FAMOUS 1950s EC COMICS!

THE VAULT OF HORROR

NO. 3 APR

Featuring the new trend in magazines, ILLUSTRATED SUSPENSTORIES. WE DARE YOU TO READ!
GET ANY OR ALL...

OF THESE EC COMICS FROM RUSS COCHRAN'S REPRINT LINE! THE ENTIRE BACKLIST IS STILL AVAILABLE AND READY TO SHIP TO YOU! NOW IS THE TIME TO REVIEW YOUR COLLECTION AND FILL IN THOSE GAPS.

AND WE ARE PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO OFFER TWO ISSUES FROM EAST COAST'S EC CLASSIC REPRINT LINE OF THE MID-70s. QUANTITY IS VERY LIMITED ON THESE, FIRST COME-FIRST SERVED.

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Welcome, once again, to the vault of horror! I see we have many new readers with us this time! Heh, heh! I trust you have properly prepared yourselves! By that I mean, you have made sure all the doors and windows are locked, haven't you? For, the tale I am about to unfold will truly be an initiation for you! You other readers who have been here before... Ready? Heh, heh, heh! Good! Now, lie back in your grave and get a good grip on your nerves because we are about to begin the story I call:

VOODOO VENGEANCE!
FOR THE PAST THIRTEEN YEARS, CALES STARDISH HAD LEFT HIS PALATIAL SUITE OF OFFICES AT PRECISELY FIVE P.M. AND HAD WALKED ONE BLOCK TO THE GARAGE WHERE HE ALWAYS PARRED HIS CAR, BUT THIS DAY, HE LEFT EARLY.

NOW, THAT'S STRANGE, I'D SWEAR THIS SHOP WASN'T HERE BEFORE! I PASS HERE AT LEAST TWICE A DAY! FUNNY HOW I NEVER NOTICED IT!

HMM... ANTIQUES... ODITIES... SOME NICE THINGS IN THE WINDOW! I THINK I'LL GO IN... MIGHT BE ABLE TO PICK UP SOMETHING NICE FOR SALLY!

I'M LOOKING FOR A GIFT TO GIVE MY WIFE, BUT IT'S SO DARK IN HERE I CAN'T SEE YOUR WARES! COULDN'T WE HAVE A BIT MORE LIGHT?

THE POWERS OF THE DARKNESS, SIN, ARE INFINITE! NOT FOR I HAVE THAT WHICH YOU SEEK!

HERE, SIR! I THINK YOU WILL BE INTERESTED IN THIS... THIS DOLL!

A DOLL? NO! I'M AFRAID THAT'S NOT WHAT I HAD IN MIND! MAYBE YOU COULD SHOW ME SOMETHING ELSE!

IF YOU DO NOT CARE FOR THIS DOLL, SIN, PERHAPS YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ONE NOT SO ORDINARY! PERHAPS A VOOOOO DOLL?!

A VOOOOO DOLL? WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

A WAX DOLL THAT WILL BE THE EXACT DUPLICATE OF ANYONE YOU NAME! ONLY, ON THIS DOLL I SHALL CAST A VOOOOO SPELL! AND WHATSOEVER HAPPENS TO THE DOLL, SO SHALL IT ALSO HAPPEN TO THE PERSON IN WHOSE LIKENESS THE DOLL IS MADE!

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HEH! YOU SIBELIEVE! BUT IT'S TRUE! IN THE PAST I HAVE MADE MANY SUCH DOLLS... FOR THOSE WHO MIGHT WISH... Ahmed, harm to another?

I... I DO NOT BELIEVE YOU! I... I THINK I'LL LEAVE.

BURY YOU SO, REMEMBER THIS! IF EVEN YOU WISH TO DO SOMEONE HARM... OR TO KILL SOMEONE... COME TO ME! MY VOODOO DOLLS!

ST. STOP! T-TAKE YOUR HANDS FROM ME!

HEH! HEH! HEH! HEH! REMEMBER WELL! MY WORDS, SMH! REMEMBER WELL! HEH! HEH! HEH! HEH! HEH!

HEH! HEH! HEH! OLD CALEB CERTAINLY LEFT THERE IN A HURRY! HE HAD BEEN GREATLY FRIGHTENED AND ALL THE WAY HOME THE WEIRD SHOPKEEPER'S WORDS ECHOED AND RE-ECHOED THROUGH HIS MIND! HEH! HEH! HEH!

CALEB ENTERED HIS HOUSE... AND AS HE QUIETLY CLOSED THE DOOR, HE HEARD HIS WIFE'S VOICE...

SOUNDS LIKE SALLY IS TALKING TO SOMEONE? SHE DOESN'T EXPECT ME HOME THIS EARLY... I'LL SNEAK IN AND SURPRISE THE SWEET, YOUNG THING!

BUT, SALLY, HOW MUCH LONGER DO WE HAVE TO WAIT?

DARLING, DON'T BE SO IMPATIENT! FOR ALL THE MONEY HE'LL LEAVE ME WHEN HE DIES, I CAN AFFORD TO BE NICE TO THE OL' GOAT... GIMME A KISS.
SOMETIME LATER HE PARKED HIS CAR AND WALKED TOWARD HIS OFFICE. SUDDENLY, HE STOPPED...

