? By Reavers, what kind of a child are you? Don't you care about anything? Are you so superior to the rest of us?

Henry!

What on earth has gotten into you, Henry? You sound as though you thought Bobby hated us. What has he done?

Nothing! That's just it! Nothing! Maybe he doesn't hate us. Maybe he only feels sorry for us. I don't know, but I know one thing. I'm sick of being looked at as though I were a worm!

He wasn't one of us. I saw that clearly, my son was what one day men might be. He endured us, knowing his own superiority, but I loved him. He was still my son, and my love made me tense and irritable...

Well, get on with it! I haven't got all day! Or do you think I'm trying to sneak out some U-235?

Sorry, sir. You know the regulations. We have to check every person working on the pile. You might have been exposed to radiation.

Might have been! You fool! What good is that Seiger counter now? The damage has been done!
The man lifted his head from his arms and looked dozedly through the window as twilight fell. All 'round, the earth lay still, waiting. A cool breeze stirred the new leaves and a sigh, long and tortured, escaped his lips. He was not old, yet not young either, for pain had carved deep furrows across his forehead and along his cheeks. He had known more despair than just one lifetime could bring.

He shifted now, in his seat, and tired fingers grasped toward the instruments on the panel before him. He touched each dial, each button, each lever gently, and then his arms fell numbly into his lap.

"Fool boy," he thought. "Fool, fool, FOOL!" the last, a hoarse scream... shattering the silence... startling him so that minutes passed, and he still trembled. He closed his eyes and saw

a boy, himself, eons ago... a boy laughing, glowing with excitement, bursting with his secret, yet not daring to confide it to anyone. The delicious agony as the days crept by toward THE day. The day the newspapers said the rocket would take off. Over and over again, the boy lived his plan, 'til THAT day, when he stowed away, hidden amongst the huge crates of instruments. The ecstasy of fear that was his 'til blast-off. And yet, they did not find him 'til they were three days out from Earth.

He remembered landing on the planet... exploring it in the suit they had cut down to fit him. The men were very patient with him, and explained each phase of the exploration and the importance of each new discovery. The youth's heart sang. His mind soaked up every word.

And then came the terror of the illness. Two of the scientists, the oldest of the group, died while they were still on the planet. Three more, middle-aged, succumbed. And then after a night of arguing, the project was abandoned, as fear of dying on a strange planet and a longing for the loved ones on Earth triumphed over scientific curiosity.

But the return was too late to save the lives of the rest of the men. One boy they died, the last one, with a prayer for the last survivor... the boy, now full grown, made old before his time by the deaths of his friends. The controls, set with care, and rechecked before the last scientist died, brought the young man closer to home. His sanity remained with him only because of the memory of his parents, his friends, and the whole wonderful world of beautiful people awaiting him.

And then, the landing. The anguish of that morning remained. At its recall, the man flinched, and a gasp stirred the air in the ship where he sat, as memory of that morning stabbed him again.

The earth was quiet and grey. There was nothing but flatness before him as far as the eye could see... flatness covered with a fine grey ash. Not a building stood, not a bird soared through the sky, and not a leaf clung to the charred branches of the few trees that stood. It had taken hours, before he remembered THE BOMB! They had used it! And what most men had scoffed at, and a few, wiser than the rest, had feared, had come to pass. Chain reaction! Uncontrollable!

And there was nothing left... no one to comfort the boy come home.

That was the part of the song that hurt so unbearably. After weeks of hope, the realization, the acceptance. He was alone... the last man on Earth. Alone... and when the trees came back to life, there was no one with whom to share the beauty of Spring. There was no joy at the first blades of grass. There was no one. No one but the man.

The creases in his face deepened as he fought the urge to cry. But there was no one to see the tears. No one to hold him, to comfort him, to love him. So, once more, he gave way. The tears poured down his cheeks. His eyes were twin pictures of his agony. He cried... and then, aloud, "OH, GOD. SOMEONE... SOMEONE. PLEASE!"

At last, exhausted, he stopped sobbing. And then, Adam lay down his head, and slept.
I'll never forget that day. I'd snarled at the guard out of my own misery... because my son was not my son... because I wanted him to love me as I loved him. There had to be a way to his heart...

Guard! That dog! Do those pups belong to anyone?

Only to her, sir. Queenie's just a stray! Been hangin' around here ever since the place was put up! She's...

The irony of it. I brought my son a pet. I tried to buy my way behind the wall of ice around him and instead, day by day, I saw final proof that I'd fathered something beyond my understanding...

My son and the dog had become inseparable, but it wasn't the way it was with other boys and their dogs. Bobby would just look into Duke's eyes... and he'd know...

I know, dear. Remarkable, isn't it? Bobby seems to be able to read Duke's mind. It's amazing the way he's trained that dog!

Laura, you... you saw that, didn't you? Bobby just... just looked at Duke and he knew that Duke was thirsty. He just looked at the dog!

He'd go out... and return... with whatever the dog seemed to want...

