WE AT E.C. PROUDLY PRESENT OUR LATEST BABY... A 'COMIC' COMIC BOOK! THIS IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE ZANIEST 10¢ WORTH OF IDIOTIC NONSENSE YOU COULD EVER HOPE TO BUY! GET A COPY OF MAD... ON SALE NOW! WE THINK YOU'LL ENJOY IT!

TALES CALCULATED TO DRIVE YOU MAD

THAT THING! THAT SULTRERING Blob COMING TOWARD US?

WHAT IS IT?

IT'S HELLO!

HUMOR IN A JUGULAR VEIN

ARRRGGH!
THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! STATUE, FRIENDS? HOW PERFECTLY AWFUL IT IS TO BE STARING INTO YOUR LEERING, EXPECTANT FACES AGAIN! IT ALMOST FRIGHTENS ME! ALMOST... BUT NOT QUITE, FOR LIVING HERE IN THE VAULT, I'VE BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO TERRIFYING SIGHTS! ANYWAY... I HOPE YOU'RE READY FOR A GRUESOME YARN THAT OUGHT TO TICKLE YOUR FANCY! IT'S A REAL CHILLER THAT'LL KEEP YOU GUESSING! I CALL IT...

SILVER THREADS AMONG THE MOLD!

SOMEBODY A TOWER CLOCK INTONED THE HOUR OF MIDNIGHT. IN HIS STUDIO, CEDRIC HARRINGTON WORKED INTENTLY, MODELING THE FINAL TOUCHES ON HIS LATEST STATUE...
Cedric moved back to survey his work. A satisfied smile came to his face and he put down his tools....

A wonderful smile came to his face and he put down his tools.

In the corner of the room, a beautiful red-haired girl stepped down from the model's stand and donned a light robe...

All one, Cedric? Yes! It's just like you'll set a good price for it, Dean! I'll buy you something nice!

You're a gambling, Cedric, to buy me so many things! Why shouldn't I buy you gifts? Without you to give me inspiration, my statues would be lifeless!

In the corner of the room, a beautiful red-haired girl stepped down from the model's stand and donned a light robe. All one, Cedric? Yes! It's just like you'll set a good price for it, Dean! I'll buy you something nice!

Wonderful, one of my best! All right, Christine... you can relax now!

Christine slipped from his grasp and disappeared behind a screen to dress. The sculptor sighed resignedly and gazed fondly at the picture he had created. He gushed it tenderly...

Christine, you will come tomorrow, won't you? I'll have a surprise for you!

A few moments later, the red-haired stepped from behind the screen, fully clothed...

Christine slipped from his grasp and disappeared behind a screen to dress. The sculptor sighed resignedly and gazed fondly at the picture he had created. He gushed it tenderly...

Christine, you will come tomorrow, won't you? I'll have a surprise for you!

A few moments later, the red-haired stepped from behind the screen, fully clothed...

No, no! I won't tell you anything! You'll see tomorrow!

You're so sweet to me, Cedric! I'll be here early tomorrow! Good night, Dean!

I love you so much, Christine! If you even left me, I'd go insane! When will you marry me? You said we'd be married someday!

Yes, Dean... someday. But not now! Be patient!

(Sigh) It's so easy for you to say that! You don't know the torment I feel! You...

Now don't GET excited, Cedric! It's late and I want to get dressed!

I love you so much, Christine! If you even left me, I'd go insane! When will you marry me? You said we'd be married someday!

Yes, Dean... someday. But not now! Be patient!

(Sigh) It's so easy for you to say that! You don't know the torment I feel! You...

Now don't get excited, Cedric! It's late and I want to get dressed!

Christine slipped from his grasp and disappeared behind a screen to dress. The sculptor sighed resignedly and gazed fondly at the picture he had created. He gushed it tenderly...

Christine, you will come tomorrow, won't you? I'll have a surprise for you!

A few moments later, the red-haired stepped from behind the screen, fully clothed...

No, no! I won't tell you anything! You'll see tomorrow!

You're so sweet to me, Cedric! I'll be here early tomorrow! Good night, Dean!
Late the following morning, she arrived at the studio. The sculptor ushered her in excitedly...

Come in, darling! I've been waiting for you! What kept you? I'm so sorry, Cedric, dear! I overslept! Where's the surprise?

It's not junk! These are the materials I need to begin the most important job of my career! This is the big surprise you had for me?

Certainly! I'm going to plate it with silver! Come... I'll show you how it works.