"IF EVER YOU WISH TO DO SOMEONE HARM, COME TO ME!"

THE NEXT MORNING, CALES BROUGHT THE SHOPKEEPER PHOTOGRAPHS OF SALLY AND WAS TOLD TO RETURN AT MIDNIGHT! AFTER A NERVE-WRACKING DAY, HE RETURNED TO THE SHOP AND WAS USHERED DOWN INTO THE CELLAR...

OH, NO... SALLY... NOT YOU! HOW... HOW COULD YOU, SALLY? HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME?

SOB!

WITH HIS EYES BRIMMING WITH TEARS, THE BROKEN HEARTED OLD MAN LEFT THE HOUSE AND DROVE BACK TO HIS OFFICE!

"IT ISN'T RIGHT FOR HER TO HURT ME THIS WAY! IT ISN'T RIGHT! SOB; I WISH I COULD HURT HER SOMEHOW, BUT I CAN'T. I... I STILL LOVE HER!

HEH! HEH! I KNEW YOU WOULD RETURN! YOU WISH ME TO MAKE YOU A VOODOO DOLL, DON'T YOU? HEH! WHO IS IT TO BE? BIR? WHO IS IT TO BE?

HUH... MY WIFE!

THE SHOPKEEPER SEPARATE THE BLACK MAGIC RITUAL HE CHANTED WEIRD INCANTATIONS AND DANCED BEFORE THE DOLL... AND CALES SAT WATCHING...
For what seemed like hours, the ritual continued, as the shopkeeper became more and more frenzied. Caleb grew more and more frightened. His clothes were wet with perspiration and his mind was in turmoil.

Suddenly, it was over.

"Here, sir, is your doll. Remember—whatsoever happens to this doll, so shall it also happen to the person in whose likeness the doll was made!"

Caleb left the antique shop and went home. He slept fitfully, but next day he awoke rested and composed.

"I must have been mad! I can hardly believe it really happened! But there is the wax doll to prove it! I wonder if what he said about it is true? I... I must find out!"

"Good morning, Caleb! Oh... what a beautiful statue! And... why, it's a statue of me!"

"Don't touch that!"

"Why, Caleb! That is a statue of me, isn't it?"

"Er... ah... yes! Yes, I had it made! But... I don't want you to touch it! It... it's very delicate! Yes, delicate! Promise you don't touch it!"

Of course, Caleb, you dear! If it will make you happy, I promise not to go near it! You sweet darling, you're not angry with Li'l Ol' Me, are you, dear?"

"Oh, Sally, Sally, how can you say those things when you don't mean them? How can you lie to me like that? Not angry with Li'l Ol' Me, are you, dear?"

"No, no, Sally... I'm not angry...

"That's good! Oh! There's the phone! I'll get it!"

"All right, Sally! I'll just put the statue up here on the shelf. Out of harm's way!"
DARLING, YOU CAN'T COME TODAY! MY HUSBAND'S HOME!...YES, I'LL MEET YOU TONIGHT! SAME PLACE...YES!...YES, OF COURSE I LOVE YOU...NOW, GOOD-BYE...

THE CHEAT! THE LIAR! IF SHE THINKS SHE'S GOING TO MEET HER LOVER TONIGHT, SHE'S MISTAKEN! I'LL STOP HER...BUT HOW? HOW...WAIT! THE VOODOO DOLL!

WILL IT WORK? I WONDER...BUT IT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN STOP HER! I'LL...I'LL TRY IT! I'LL...I'LL JUST...

...SCRATCH THE STATUE'S ARM...LIKE THIS!

The scream shocked Caleb into action! Quickly putting the doll back on its shelf, he ran to the kitchen.

CALEB! DO SOMETHING! CALL THE DOCTOR! I JUST CUT MY ARM WITH THE BUTCHER KNIFE! IT'S BLEEDING TERRIBLY! DO SOMETHING!

CUT YOURSELF? GOOD HEAVENS! HE WAS RIGHT! IT...IT WORKS!

DON'T JUST STAND THERE, YOU IDIOT! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M BLEEDING? GET A DOCTOR!

After the doctor had bandaged Sally's arm, he gave her a sleeping pill, and left naturally, she didn't meet her boy-friend that night, but Caleb wasn't as happy as you might expect.

IT'S AMAZING! WITH THIS DOLL I HOLD SALLY'S LIFE IN MY HANDS! IT'S...IT'S WEIRD! I'M ALMOST AFRAID OF IT!

IT WORKS...
Poor Caleb! He disliked hunting Sally because he still loved her! But he was jealous, and if that was the only way he could keep her, that was how it would be! Well, friends, Sally recovered rapidly... and one night...

Caleb, I'm going to visit an old friend!...ah... May Be a little late. Don't wait up for me!

Ha! She doesn't fool me! I heard her make a date with her lover!

She must think I'm a fool! Well, I'll show her how foolish I am! I'll just break the doll's leg this time! There!