I don't ask for the dog's life history. I only want to know if anyone owned the pups. If not, my son might like to have one...

Help yourself. We've been wondering what to do with them. If Queenie doesn't mind, why should I?

Trained? Bobby hadn't trained Duke? He'd controlled him. He knew what Duke was thinking... the way he probably knew what I was thinking... what Laura was thinking...

Dad, would you open the back door? Duke's on the steps and he wants to come in!

Huh? Duke? Y-yes... of course!
YOU CANNOT PREVENT IT! THINK! YOUR WORLD
HAS STILL SO FAR TO GO. YOU KILL... STRUGGLE
AGAINST EACH OTHER... LIE... CHEAT... STEAL!
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO YOUR WORLD IF A SUPER
INTELLIGENCE SHOULD DECIDE TO... SAY...
CONTROL IT?

YOU MUST control IT!

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THIS INTELLIGENCE WHICH HAS SUDDENLY COME AMONG YOU WERE
USED FOR EVIL? WOULD YOU HAVE YOUR WORLD ENSLAVED? PERHAPS DESTROYED?

IN YOUR HEART, YOU KNOW THAT WE MUST TAKE HIM AWAY... TO WHERE WE CAN WATCH OVER HIM... TRAIN HIM
RIGHT, THERE IS NO OTHER WAY!

AND I WAITED FOR THEM TO COME DOWN, CARRYING THEIR BURDEN...
I stood there, my finger trembling on the trigger. And then my hand dropped limply...

I stood to one side as they passed me and went out to the ship and climbed in...

...and I watched the gleaming sphere rise into the night to the stars...

...and disappear...

Then I went back into the house...

...and sat by the window all night until the dawn crept up from behind the east and erased the stars...

...and Bobby came into the noon...

Dad! Where's Duke? I can't find him anywhere!

I know...

Yes, they'd heard the call and they'd come across space to answer. My boy was a normal boy. A bit of a bookworm. A bit too bright, but normal...

You know Duke's bone, Dad? Yes, son! I... I found the front door open, I'm afraid I forgot to close it last night! He must have gone out!

No, my boy wasn't a mutant at all! Not like Duke! Not like a dog whelped in the shadow of an atomic pile...

But I wouldn't worry about Duke, son. He'll be all right. He'll be back!

And I knew that I lied. I knew that Duke would never be back... that he was out somewhere... in the void... with them...
The ship was the last. It threw itself upward on a pillar of flame into the empty oceans of space, and I am alone. They've gone with sinner words and ironic jests, the others. They've left the clean desolate silence of Mars and they've returned to Earth... to the sprawling crowded places. The dream... the hope... is ended, and the tears are hot and salty on my lips.

Mars, red Mars... goddess of promise. Cool Mars... whose virgin dust we'd torn to shreds with our bullroarers and our too-loud laughter and our eager scratching in its sand flesh. Now she can sleep again... unmoistened, this time, time forever. The colony has been abandoned...

If only... if only we'd learned...

I walk and the voice whispers to me. The voice, I'd heard it so many times in the past weeks, inside my skull, inside my brain, whispering. And always, afterwards, there'd been the pain. It is because of the inevitable pain that I hurry...
Four of us had left Earth in a slum needle of gleaming alloy. But I had been the first...The first man to set foot on Mars, and I'd fallen in love with her...

Hey, Lee! Snap out of it! You're holding up the parade. We've got work to do...

Doomed? Sir, you're...you're joking!

Death is never humorous, Captain Harper. Within a generation, the entire race will be sterile! A century from now, man will have ceased to exist!

I cry aloud with the remembering. How long has it been? Thirty years? Yes...Thirty years ago I'd stood and stared at promising Mars on our astro-screen as we'd hurtled toward it...

There she is! She's beautiful!

I'd looked up when Torgson'd spoke...up to the tiny green ball that was Earth...and I'd remembered then, too...

I'd remembered the Supreme Council of the United Nations and the prayer they'd entrusted in us a few short months before...

Go there, and may success be yours...for you are our only hope! Man-kiro is doomed!

Man...doomed? Sir, you're...you're joking!

That is, unless we can leave Earth and escape the radiation!

On the day man discovered atomic fission, he committed suicide. The sudden releases of energy have released other things!

Certain radiations...certain forces we are unable to cope with. They are slowly, steadily sterilizing us...making us impotent!

It doesn't seem possible...

It is...horribly so! Earth is a dying planet...for man is dying. But if your trip is successful...if man can escape to an uncontaminated world...we can build again...

Back to the abandoned city...back to the empty shells. I fished my bed and threw myself upon it and the agony closes around me like a diatribe, crushing the pain. The awful shattering pain. And yet, even then, there is the other pain...the pain of remembering...
The nations of the world have pooled their resources! We've begun construction of the first space ship. You four have been chosen to man this ship... to attempt to reach Mars!

My task was finished with that. I'd wandered the empty desolation while the others had begun their tasks. Mars had crept into my heart, my soul. When we'd left at last, a part of me had remained behind...