It's simple! This vat is filled with a silver salt solution! The statue is placed in the vat attached to an electrode! A block of silver is also placed in the solution and hooked up in the same manner to the other electrode... then you turn on the current!

Minute particles leave the block of silver, travel through the solution and are deposited on the statue! In a short time, the statue is completely coated with silver! Isn't it wonderful?

Heh, heh, heh! Cedric was so enthused with his electroplating outfit that he never ever noticed Christine's disappointment! In the next few days he made sketches and studies for the statue that was to be his great masterpiece! At last work was begun...
One day, several weeks later, Cedric had to leave the studio for a while... and when he returned, he heard Christine speaking to someone on the phone.

Yes... yes, I'll meet you tonight, at the usual place? I have to hang up now! Yes... all right. Bye!

Meet someone? Usual place? Hmm... I wonder who...

Keeping well hidden, Cedric saw her arrive at a secluded spot where a man waited...

Wha...? He's taking her in his arms! She's kissing him!! That... that two-timing witch!

Trembling with anger, he crept nearer...

Oh, Gary... If we didn't meet every night, I couldn't stand being with Cedric all day!

Don't worry... honey! We'll be married soon and you'll never have to see him again!

But by hooking and selling those gifts, we added a nice piece of change to our bank account, baby!

If he weren't so generous with money and gifts, I think I'd spit in his face every time he comes near me!

Okay, Chris! Tomorrow night! Try to get Cedric to give you one more large gift... cash! Then we'll take off and never come back!

Christine doesn't live in this neighborhood! Wait! She's turning into the park!

Oh, Gary... if we didn't meet every night, I couldn't stand being with Cedric all day!

Don't worry... honey! We'll be married soon and you'll never have to see him again!

Oh, darling! At last! I'm so happy!
THE NEXT DAY IN THE STUDIO, CEDRIC SEETHED AND FUMED WHILE HE WORKED ON HIS MASTERPIECE! MANY TIMES HIS SNIDE REMARKS STARTED THEMrickering! NEW! Christine noticed the change in him, but she didn't care! This was her last day and she was just itching for an opportunity to tell him off! Anyway, by the end of the day, they were at each other's throats!

YOU FOLLOWED ME? YOU SLIMY LITTLE SNEAK!

DON'T CALL ME NAMES, YOU LYING, CHEATING, GOLD-DIGGER!

WELL, THAT DOES IT! YOU CRUMMY LOVER, SICK LITTLE JERK! I WOULDN'T STAY HERE ANOTHER MINUTE, NO MATTER WHAT YOU PAID ME!

OH, SHUT UP! YOU SHOULD BE THANKFUL I GAVE A GOON LIKE YOU ANY AFFECTION AT ALL!

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME? I'VE BEEN SO GOOD TO YOU!

YOU GOT WHAT YOU PAID FOR! IT'S ALL OVER NOW, AND I DON'T KNOW HOW I PUT UP WITH YOU THIS LONG! I'M PACKING! I HOPE I NEVER SEE YOU OR YOUR STATUES AGAIN!

At that same moment, Gary was also packing.

CHRIS SHOULD BE HERE IN A LITTLE WHILE! I'M JUST ABOUT FINISHED!
Several hours passed... she probably had to work late of all nights... oh, well... nothing to do but wait!

Gary sat down in a chair and slept! when he awoke...

Luvva Mike! it's almost four a.m. and Christine isn't here yet! something must have happened to her! she wouldn't be late tonight if she could help it! i'll... i'll give her a few more hours...

But when eight o'clock came and Christine still hadn't shown up, Gary went to Georico's studio.

I'm looking for Christine! where is she?

Christine? I haven't seen her since yesterday!

You mean she wasn't here last night? of course not! we finished our work about six p.m. she oassed, packed her things... who left? why are you so concerned?

She was to meet me last night, but she never showed up! i'm worried!

Oh! you must be Gary! she told me all about you! now i can see why she prefers you to me! i... i was stupid to think she could love me!

Never mind that stuff now! where is she?

I don't know! we did quarrel because of you, but nothing... en violent! i saw i couldn't change her mind and she left! i hope nothing's happened to her!

Heh, heh! Gary searched everywhere... but he couldn't find Christine! he even had the cops investigate... but they, too, couldn't find no trace of her! months passed and Gary gave up hope of ever seeing her again!
OH, Hello, GARY! Hear anything New about Christine?

OH, THAT! I finished it the night Christine disappeared! It's beautiful, isn't it?

Well, yes! But it would cost you a great deal of money!