Once again the doctor was summoned. Sally's leg had been broken and she had to remain in bed for a long while. Heh, heh! Caleb was very happy! But it didn't last forever! Sally became well.

Oh, darling, I know it's been such a long time! But I couldn't help it! Caleb wouldn't leave me for a minute! He's such a pest...yes, bon... I'll meet you tonight! Good-bye, darling.

Sally, please... Don't! I've given you everything! I beg of you... leave that man! I can't stand it any longer! Please, darling, please! You loved me once...

Why, you old fool! You been spying on me. That's what spying on me!

Sally, please... Don't! I've given you everything! I beg of you... leave that man! I can't stand it any longer! Please, darling, please! You loved me once...

Caleb? Wha... I thought you were out!

Don't pretend, dear! I know what's been going on, but I can't be angry with you! Sally, please. I love you.

Why, you old fool! You been spying on me. That's what spying on me!

Sally, please... Don't! I've given you everything! I beg of you... leave that man! I can't stand it any longer! Please, darling, please! You loved me once...

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Sally, please... Don't! I've given you everything! I beg of you... leave that man! I can't stand it any longer! Please, darling, please! You loved me once...
Loved you? Ha! I only married you for your money! You old nitwit! I can’t stand you! SALLY... PLEASE! DON’T... DON’T SAY THAT! OUCH!

I hate you! I hate you! You and your money! SPYING! I’ll show you! SALLY! NO! DON’T TOUCH THE DOLL! DON’T!

No! Sally! You don’t know what you’re doing!

His face contorted in stark terror, Caleb could only watch helplessly as the wax image of Sally sailed over head and struck the inner wall of the fireplace...

The pieces fell on the burning log... the licking flames leaped around them... and they began to melt.

CRASH!

Well, dear readers, that was a smashing climax, wasn’t it? Too bad Sally was such a hot-head! She really went to pieces over her shattered romance! Heh! Heh! Heh! Now the poor thing is all broken up! Yep... Old Caleb finally melted Sally’s cold heart in one soul-searing scene, didn’t he? Heh! Heh! Heh! Now that you’re warmed up to my tales, pull yourself together and read on... Heh! Heh! Read on!

SALLY!

The End
Mr Vault-Keeper,
I would very much like it if you would send me a picture of your slinky self. I always read your comics on the bus ride home because I’m the last one off. The tale I liked best is “The Mask of Horror” in [RCP VAULT #5]. I only have two books and I also like to draw pictures of the three storytellers, The Old Witch, The Crypt-Keeper, and my favorite one, The Vault-Keeper.

Jesse Ryan Deering
Omer, MI

Dear Vault-Keeper,
I just wanted to ask for your picture, but as long as I am here I guess I’ll tell you some things, like my fave mag is yours. I just recently got a subscription to all of the horror mags. My fave story is “The Mask of Horror” in [RCP VAULT #5].

Alan
Besthalta, IL

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I love your comics. I am your biggest fan. I have The VAULT OF HORROR 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 & 10. Did you ever think about getting your own show like “Tales from the Crypt?” It would be really cool if you did. Could you send me an autograph?

Blaise Caroleo
Staten Island, NY

See there, H80! My picture they want, my autograph they want! Amicus that I was star-material. I’ll even pay for the puppet-rod implants (CK says they’re tax deductible)!

—VK

Dear VK,
I just want to say that EC comics are the best. I buy every issue. My favorite tale is from [RCP VAULT #3], “Graft In Concrete,” another favorite is from [RCP CRYPT #5] “Squash...Anyone?” There’s a certain tale I’ve been dying to read, could you tell me what upcoming issue it will be in, or if there is one? It’s called “Dead Wait.”

Billy Ray Price
Meridian MS

“Dead Wait!” appeared in VAULT OF HORROR #23, which will be our VAULT #12, and I told the tale, so you know it’s good! If you can’t wait, it’s also in Gladstone’s VAULT #4 (see our ad elsewhere this ish).

So, if you’re dying to read it, you can choose between a slow death or a fast one. Decisions, decisions. Squash?

—VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,
I could remember back when I saw this movie about this girl who would draw monsters and they would come to life and do what her drawing showed. Since then I love anything to do with horror. I would see many movies and watch many, many horror shows on TV. One day I went to my local newstand and noticed a comic book that said VAULT OF HORROR I picked it up and looked at it. It was worth every penny. I wanted to read it so bad, but when I got home I had to cut the grass. The book was on my mind during the 1½ hour period. It soon was dark which made a perfect environment. I had my soda pop and chips ready as I read. It was great.

I have been doing my own comic books. Although my drawing ability is not yet perfect, nor my tales either, when I’m down I read some CRYPTs and VAULTs.

John Hempstead, age 17
Struthers, OH

What a charming scene of domestic life, what a typical, Theodore Cleaver picture of chores, snacks & delayed pleasure. . .

How disgusting! This is 90s, kiddo; immediate gratification and hedonistic pleasure up to your ear! I’m talking about the driving force of modern society.

[Don’t let VK discourage you, John. Sounds great to us!]

—VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

What’s up? I was reading your issue #2, and the stories are so wild. They keep you in suspense through the whole story. Some are switched around, you think someone did it, and the other person really did it. I like the way you do that. I love reading the comics at night. Keep it up!

Rich Armas
Kankakee, IL

Hey, Rich, I consider it a vote of confidence that, although you don’t know what I’ve got up, you want me to keep it there!

—VK

MORE AFTER “RATS HAVE SHARP TEETH!”
The tingling air and the gleaming snow-capped peaks of the Carpathian mountains attract vacationers from all over the world. Trudging up the flank of the Cragghorn is a little group of climbers...

From a little village in the southern part of Transylvania... Viktor Zerak...

And from America, honeymooning in this romantic setting... John and Edna Farnum...

And the English brothers... students, enjoying their summer freedom from classes at Oxford... Reggie and Eric Smythe...

These are the people who will follow their grizzled guide, the Roumanian Jan Bozila, into the adventure and excitement they seek. They know they face danger, but how can they know of the horror they will meet when terror strikes in the form of a...

WEREWOLF

There it is! The lodge where we will rest this night! Tomorrow we shall continue the climb to the top of the Cragghorn!

SH-H-H! No one must hear me, Mr. Farnum! I must warn you of something... horrible!
IT'S HE! VICTOR ZORAK! I THINK HE'S A... WEREWOLF!

MIDICULOUS, MAN! YOU DON'T REALLY BELIEVE THOSE OLD SUPERSTITIONS, DO YOU? WHY, ZORAK SEEMS LIKE A NICE GUY!

BUT THERE ARE SIGNS... UNMISTAKABLE SIGNS! L-LOOK AT THE HAIR ON THE PALMS OF HIS HANDS AND HIS EYES. THE EYEBROWS MEET IN THE MIDDLE AND HIS MIDDLE FINGER... THE SAME LENGTH AS HIS MIDDLE FINGER! A WEREWOLF, I TELL YOU!

WHY HA-HA YOUR OWN EYEBROWS ARE JUST AS SHAGGY! NOW FORGET IT!

WHAT WAS THE OLD CHAP WHISPERING ABOUT. FARNUM? IS THE LOUSE HAUNTED OR SOMETHING?

YOU'RE NOT VERY WRONG, SMYTHIE! HE SEEMS TO THINK THAT ZORAK IS A... YOU DON'T BELIEVE THIS A WEREWOLF...

YOU MEAN, ZORAK'S LIABLE TO CHANGE INTO A WOLF SOME NIGHT AND TEAR US APART WITH HIS AWFULfang. HE'S JUST MADDING YOU, WHAT?

I THINK IT BEST IF WE MOWE IMMEDIATELY. I KNOW YOU'RE ALL ANXIOUS TO LEAVE EARLY TOMORROW, FOR WE HAVE A HARD CLIMB AHEAD OF US.

YES, I'M TERRIBLY TIRED. GONE, JOHN DEAR! GOOD-NIGHT ALL. GOOD-NIGHT!

THAT'S FUNNY! I THOUGHT EVERYONE WAS ASLEEP BY NOW. WONDER WHO'S WANDERING AROUND AT THIS HOUR? GUESS I'LL TAKE A LOOK.

SQUEEAK.

YAAHH!
Wha... what are you doing? You certainly scared me!

You think I'm an old fool, but I must take precautions!

Silver crosses, one for each window, and one for each of us to wear. Here! It is all that will protect you!

Are these... for the doors? The wolf sign bloom's this time of year, and the werewolves howl when they smell it! This will keep him away!

Garlic? Any one's mad around here, is it you? This medieval stuff is stupid. I just won't hear anymore! Goodnight!

But Jan Bodzla was wary... and while the others slept he silently stood guard...

Tomorrow night there will be a full moon! Then the cursed thing will surely assume its horrible form!

But perhaps it was Jan's ancient ritual, perhaps there really was no werewolf, but the night passed quietly into the dawn.

Relaxing in the sunlight, Jan and his group were very anxious to start on the trail...

It is lovely, isn't it? I can't wait to reach the top!

Oh, Mr. Smythe, I do hope we make the summit!

Up the west slope of the imposing towers of stone? Older, closer to... what...? Listen, old man, you really shouldn't tell those silly old stories, you might scare Mrs. Fashum!

But it's true! Savage tre coming night! At the time of the full moon, the werewolf will stalk innocent victims for his inhuman pleasures!

Shh-h-h! Here are the gnomes! Possibly those norse tales for awhile, what say?

You will see... you will see! But now, it is time to make camp for the night!
The moon appears in the darkening sky as the climbers eat their supper... unaware of impending horror.

Look how his eyes shine! The moon is rising and his eyes turn red! It's the first sign... we must watch him carefully!

Red eyes! You're a card! You certainly have an imagination! Why, it's just the reflection of the flames!

The moon is rising and his eyes turn red! It's the first sign... we must watch him carefully!

Her hand! He looks at her hand and sees the sign of the pentagon visible only to him! She will be his first victim! We must save her!