It hadn't seemed real... the whole thing. Even while I'd studied and learned to fly the ship, it hadn't seemed real. An air force captain... a biologist... a mineralogist... we were nothing, and yet a world had watched, prayed for us, and, one day, the prayers had been answered. I'd stepped from our ship... the first man on Mars...

C'mon, Lee! Snap out of it!

They'd come and they'd split the silence with their curses. They'd roared their happiness, because the yearning for the race to survive was bred into them. They'd made Mars hideous with their din, but they'd built...

They'd raised a new world, they'd dotted peaceful Mars with noisy cities. And they'd remained men. They'd brawled and hated and scarred her velvet nights with their neon signs. And then, Mars had taken her silent revenge...

Gentlemen... the facts are too obvious to be denied... the eight years our colonists have been on Mars, there has not been one single birth!

Strange! You know, Torgson, I've dissected a half dozen of these Martian hares and as far as I can determine, they're completely sexless...

But, Mr. President! The radiations which are making man sterile here on Earth do not exist on Mars! Why haven't our colonists reproduced?

Why? Here, is the answer, gentlemen!
The thing that the attendant had placed upon the council president’s desk had been a case with a single sexless Martian hare. It’d crept out slowly. Then, the council had seen what we on Mars had seen so many times...

Why, it’s... it’s losing its shape!

Exactly, gentlemen. Man is not an amoeba! Something in the atmosphere on Mars... like the radiations here on Earth... will not let man reproduce his way! Mankind, gentlemen, is doomed!

The laughter on Mars had died then. The farmers and the storekeepers and the hard-faced adventurers had fallen silent. Colonists had stopped coming. The atmosphere above the red sands had begun to seethe with the vibrations of discontent...

If we’re going to die out, at least we can do it at home... on Earth!

I’m going home! And if the rest of you have any sense, you will too!

I’d watched them go. I’d seen their rockets blast at the red sand and climb away from Mars. But, I’d stayed...
All through the long years I'd stayed, watching them leave, until the cities were almost deserted. In the end, the hard-faced ones, the adventurers, were all that were left... looting... destroying, and I'd watched them. I'd watched the dream die...

They'd not understood, the hard-faced ones, nor had I. I'd gathered food-stuffs... clothing... tools. I'd filled my quarters with them. It had been as if something was driving me to prepare for the future, and yet there was no future. I knew...

We might have done so much on Mars. But Mars had rejected us, Mars hadn't wanted our brawling and our obscenity. And so, at last, I'd stood alone and watched the last rocket go...

If only... if only we'd learned...

The voice had begun coming then... the voice in my head... down deep, and along with it had come the pain... slight at first... then worse and worse... until it had wracked my whole body, and I'd begun to do strange things... foolish things...

They'd shot out the windows from the buildings and smashed the statues and laughed obscenely. And sick as I was, I'd wished that they would go so that Mars might be again as I'd first come to know her... untouched and clean...

I'd walked back... and the voice in my head had whispered to me... and the pain had come... and I'd remembered it all...
THIRTY YEARS, OF ALL MANKIND, ONLY I HAVE BEEN SO LONG ON MARS. I THINK OF THAT NOW WHILE BEING COMPRessed INTO ONE SINGLE THROBBING NURSE. I THINK AND IT SEEMS TO ME THAT MY BODDY draws in UPON ITSELF...

I TEAR AWAY THE CLOTHES WHICH BIND My WRETThING MUSCLES... AND IN MY AGONY, IT IS AS IF MY FLESH MELTS AND FLOWS...

IT IS AS IF... AS IF... OH LORO!... AS IF I AM BECOMING A NOTHING... A BLOB OF PROTOPLASM WITHOUT SHAPE OR SUBSTANCE...

AND NOW THERE IS ONLY DARKNESS. EMPTY, ENDLESS, DARKNESS. LIKE SPACE. I STIR. I MOVE... WITH A CURIOUS NEW LIGHTNESS AND STRENGTH. I OPEN MY EYES... AND I KNOW! WE BOTH KNOW...

AND OUR HEARTS SING A SONG OF THANKSGIVING, BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT MARS HAS BEEN KIND TO ME. WE KNOW THAT I HAVE ADAPTED...

I HAVE REPRODUCED... BY DIVISION... AND NOW I AM NO MORE. THE EARTH MAN IS GONE... NEVER TO RETURN. WE GO OUTSIDE TOGETHER. WE STAND NAKED IN THE COOL SILENCE OF THE MARTIAN NIGHT AND WE SMILE AND DRINK IN THE PEACE AND PROMISE OF THE GODDESS, THE MOTHER MARS... WE MARTIANS...
Comics Buyer's Guide  Fan Awards for 1990

Welcome to the CBG Fan Awards. Comics Buyer's Guide, a weekly newspaper devoted to the world of comic books, sponsors these awards in order, the readers, tell the world which comic books are your favorites. Just fill out the ballot and send it to the address below.