That's all right! I came here to buy it, and price does not matter! It'll be... sort of a Remembrance!

NO, THE POLICE have closed the case! I'll never see her again! But... THAT Silver statue of her...

Yes... it is! I want to buy it! Would you sell it?

The statue was delivered to Gary's apartment the following evening. He took a bottle and two glasses from his liquor cabinet, sat down and began to drink heavily...

Silently, he sat gazing at the statue, staring in silence. "HIS" glass followed by "HERS". It wasn't long before he began to feel the effects . . .

Silently, he sat gazing at the statue, staring in silence. "HIS" glass followed by "HERS". It wasn't long before he began to feel the effects . . .

Chris... Chris, where are you? What happened, baby? You know I love you! We... we were going to be so happy, but now...
With difficulty, Gary managed to stand the statue upright again. It wasn’t until then that he saw an object lying on the rug:

OJMY GOSH! I’VE BROKEN THE STATUE’S HAND. WONDER IF I CAN PUT IT BACK ON? I’LL HAVE TO TRY.

He stood before the statue... And suddenly, an expression of horror electrified his face.


A terrifying thought rushed into his mind. Quickly, he gathered tools and began to pry open the statue’s head.

OH, LORD. DON’T LET IT BE WHAT I THINK! PLEASE, LORD...

The metal split open and fell away in two pieces, unveiling the rotted, decayed, putrid-smelling head of a woman. There was no doubt who she was... for, to Gary, the flaming red hair was the most positive identification!

HEH, HEH, HEH! THOSE OF YOU WHO THINK A BODY CAN’T BE ELECTRO-PLATED: HEAR THIS! Cedric first completely smeared Christine with aluminum paint, which made her a conductor of electricity. But don’t try it on any of your friends... it’ll make things a little hard for them! Christine was a very inconsiderate person— but she became a chip off the old block. In the end, HEH, HEH! Now, get ready for a tale by that big blockhead, the crypt-keeper!

THE END.
GREETINGS, BORES AND GHOULS! WELCOME TO THE CRYPT AGAIN! YEP, IT'S YOUR TELLER OF TERROR TALES, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, SPOOKING! AFTER THAT FAIRY TALE OF THE VAULT-KEEPER'S... I REALLY FEEL SORRY FOR YOU! SO I'LL TELL YOU ONE OF MY MOST HORRIBLE YARNS TO MAKE UP! IT'S ABOUT AN OLD MAN WHO ALWAYS DRIVES A BLACK-DRAPE, OLD-FASHIONED... WELL... I'LL BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING... WITH THE TITLE! I CALL IT...

PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN BRASS HEARSESES...

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

THE HORSE SNORTS AS IT MOVES ALONG THE MAIN STREET HAULING THE OLD-FASHIONED, BLACK-VELVET DRAPE HEARSE-WAGON AND DRAWN BY A CHILDREN LOPE ALONG BESIDE THE FUNERAL CART, YELLING UP AT THE EXPRESSION-LESS GRIM-FACED REIN-HOLDER...

HOWDY, MR. BYRD! WHAT'S SO FUNNY, MR. BYRD?

COME DOWN FOR YOUR VITTLES, MR. BYRD?

HEY, LIKE OUR MOCKING... BYRD?
Old Lionel Byrd never budges! He dictates his order to Ed, the storekeeper, and waits on his perch in the driver's seat of the hearse till it is brought out and stowed in the back.

Okay, Lionel! That's the lot! That'll be $12.00 as usual!

Thanks, Ed! Here y'are! Be seein' you!

Okay, Lionel? That's the lot.' That'll be $12.00 as usual?

Then Mr. Byrd cracks his whip and, turning the old-fashioned funeral wagon around, heads out of the small New England town once again.

Bye, Mr. Byrd! See you next month, Mr. Byrd!

Keep out o' jail... Byrd!

Crazy old Byrd! Always orvin' that hearse wagon!

He ain't no undertaker! How come?

Search me! I dunno! Nobody knows!

Heh, heh! Yes, dear readers... Nobody in that town knows why Old Lionel Byrd drives that hearse wagon... why he never comes into town without it... why he refuses to get off it when he does come in on his rare monthly visits! Heh, heh! Nobody, that is, but me...

But Mr. Byrd's expression doesn't change! He just sits there listening to the kids' insults and jibes, moving through the small-town main street! Finally, he reaps up the black-draped hearse before the general store.

Afternoon, Lionel! What'll it be today?

Usual, Ed! Sack of flour! Sack of sugar! Can of shortening! Bottle of toilet water beans...