Oh, you're really funny, you know! But old Jan's warnings are ignored! The climbers retire to their tents and all is quiet... for awhile. Then, suddenly...

What is it? Mrs. Farnum. She's gone! That scream... we must find her!

Let's go... we can't waste time! We're with you, Eric!

But everybody's not here! Where is Zorak? Where is he?
WE CAN'T WORRY ABOUT HIM NOW. C'MON! LET'S SPREAD OUT! BE CAREFUL... AND IF YOU SEE ANYTHING... SHOOT TO KILL!

NO... WAIT! THOSE BULLETS ARE NO GOOD WAIT!

WE CAN'T WAIT!

WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED? OW!

OVER HERE! I'VE FOUND HER! HURRY!

I TRIPPED OVER SOMETHING AND THERE...

UGH-UGH! IT'S... HORRIBLE! SHE MUST HAVE BEEN ATTACKED BY AN... ANIMAL!

YES... A HUNGRY ANIMAL! A... WEREWOLF! YOU BELIEVE ME, NOW!

NOTHING ELSE WILL KILL THE WEREWOLF BUT THESE SILVER BULLETS! AND THEY ARE SLEETE... I MADE THEM FROM THE CROSSES! I MELTED THEM AT THE LODGE LAST NIGHT!

His Tracks... They're Wolf Tracks! They Head Upwards! He's Climbing to the Peak! This is the Only Way Down... We Have Him Trapped!

We'll Have to Leave Poor Farnum Here...

No! Edna... My Wife! I want to... Kill Him! I'll Set... Whatever Unholy Thing It Is!
The loathsome beast led them stealthily on, skulking in the shadows here... darting into the moonlight there! He evaded the hunters, and led them up up.

There he is! After him! I see him! Let me at him!

I can't shoot! Farnum, get out of the way!

But don't you know? Those whom the werewolf bites, or scratches, are contaminated! Nothing can save them from this hideous fate! The werewolf's victims become...
WEREWOLVES!
They lay in their coffins, the quiet dead of old and haughty Cape Colony. On their boney fingers they wore their rings, and jewels sparkled around their withered necks and arms. Seeking this forgotten loot came Abner Tucker... merciless to anything that stood in his path... forgetting in his greed... that...

**Rats Have Sharp Teeth!**

Abner Tucker was the local historian of blue-blooded Cape Colony. He knew the ancestry of every man and woman in town. He also knew... other things...

The book said... she was buried... while wearing all her wedding jewels?

Suddenly, shrilly in the night's silence, Abner Tucker screamed...
Another Rat! They've honeycombed this place with their burrows and nests. Whewww...sure gave me a start! I thought she was stirring in there...sitting up!

Ahh, there she is! The lovely Miss Lady Dean...with all her emeralds! Her emeralds...? my emeralds, now!

And here they are...just as that old history I found said. Real emeralds, all right! A fortune in jewels...all nine just like the rest of the things this graveyard holds!

Yes, this is only the beginning! In my role as historian I have access to old records, old burial records and diaries! This whole graveyard must hold hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of valuables...someday...I'll be rich!

What was that? I heard something...gulp! A...a policeman!

If anyone ever saw me digging up those graves, I'd go to jail! And I can't let that happen! I've got to get away. Think up some way...to dig up those graves without risk of discovery!

Some afternoons later, in the office of the office of the committee in charge of the colonial graveyard, Abner, the committee...has passed on your application for the vacant post of caretaker...you have the job! Thank you, sir. Thank you.
Asher Tucker wand his home in the old mansion which was now a part of the grave yard. At night he poked over old plans and blueprints. According to this old print, there's a secret entrance from the cellar into the tunnels beneath the graveyard.

They used those tunnels during the revolution to smuggle spies in and out. Then during the Civil War to help slaves escape up north.

This must be... GRRRRRRRR!

Those rats gave me a scare! blasted things! I'll have to get rid of them... somehow.

Down, down a wooden staircase rotted with age and into the earth, tunnels went Asher Tucker, and everywhere that he went... RATS! Thousands of them? They're all over the place!

There's a grave right about here. I'll just get in a little work tonight. Have everything ready for tomorrow.

And as Asher Tucker worked and sweated, cruel, little glittering eyes watched him. Every move. For Asher Tucker was an enemy... to the rats.

I ought to be inside the coffin-chamber painfully soon.
At last! Here it is! The grave of rich old Marcus Lee! He was buried with his moneybelt still on him!

There! There's the belt. Stuffed with gold bricks! How heavy it feels! But that's because... gold is heavy!

Nice yellow gold! Enough here to make us rich! But there's more to come. I'll leave the belt here tonight. I must have a safe hiding place for it... up above.

All the next day, Abner Tucker went about his tasks with impatience that right, as he went along the tunnel and into the rifled grave of Marcus Lee.

The moneybelt gone!

Those rats took it! I can see the marks—where they dragged it along the tunnel. They stole my money.

Steal my things, will you? I'll teach you, you filthy little beasts! It's war! You want, is it? All right. From now on— you all die!