1. Favorite Editor .................................................................................................................

2. Favorite Writer ................................................................................................................

3. Favorite Penciller .............................................................................................................

4. Favorite Inker ................................................................................................................

5. Favorite Colorist ............................................................................................................

6. Favorite Letterer ............................................................................................................

7. Favorite Cover Artist .......................................................................................................

8. Favorite Comic-Book Story .............................................................................................

9. Favorite Comic Book .....................................................................................................

10. Favorite Limited Comic-Book Series .............................................................................

11. Favorite Original Graphic Novel or Album ....................................................................

12. Favorite Reprint Graphic Novel or Album ....................................................................

13. Favorite Character ........................................................................................................

14. Favorite Publication about Comics ................................................................................

Only material with a 1990 cover date can win. Votes for projects that did not have a 1990 publication date will not be counted.

Copy this ballot and give it to your friends, so they can vote, too. Anyone who loves comics can vote — but only vote once. If you vote more than once, all of your votes will be thrown out. Vote only in the categories you want, and ignore any you don’t.

Comics Buyer's Guide is not eligible for Category 14.

Every voter in the United States will get a free copy of Comics Buyer's Guide #924, dated Aug 2, 1991, unless you already have a current or expired subscription to CBG. That issue will carry the list of winners! Votes from other countries will be counted, but we regret that free copies of CBG can't be sent out of this country, unless your vote is accompanied by $2 in U.S. funds to cover handling and shipping.

Mail your ballot individually in a single envelope by June 1, 1991, to:

Comics Buyer's Guide Fan Awards
700 East State Street
Iola, Wisconsin 54990

You need not cut or tear out this page in order to vote! Copies are acceptable and will be counted.

Name ................................................................. Age .......... Male Female (circle one)

Street or Box ...................................................................................................................

City, State, and ZIP .........................................................................................................
Whew! Just got finished with a letter column for
The Vault of Horror and now here's another one
breathing down my neck!

Dear Editors,

Wood's cover for Weird Science #3 is splendidly
dramatically colored, a real entennae-boggler. Once
again you've published another dazzling whiz of a
bump'n cumber stick science fiction comic. These
science fiction strips are perceptive and intelligent in
terms of story as well as being superior works of comic
art.

"The Gray Cloud of Death" is a dramatic and un
compromising story, ending with a trio of spacemen
waltzing as death approaches. The cruel irony of "The
Invaders" is an indictment of our vain, smug and
patriotic notions of "civilization." "Cosmic Ray Bomb
Explosion" is an astounding piece of work. It has great
irony, again ending with shattering doom and revela
tion as the Cosmic Ray Bomb goes off in the last
panel. It's really nice to read a strip that actually
features a Weird Science creative team. With similar
dramatic irony the character Don Hertley in Jack
Kamen's "The Trap of Time" ends up as a buried
skull after experimenting with time travel. Kutzman's
"Atom Bomb Thief" also ends with a bang. My
stomach sunk when I saw the caged-up pigs,
remnbering watching film of an A-Bomb test on
yesteryear. I have to confess to a lot of instant
shock. My pig bun is a natural. I often wonder why
there's no real interest in the dangers and horrors of
mad science running amuck. So I'll stick like radioactive
proto plasm in Weird Science. Keep 'em comin'!

John Miller
Edinburgh
Scotland, UK

Issue #3 was the BEST so far! The cover kept me
mesmerized for I don't know how long! I still can't get
over the irony of "The Martian Monster" and "The
Cosmic Ray Bomb Explosion." These one-page
stories such as "Speed-Up" and "Dr. Rand's Exper
iment" are cool, too. But one question: what's with
the nickel price hike?

Stephen Kramer
Clifton, NJ

That extra nickel's to pay me for doing double later
column duty! (The publisher just got a big laugh
out of that one!) Actually, it reflects long-needed
improvements in the quality of the paper and print
ning for our covers.

Dear Editor,

Let me congratulate you folks at Gladstone for
doing an excellent job on the E.C. line of comics. Weird
Science #3 was no exception.

Being a comic fan, I knew of the E.C. comics, never
dreaming to collect reprints. That's why I'm thankful
to you. But why are they published bi-monthly? I
understand and there is a limited supply of stories,
but please publish more! There is so much junk out
there, so thanks a lot for being here. Another request
is for maybe more titles.

Lots of continued success!

Moeshe Benyamin
Staten Island, NY

I loved issue number 3 of Weird Science! Especially
"The Gray Cloud of Death"! Tell me, how come you
guys are so creative? Were you born with it?

Dee Cheng
Fort Smith, AR

The guys who did the stories were indeed born
with creative talent, but it took work and dedication
to develop it. Good thing they had what it takes!

Dear Ghouls and Goblins,

I'm back! To tell you I got my Weird Science
comic. It was spooky. I especially loved "Cosmic Ray
Bomb Explosion." It was terrific! You should write a
story about alien invasion from outer space and how
we know it's real.