You die! Ha! Ha! Ha! You hear me, you—you things? You die! Nobody steals Abner Tucker's gold from him.
Next day, Abner Tucker worked like a man possessed, he built traps... They'll learn what a man can do! They'll learn by dying!

He poisoned meat, and cut it into tiny crunks. At night he walked the tunnels, dropping the deadly food. HA! HA! RA! Come and get it, your dinner! RA! RA! DEADLY DINNER

Day after day, rats died by the hundreds! Now, when he walked the tunnels, there were few of them to be seen. But Abner Tucker was not satisfied. There! This wire barrier will keep them down at the far end of the tunnel. Now I can dig all I want... and they can't get at my treasures!

Now I can really concentrate on my job! The next grave to be opened is that of Gaffer Pondleby. He was an old squire, who had his fortune buried with him.

His grave is further than I thought! I'll have to shore up this tunnel with wooden beams, to keep it from collapsing.

By day, Abner Tucker pored over the old graveyard plans as he ate his lunch. After I open Pondleby's grave, I'll get to work on young squire Jackson's! He had a collection of gold rings that was buried with him.
As he ate, Arner Tucker was blissfully unaware that his enemies, the Nats, were furiously working away below him.

Once free, the Nats raced for the tunnel on which Arner Tucker had so furiously labored. Their quick white teeth gnawed at the wooden beams that supported the walls of the ponole by tunnel.

Night after night, Arner Tucker worked away in the dim light. He never noticed the slow, steady weakening of the beams until one night a week later.

At last! Look at his gold! His moneybags! His jewels! There must be close to fifty thousand dollars in here!

So excited was he that he did not hear the sharp clicking of sawing teeth.

A beam weakened by the sawing...and the weight of untold tons of dirt...cracked! Another cracked! What's that? What is it? Ohhnnn! The tunnel is caving in!

The Nats! They've gnawed away the tunnel supports! My spade is useless!

No...no...no! I'll be buried alive...down here...I can't dig out with my bare hands...no no...the air won't last long...I'll be suffocated...buried!

Twenty feet above, the graveyard was quiet. Only the dead...and the Nats...were there to enjoy the moonlight...
Dear V-K,
I like the idea of having hosts for EC comics. In order I like the Crypt-Keeper because he's very funny. Next is the Old Witch who always seems to be stirring something new in HAUNT. Third, I like YOU because you're such a nice guy.

Scott Kirkpatrick
Cincinnati, OH

I must be slipping. —VK

Dear CK, VK, OW,
Recently I read one of your horror comics. I enjoyed it very much. My family went on a trip to Muskegon; we stopped at a gas station, and I bought three of your comics. My whole family likes your comics. I've told my friends about your comics and they are starting to collect them. I've been so delighted with your comics that I thought I'd write.

Tina Montie
Alpena, MI

'Fess up, you're...the Addams family! —VK

Dear Russ,
In the past I have purchased six of your EC libraries. But the one-time outlay of cash for these tremendous hardback books has prevented me from doing so recently. I never bought any of the combination reprint issues. I wanted them in order and not mixed together. You must have read my mind.

Your new format is perfect for me. I like the chronological printing, the paper format and lower price, and I like the quarterly frequency. I would also like to purchase the Pre-Trend ECs. None of these have ever been reprinted in any format that I know of. I also would be purchasing the post-code issues if you reprint them in this format. Thanks for a super product.

Matt Sturm
Cincinnati, OH

Russ says to say if you DO decide you want hardbacks (ouch, ouch), he's published the entire New Direction (post-code, OUCH) line, and for a short time only you can order the 3-set Pre-Trend books (WAR AGAINST CRIME; CRIME PATROL; SADDLE JUSTICE; GUNFIGHTER; SADDLE ROMANCES; A MOON, A GIRL...ROMANCE and MODERN LOVE) at a special prepublication price; write or call for details (EE-Yow! Now, leggo the arm, Russ, you'll break it. Again.) —VK

Dear GhoulUnatics,
I just wanted to let you know that all the #1 issues of the 32-page ECs arrived in perfect condition. Your packing & shipping department did a careful job, and obviously cares about the condition the comics arrive in.

Although the #1s were ordered as back issues, I did finally order a premium subscription by phone. I don't have a car, so the cost of a subscription is probably equal to or less than round trip bus fare to a comic shop 12 times a year, especially now that recent route changes mean that it now takes 2 buses to get to the nearest comic shop. Also, the shop relegates what few ECs they have to the rotating rack. You have heard this before, but my comic shop copy of TWO-FISTED looks like somebody drove a nail through it! All the comic shop people told me how mutilated the comics would be if I subscribed, while theirs would be near perfect condition. It looks like it's the other way around! I now know that if they come from you via a premium subscription, they'll be in perfect condition. I chose the $75 Option #3. As long as they come in a box, it is all that matters to me. I always thought Calumet was a brand of baking powder.

I couldn't help but notice similarities between "Portrait In Wax!" in VAULT #1 and the 1950s Vincent Price movie "House of Wax." Not the plot, but specific details, like corpses disguised as wax statues and a man who covered his scarred face with a wax mask. I wonder if it was just coincidence, or if the writers of the film "borrowed" these ideas from VK.