If you have any news about your comics please write: I
can't wait to read your comics when I go home from
school! So keep up with your writing, O.K! Peace!

Your Alien Being,

Damon Wahl
Reading, PA

I am glad you edit the reprints only lightly, apart from
omitting period advertising (which would have been
interesting, surely?) these are as originally published.

Except the colouring. As I have nothing with
which to compare I cannot say whether this is close
to the original, or whether it is "creative." It is cer
tainly attractive, but if it is the latter, it is questionable.

DC explain their new coloring as providing the quality
that was satisfactory in the past. But how can this go before
"reprints" are redrawn and rewritten because a publisher considers that superior
artists and writers are currently available?

Francis Hertzberg
Cheeshire, England

Fortunately, most of Marie Severin's silverprints
from the 50s still exist, so we're usually able to
provide the nearest thing to the original color that can
be had for love or money. As to how far "refur
ishing" reprints can be taken, that's hard to say,
but these days the boundary line is being pushed out
a lot farther than we ever intended to go.

All for now, but always room for more, so write to:

Cosmic Correspondence
P.O. Box 2079 • Prescott, AZ 86302 • (602) 776-1300
He was one of us and yet they killed him, he was my friend and yet they lifted him high and plunged him from the cliff-edge. We hunters were returning at dusk. We'd left the cool, green-smelling forest and crossed the Sahara Place beneath the cliffs, when I saw him struggle. I heard him scream as he flailed in mid-air on his way to a rock-rupturing death. And, though I was, I swore that this day my speech would taste human blood, for he was my friend.

We use the old names still, his name was John and I'd loved him. He came down, screaming and then the screaming stopped and he was dead. I plunged the flesh-killed doe from my shoulders. I would have climbed to the cliff-edge above, but the others would not let me pass...

STOP! Would you be like he is now? You know our law!

They spoke of the law and I trembled. I knew that John had broken the law. For only such a crime is punishable by death. Ours is a strong law! Yet even so, I could not be still...

The law is a stupid law! The law is a good law! It was right that John should die! He broke it! We did not wish to slay you too!
And then they left me to face the darkness alone. I built a cairn for John's body to cheat the scavenging wolves, and then I grieved for it.
I climeed behind the old one... The wise one... and I shivered. For many were the tales I had heard of the mystery behind the law, yet I walked proudly. Erect... as I passed the hunters and their wives and their wide-eyed children...

Samuel took me to his cave. I see no mystery here, old man! The mystery is not a thing to be seen with the eyes or felt with the hands, my son...

The old one sat down on his bed of skins... it is a thing to be seen from within! The mystery is not a thing that is but a thing that was! It was a time long ago, when men were not as they are now... when men lived in shining towers...

All that I saw as the old one spoke, and then I saw the towers crumble. I saw the stone paths split and break and recoil like snakes. I saw the fire like that of a hundred suns...

And somehow I knew. I knew that the things that flew had brought death, they'd hovered... and then they'd streaked away. And where they'd hovered there'd been the flame! The awful, white flame! Oh, Lord...

It is only a brand of flaming in the fire, my son!

The old one spoke, and his words carved visions in my head. I saw neat spires reaching spark-lit fingers to the sky. I saw smooth stone paths, wide as rivers... and things like silver beetles, nailing upon them... and things like wingless, gleaming insects, flying in the sky over the spires... and god-men...

And I saw the god-men die, hundreds... thousands... millions. I saw the fire rise like a ball and mushroom upward and hang over the death and destruction like a blazing cauldron of flame...

And somehow I knew. I knew that the things that flew had brought death, they'd hovered... and then they'd streaked away. And where they'd hovered there'd been the flame! The awful, white flame! Oh, Lord...
It was so real! I dreamed I thought it was the fine from the skies. From the things that flew! The god-men fought for strange reasons, not for food or for mates. But for things you would now understand, and always they fought these wars with their machines. The machines that flew were called rockets.

I saw it all through Samuel's eyes. I saw the rockets in their thousands. I saw them battle and destroy each other until the last rocket dropped from the skies. And then there were different things flying in the skies. Strange things... like birds, with wings that did not move...

I saw more god-men die as if they were sacrificed to the machines they themselves had created. And then I saw them begin to lose their godliness...

And I saw the god-men starve. I saw them perish by the millions. But still their war went on. One day, there were no more flying things in the air... no gleaming beetles on the ground...

The god-men fought with only the things they could carry... with the black sticks which spit flame and the knives made of gleaming, shining stuff...
I saw the man who preached to the others lead them. I saw them seek out all of the things that they had built...

And after the battle, I saw one god-man climb a heap of ruins and speak to the others...

That was the first, my son. The first to understand what men had done... the first to curse the things which Hao made a wilderness of his world. He preached to the others... the few that were left. He made them understand...

And I saw them crush them... smash them... destroy them... the machines!

And when they'd wrecked every last machine, they were content. They left the ruins and the dead places and the wrecked machines, and they went back to the forests and the caves...

And time buried the machine, my son, and the law was born! Never again would man build machines which would destroy himself! You know that law, my son...

Yes! But I never understood it! Now I do...
Then now you understand why John was killed. John broke that law! John made a machine! And the machine means death! If men build one, they will build others!

And if there are others, one day men will fly again and kill again. I loved John, but it is good that John died. Now I can see the wisdom of it!

I can understand! But... but this machine? Has it been destroyed? I have never seen a machine. It would be a tale to tell my son some day... that I had actually seen a machine...

Then the old one arose and went to the cave mouth... and watched the procession filing past...

No, the machine has not been destroyed. Not yet! It is to be placed in the fire so that all may see and know how strong is our law! Come...

They carried it past the old one's cave... the machine. And it was truly wondrous. Its use, I did not know. It was strange... new... alien. I felt the fear rise on my neck, but I did not turn away, afraid though I was...

Remember what you see this night, David. The beginning of all evil! The god-men had such a machine long ago and it eventually brought them agony and doom...

Remember, that you may teach your children, so that they may teach their children... how good is our law! Remember that you have looked upon a machine! Remember its name...

The god-men... our ancestors... called it... a wheel!

The end.
I am a robot... A contrivance of wheels and wires. And yet I also have that human attribute called "emotion". This was proven... to me, at least... when my reprieve came. I had been marching down the jail corridor in that "last mile" between two guards. Ahead of me, through the open door, I could see the solemn group of witnesses and the electrical machine in which I would sit in another moment and have my brain burned to blankness by surging searing energy for the "murder" of my creator, Dr. Link. My metal face showed no feelings. But within, my thoughts, then, were sad and bitter thoughts. I had been ordered by man to bet out of his world...

Suddenly there were shouts behind us. People came hurrying. I saw a face I knew... the young reporter who had deferred me editorially. Flushed, panting, he spoke to the governor who had come to witness my execution...

I'm Jack Hall, sir... Evening Post! Adam Link is innocent! Listen to these witnesses I have brought...

Mr. Hall's witnesses spoke fervently... this robot saved us from that tenement fire. I came to briefly and saw him! We owe him our lives! He rescued my boy from being run over by a car! He's not a murdering monster! God bless you, Adam Link!
Jack and I often talked of my "FUTURE."

Yes, Dr. Link left me the secret of the iridium-sponge brain. But I won't make more robots...not until I first adjust to human life so I may lead others of my kind!

One day, I received a phone call from Dr. Polson, an eminent scientist who had tested my I.Q. at the trial...

"You gave a formula for hormone-growth relationship that you deduced from known facts; I've checked it! It's correct! You are a scientific genius, Adam Link! We need you in our research laboratory..."

Sorry, Doctor! But thank you for giving me an idea!

Dr. Polson's call gave me the inspiration, and that is how I went into business. I took an office in the Maple Building...

Great, Adam! I'll advertise for you and take care of publicity. Every industry in the city will flock here for help!

As my reputation spread, Jack's prediction came true. On paper, doing purely mental work, I unraveled scientific problems ranging from complex chemical reactions to intricate subatomic research...

Amazing! This formula is just what we've been looking for for six years! Here's my check...and $100 an hour is cheap! You're a robot Einstein!

But now I come to a much more significant human problem. It is one that I feel I can never quite explain, but I will try. When my growing business demanded a secretary to handle detail, Jack brought a girl he knew...

"Adam, this is Kay Temple! How do you do, Mr. Link? I've heard a lot about you!

Quickly, though, I sensed that Jack was in love with Kay, but did she love him? I could not tell. Sometimes, after office hours, we three spent evenings together. I recall with mixed pleasure and pain one night as a singer warbled the latest hit tune...

Kay's voice was low, musical. Her soft hand, resting on my hard, metallic substitute, suddenly made me realize I had been "brought up" by Dr. Link with a purely male viewpoint. Though a sexless robot, I was mentally a man, the opposite of this woman...

She is different somehow...mysterious! I cannot read her emotions or her face as readily as I can with men!

He has a heart of gold...and nerves of steel. He ruffles like a dishpan...and never eats a meal. Who do I mean? Why, Adam Link the Ho-o-o-dot!
It was a silly ditty, of course, with endless verses, but as I took a bow, exhorted by the M.C., a drunk arose at the next table, holding a can-opener... mockingly...

Adam Link, tin junk man! Set it? Hawn! I'll offer 99$... not one penny more! Hic...

Pay no attention, Adam!

I ignored the drunk until... I'm not afraid of you either! Wanna make somethin' out of it, Frankenstein?

Please, Jack! Let's leave...

We left quietly, but I was depressed in the taxi. Frankenstein! Would they always think that of me? But then Kay spoke. It is a memory I'll carry with me always, making such things easier to bear...

That pitiful drunken fool! You're more of a man than he could ever hope to be, Adam! You have... yes, character!