I'll consider ordering some of the color prints of EC covers. I'm assuming they're the color plates from the hardcover EC Library. I haven't decided yet, because it would take some of the surprise out of getting the comics if I saw all the covers at once.

That's all about all I have to say. Your main requests in the last few pages are "Subscribe!" and "We Want Letters!", and now I've done both.

Bobby Birkert

CK mentioned the vide-worthy Vincent in his recent in CRYPTO #3, now it's my turn! Before we crow too loudly about beating Hollywood to the punch, beer in mind. "House of Wax" was a remake of 1933's "Mystery of the Wax Museum," directed by Michael Curtiz. But, to compare, here's the peerless Price vs. "House." A Henry Jerrod being unmasked alongside Craig's Julie Vendette in the same circumstance, from "Portrait In Wax!" in VAULT #1.

While we're on the subject, I've been catching up on movies released since my forced retirement, and can recommend the
Dear Vault-Keeper,

I love your gruesome tales. I've read only one issue of VAULT, I know I'll buy more. It's the best comic I've ever read. Although I'm not the best artist in the world, I drew a picture, I hope you will like it.

Anthony Bell
Plainfield, IN

I like it! I like it! From sharp minds come...sharp knife! —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I want to know who wrote EC's stories in CRYPT, VAULT, and HAUNT. Was it the artists? At first, when I started collecting, I thought it was. Now, I am not sure.

I am your #1 fan.

Dan Kraut
Philadelphia, PA

At last! My own little #1 fan!
The fact is, we're not set up to accurately list the authors of the EC stories, but we can easily (using the von Bnewitz "Checklist") list the artists.

—VK

Electronic publications are available this month are WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED TALES. Watch for HAUNT, WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY and CRIME next month. Don't forget CRYPT, WEIRD SCIENCE and SHOCK. Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic for details)! Back issues are $1.50 each plus $2.00 per order for aum ($3.00 outside US).

We want letters! Write to:
VAULT
RUSS COCHRAN
POB 483
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

THIS COMIC REPRINTS
VAULT OF HORROR "F14" (#3, AUG. 1950)

"Voodoo Vengeance!" Johnny Craig
"Werewolf!" Wally Wood
"Rats Have Sharp Teeth!" Graham Ingels
"The Strange Couple!" Al Feldstein

Kevin Spann
5415 Cardinal
Little Rock, AR 72204

See also the local in CRYPT #3, already in release.

—VK
This tale is one of my favorites! I call it...

**The Strange Couple!**

You have been driving for two hours through this blinding downpour! At times, you can hardly see the road ahead! Headlights don't help! They only reflect back from the sheets of driving rain... giving the eerie effect that you are following a solid wall of water! Wait... there's a light up ahead! It's moving up and down... it... it's a man standing in the road... a state trooper... signaling you to stop...

You'll have to turn back, mister! The bridge's washed out up ahead.

But... I've got to get through! Isn't there another way?

You can take this side road! It crosses the river 'bout two miles below! Bad road, though.

Thanks, officer... I'll chance it!

You back the car up, and swing into the side road! The car bumps and rocks as you guide it through the slackness! The officer was right! This is a bad road... full of holes... now filled with water...

...hope none of these ruts are deep! If the engine got wet, I'd be stuck good!
You continue off, splash and rolling, for what seems like hours. You're tired now. The strain of driving in this dreadful downpour is beginning to have its effect.

Suddenly you sit bolt upright! A light shining through the black downpour. Funny! You didn't notice it before. Maybe it's a house. Maybe perhaps they have a phone... need a mechanic to fix the car!

The engine has stalled! That last ditch you went through probably wet the works. You're stuck now. Stuck out in this abandoned spot!

Well, there's no use trying to walk anywhere, the rain is too heavy for that...

Minnt as well make myself comfortable. Got to wait for this beastly storm to stop. Tired anyway. No-nun... I'll

You pull your collar up around your neck, pull your hat down, and make a sneak for the house.

I hope they can put me up for the night! I'm... pant... hungry, too!

You knock! The hollow sound echoes through the interior. And heavy slow footsteps approach the door. The rusty hinges squeak and strain, as the door swings open...

Ow! Sudden! This place gives me the creeps.

Go away. Go away. From here.

But the storm...
WHY...THANK YOU, SIR.' I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD PUT ME UP...

OF COURSE! WAIT HERE! I'LL GO DOWN INTO THE WINE CELLAR...AND BRING UP A BOTTLE OF MY BEST VINTAGE!

YOU MUSTN'T MIND MY WIFE, SIR! SHE'S NOT WELL!

THAT'S WHY WE LIVE OUT IN THIS DESERTED PLACE! I CAN KEEP MY EYE ON HER...TAKE CARE OF HER!

YOU SIT DOWN! YOU LOOK AROUND! THE WOMAN IS COVERING IN THE CORNER! HER BEAUTIFUL EYES FOLLOW THE MAN AS HE DISAPPEARS INTO THE CELLAR! THEN SHE HUSHES TO YOU...CLAWING AT YOUR ARM...