I record the following incident only to indicate a possible future role for robots. One day, while I was depositing some checks at my bank, three masked men suddenly appeared...

This is a stick-up! Don't move... anybody!

I slid across the marble floor like a baseball player, upsetting the third before his spraying machine gun could give more than a brief burst...

Outside, two more in a getaway car sped off, abandoning their friends. I smashed through a plate glass window, taking a short cut...

Oooodadf! What the...?

To avoid injuring pedestrians by overturning the car, I merely overtook it and lifted the rear wheels from the road. They spun ineffectively and I pulled the car to a halt...
You may have noticed that we’ve reproduced two versions of the cover art for Weird Science-Fantasy #29 in this issue. Both are by Frank Frazetta, and are virtually Identical! But for some interesting details, whereby hangs a tale (as told by B Hob Stewart):

A curious karma hung over Bill Gaines’ purchase of this illustration since it had been rejected by Famous Funnies—and Famous Funnies was the comic book displayed on newsstands in 1934 by his father, Max Charles Gaines, thereby launching the comic book industry. "That’s the only piece of art I used in my life that I didn’t buy outright," Gaines told interviewer Rich Hauser in 1963. "As I recall, I was paying 60 bucks for a cover in those days. I think I offered him 40 bucks for the rights or 60 bucks for the cover outright; and Frenk, well, he was never one for the buck. He’d rather have the art. He kept it, and I think I paid $40 or $50. Beautiful work."

A 1954 twilight in Boston. Another day’s session on LFI Abner (on which Frazetta had a lengthy tenure) came to a close, and the studio drawing tables were vacated. Everyone was gone except for Frazetta, who stayed late that night to do the ninth in his series of Buck Rogers covers for Famous Funnies (#209-216). Surrounded by Moonbeam McSwine, Tiny Yokum, Nightmare Alice and the other Dogpatch denizens, Frazetta completed the picture in one setting.

"But the various 1953-54 editorial crusades, accusing comic books of excessive violence, had already brought repercussions. The editor who deemed the Buck Rogers combat-with-club is as violent for Famous Funnies was Stephen A. Douglas, a pioneer in the field. Had Douglas chosen to go with Frazetta’s drawing, it would have turned up on Famous Funnies #217."

When Gaines decided to put this art on Weird Science-Fantasy #29, he requested two minor changes, and these were done by Frazetta with small paste-overs on the illustration, adding hair to the foreground figure and deleting Buck’s helmet.

Regrettably, we can only reproduce the art inside this book, but even at that Frazetta’s style comes through as nothing short of spectacular! And here is a final statement concerning “altering” classic E.C. material:

My feeling is that a typo such as "giraffes" (in the Bradbury story "There Will Come Soft Rains"—ed.) should be corrected. In fact, the stories should be carefully proofread because E.C. made lettering corrections with rubber-cement paste-overs, and there are some such corrections which have fallen off the art over the years, revealing the original error.

To intentionally alter the stories is another matter. After studying these changes closely, I submit that you are altering the meaning of the story because your changes are not consistent. In "The Aliens," on page three, the aleene hold a copy of Weird Fantasy #17, and in panel one and four you have deleted the pic, the months end distributor marks. One of the circular E.C. insignias has been replaced by the triangular Gladstone symbol. However, you have not altered the cover in the last panel of page four. These changes mean the story no longer works—because your Weird Science #2 has a front cover that differs from the WF #17 front cover held by the aliens. The impact of the original ending ("...this may be the very magazine those creatures will find...") is rendered meaningless. I’ve always interpreted the word "may" to mean that the aliens found not just WF #17, any copy, but a specific copy—the reader’s own personal copy. Within the careful story construction this amplifies the pay-off, suggesting that an outrageous fantasy has been given a physical reality. Even in reprint, the story should still work because one knows it refers to actual copies of E.C.’s WF #17 still in existence. But in your reprint it doesn’t work because there is no Gladstone or E.C. comic book with a front cover like the one depicted! If your defense is that you printed a similar cover on page 33 of WS #2 and one need only open the book to the staples and bend it backwards, well, we could go at this forever—why isn’t the page 33 cover printed full-bleed? What about the inconsistency on page 4? Etc.

B Hob Stewart
Queene, NY

Most of you who have written to us on this matter, including B Hob, have had experiences with E.C. prior to the current reprint series, and must valid points concerning "tampescing" with stories. It could hardly be otherwise, and we hope that E.C./Gladstone are grateful for your input; it’s helped us modify our approach to making these reprint books work in today’s marketplaces. (Believe us, the fewer things we feel we have to change, the better we like it).

One point: some of you, because of your past experiences with E.C., seem to harbor the notion that anyone who reads an E.C. story today knows as much as you do about it. This is understandable, as you are reading the E.C./Gladstone with a sense of reflection. However, the vast majority of our audience has never heard of E.C. before, and are reading these books with a sense of discovery! Remember what that was like? Any of us with an E.C. background ship, but it can be difficult to recollect that there was a time when we didn’t know squat about E.C., either. So let’s give the new fan a chance to read and enjoy, and then, if they wish, dig into the lore. This way, there’s more likely to be an interest in and an appreciation of the background we ‘old codgers’ possess.

Cosmic Correspondence
P.O. Box 2079 • Prescott, AZ 86302 • (602) 776-1300
The next day, the newspaper lauded my feat... Heroic? Certainly not! Humans have such a herd-worship complex! It was merely the use of my machine-giver powers, I envision someday a police force of robots...perhaps!

What if I made more robots and they turned criminal? They wouldn't, Adam! Criminality is bred by maladjustment...social ills...especially slums, but of which I have to struggle myself!

Shocked at Kay's stories of slum poverty and wretchedness, I suddenly knew what to do with the large sums of money I was rapidly accumulating from my business...

We'll buy up slums...tear down tenements...build modern low-cost apartments in their place! Dh, Adam! I didn't see you as a robot anymore seeing that illusion of metal. I see you as a man!

Kay's eyes were shining...

Yes, a man...big, strong, and gentle...doh, so very gentle. Inside, you are warm and sympathetic, I know. You're human, Adam!

To Kay, from that moment on, I was no longer Adam Link, robot...but Adam Link, man!

You will remember my "cousin" Tom Link, who first befriended me. Busy on legal duties elsewhere, he returned now as my attorney in the slum-clearance project...

I'm proud of you, Adam. Teaming down those venem infested tenements and building shiny new dwellings. But are you sure you want to pour all of your funds into this?

I also bought and drove a powerful sports car, handling it unerringly at high speeds on lone drives. But once, I had to make a choice as a careless driver cut me off...

It's him...or me! Good Lord! I've forced him off the road...straight in the middle of trees!

Tom left soon with all in order and Kay and Jack and I found time for sports. Golf, bowling, tennis...I could not help but excel in all of them. With my superior strength and timing, Jack joyfully used to take down the insufferable ego of a boastful tennis rival...
I'll never forget the shock on the other driver's face. He stopped and rushed to my completely wrecked Jaguar and I stepped out...

I...I...choke... Calm down, sir? A trifle dented... a few scratches... but I'm all right otherwise!

But again I am only digressing, trying to avoid it. But I must get back to Kay Temple. One evening, Jack Hall unburdered his heart to me...

I love her, Adam... deeply! I've never proposed! But she's holding off for some reason! Is it another man? Who?

I...I don't know, Jack!

I found out, though, a few days later. Attracted by Kay's beauty, one caller at my office lingered to annoy her...

Now, look here, please. I don't know who you're cancellin' down!

...and she could turn down a dozen like you without any loss! This is the way out and don't bother coming back!

Okay? Okay! Don't get sore! I'm goin'...

I'm sorry that happened, Kay! But I really can't blame them... with a lovely girl like you...

Adam... Oh, Adam... you mean you've noticed?

She stared at me in a strange way... the way she stared at me, I recall now, from time to time for long months. And I was suddenly frightened by what I saw revealed openly in her eyes...

Adam! I must tell you! I... you are... you're a bit upset, Kay! Why not take the afternoon off?

But Kay refused. She insisted upon talking. Briefly I tried to forestall what I sensed was coming...

Remember, Kay! Remember that I am a metal robot... not a man of flesh and blood!

It doesn't matter to me, Adam... physical structure is unimportant! What counts is the mind... character... personality. You are good, Adam...
...AND I LOVE YOU! ...CHOKED...

She said it calmly, not hysterically, with a tender hand on my chromium-plated shoulder. There was a glow in her eyes that blinded me. This was mad... incredible! A human girl in love with a metal robot! I was that "other man" standing between Jack and Kay. I tried reason...

Jack wants you, Kay! He needs you! Go to him! He loves you!

No! I'm sorry for Jack! I might have married him... but for you! I want to be with you, Adam... always!

For a moment, I had a wild dream but I erased it from my mind... If it were possible, my metal throat would have sobbed as I jenked away from her, almost brutally...

I must go now, Kay! I must!

Don't go, Adam! Please! My life is with you! Please!

I left her with tears in her eyes... tears that I couldn't wipe myself...

Goodbye, Kay. Don't try to follow me! I... I... goodbye!

Adam, my love! Come back... sob... come back!

I drove to a deserted cabin in the quiet country to be alone. Hours have passed since I first began writing this account. I have the telegram ready for Tom Link, instructing him to liquidate my business. Now, the letter to Jack...

Someday, I will leave here for a secret place I own, known only to me... my robot retreat! I may return to this world someday, but I don't know when! There is much good I can do... yet much harm I must wipe out. All emotion that could destroy me...

Dear Jack,

Deep down in her heart, there can be only one man for Kay... you! Marry her! To you both, my deepest love...

I will vanish into hiding, perhaps for years. I will return until I am truly a machine again. It is the only way!

Signed...

Adam Link Robot.

The end
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