MY HUSBAND...IS A VAMPIRE! THAT IS WHY YOU MUST LEAVE! TRUST ME! THAT BOTTLE HE'S SETTING...IT'S ALMOST EMPTY!

PLEASE! I SEE OF YOU! GO!

GOOD LORD! THE WOMAN IS MAD!

YOU ARE IN GREAT DANGER HERE!

MY HUSBAND... HE IS INHUMAN!

IT'S NOT WINE! IT'S BLOOD!
The footsteps on the cellar stairs warn the old woman of her husband’s return and she slips into the shadows beyond the fireplace.

You’ll understand! We are!

The man puts the bottle on the table... and you stare at it! It is almost empty, and the contents are a deep red... blood red.

You’ll join me, sir?

I’d rather not!

He jumps up in a fit of rage! He rushes to the woman who sits muddles in the darkness.

You’ve been talking! Go upstairs to your room! Go ahead!

Yes, sir!

You can see that he’s irritated! He returns to the table and pours a glass of the red liquid for himself! He drinks it down and licks his lips! Then he leans toward you... I see that I must tell you about my wife! She is insane! Hopelessly insane! But her affliction is worse than any fiend could imagine! My wife... is a ghoul!

Icy fingers as an icy hand around your heart as the man relates a strange tale.

We had a dog! One day, it died! I took the poor thing home to the barn and buried it in the sand. Behind the ruins! That night, I was awakened by the sound of a spade in the soft earth! I looked out of my window... it was my wife! She was digging at the dog’s grave! I put on my robe! I went downstairs! She was gone when I got to the barn, but the dog’s corpse was still there... and it was partially devoured!

...it was my wife! She was digging at the dog’s grave! I put on my robe! I went downstairs! She was gone when I got to the barn, but the dog’s corpse was still there... and it was partially devoured.

You shudder? A wave of nausea sweeps over you! Your throat is tight and dry! The man rises. Takes the bottle and goes down into the cellar once more! Suddenly you hear footsteps behind you! You turn... he killed the dog! He drained its blood! Lock the door! To your room tonight! I see you! Lock the door... protect yourself! I warn you!

I will!
She scurries up the stairs as the man returns. He hands you a key! This is a key to the closet in your room! Lock it tonight! She can get in that way if you don't come. I will show you your room!

He opens the door to a small room. There is no window... only one other door! The closet!

Heed right, sir. Remember what I told you. Lock the closet with that key.

Yes, I will! I'll remember!

He is gone, and you are terrified! Lord, how you wish you could run from this cursed house! But the rain! You can hear it patterning on the roof above... where can you go? I'll barricade myself in!

First you lock the closet with the key. Then, you lock the door to the room. That bureau looks heavy enough!

You push the heavy bureau up against the door to the room. That ought to do it! We can't move that!

And shove the bed up against the closet door... if I lie on the bed... she won't be able to push it open!

Nervously, you lie down on the bed. You are tired, but you dare not sleep! Who is the one who believes? Which one is telling the truth? Maybe... maybe this is all a horrible joke they are playing...
Suddenly your blood freezes in your veins! You sit up! A noise... the noise... again... The door? Is it the man?

You try to peer into the gloom! The gloom... again... The globet? Is it the woman?

Then... a thin pencil stripe of light falls across the room. The wall... a panel is opening.

Sheer horror clutches at your pounding heart. The panel opens wider... wider... and then... NO! NO! It's both of them!

You back up... but there's no place to go! The room is small... the doors barricaded... and the two of them, that horrible couple, are coming at you.

My sotlles is almost empty. Hurry, Fedor! Finish quickly so that I may feast.

You scream loudly with all the strength you can muster! You claw against the wall behind you and SCREAM: A-A-A-A-H!
Suddenly there is a blinding flash of light and you open your eyes...

**Good Lord!**

You are in your car... the rain pounding on the metal top... echoing in your brain! You're wet with perspiration... and sick...

_E..._ I must have seen dreaming!

You press your foot on the starter of your car; there is no sound!

... Dead! The water must have shorted the battery!

You look around; a light... shining through the downpour!

A house...

Maybe they have a phone! I could get a mechanic...

You pull your collar up around your neck, pull your hat down over your eyes, and break for the house...

If they have a phone, at least they could put me up until morning!

The house seems strangely familiar! Run down... clattering shutters, battered door! Almost like the house in that horrible nightmare you just had...

_Bah! It was only a dream!_

Footsteps, slow and heavy, approach in answer to your frantic hammering! The door squeaks open...

_Hold on!_ So... from here... before... it's too late!

Let the gentleman come in, Nebbiab! I wouldn't turn away a dog on a night like this...

Only a dream? Well! Then what are you frightened of? Go on! Go on in!
YOU, TOO, CAN PEP UP YOUR HUMDRUM EXISTENCE WITH SOME HORRIFIC, TERRORIFIC FEAR-SOME FICTION! ALSO, SUSPENSEFUL SURPRISE ENDINGS AND SCIENCE-FICTION!! CALM DOWN AND AND.

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