Okay, Lionel! That's the lot! That'll be $12.00 as usual!

Thanks, Ed! Here y'are! Be seein' you!

Okay, Lionel? That's the lot.' That'll be $12.00 as usual?

Then Mr. Byrd cracks his whip and, turning the old-fashioned funeral wagon around, heads out of the small New England town once again.

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All the town's folk know is that he drove into town like that about a year ago! Didn't say where he came from! Just rented an old deserted house way up in the woods! When the kids went nosing around up there...

Gosh! He's got the windows all covered up!

I'm scared of him! Let's go!

At first, everybody mistrusted Old Lionel! They didn't like the way he secluded himself! Nobody ever saw him except when he'd come into town, driving the hearse...

He's crazy, that's what he is! He ought to be run out of the country!

He ain't harmin' anybody, Jed! Ain't no law says yuh can't use an old hearse th'ide round in!
Ed, the storekeeper, used to get mad when Old Lionel drove into town. Old Mr. Byrd would refuse to get down off the hearse! He demanded that Ed come out from his store and take his order.

The store's inside. Mister, hot out on the street? You wanta buy somethin'? You come in and buy it!

I got my reasons for stayin' up here. Ed! You wanta sell me some vittles or hot?

The kids used to peer into the hearse while Ed was loading it with the purchases.

Shucks! He ain't got anything in there! Yeah? I'll bet there's somethin' behind that curtain!

Heh, heh! Yep! Old Lionel has the hearse partitioned off with a curtain! Want to know what's behind it? Okay! I'll tell you! For the story, we'll have to go back a bit... back to the time before he ever came to that small New England town in his strange vehicle...

Back then, back before he even owned the old fashioned hearse, Lionel lived in a lonely cabin way up in the mountains in another county! One day, two men came to the cabin...

Look, Nick! Smoke comin' out! Somebody lives there, Red!

The two men that came to Lionel's cabin way up in the mountains were strangers to those parts. They knew nothing about Lionel Byrd. They were fugitives... fugitives from the law.

Wait a minute. I'll be ready in a minute!

So the fugitives, Nick and Red, knocked on the Byrd cabin door. A voice answered...

Windows are covered. Can't see who's inside!

G'Norm! Let's knock!

This looks like a nice spot to hide out for a while, Nick!
Nick pushed open the cabin door. He peered into the gloom. Old Mr. Byrd sat on a bench before a draped doorway.

If-IN ALLY, THE VOICE INSIDE THE CABIN SOUNDED AGAIN.

HELP YOU? YOU LOST? ER... YEAH! THAT’S IT! YEAH! YOUR CAR BROKE DOWN!

Red closed the door behind them.

Nick whipped out a knife and held it against the old man’s throat...

The baying howls drew closer. Nick whipped out a knife and held it against the old man’s throat...

The baying howls drew closer. Nick whipped out a knife and held it against the old man’s throat...

Suddenly, the still mountain air outside the cabin was split with the knifing sound of baying hounds...

The baying howls drew closer. Nick whipped out a knife and held it against the old man’s throat...

I didn’t think they were so close!

Yeah, old timer! We’re criminals! Killers! And we’ll kill you if you let on we’re in here!

The baying howls drew closer. Nick whipped out a knife and held it against the old man’s throat...

Listen, old timer! You do as we say or I’ll slit your throat!

I’m not budgin’! I... I

I’m not budgin’! I... I

They were right outside... Nick and Red’s pursuers! They were hammering on old man Byrd’s door...

Open up! It’s Sheriff Allen!

S’help me, old man. What is it, Herb? Anything wrong?

Listen, old timer! You do as we say or I’ll slit your throat!

I’m not budgin’! I... I

I’m not budgin’! I... I

They were right outside... Nick and Red’s pursuers! They were hammering on old man Byrd’s door...

Open up! It’s Sheriff Allen!

S’help me, old man. What is it, Herb? Anything wrong?
Red and Nick went back inside as they came through the door they gasped...<br>

"Holy!"

He ain't dead! But... I pumped two 45's into him!

Lionel sat upon the bench before the curtained doorway, his shotgun pointed at the two fugitives...

She's double-barreled, you murdering rats! One shell for each of you!

"Don't shoot, old timer! We... we didn't mean to..."

Lionel looked at the two men...<br>

You didn't kill me! You killed my twin!

Yes... my Siamese twin! <br>

Godd Lord! <br>

Suddenly red looked down! His eyes widened in horror! A scarlet pool of blood dozed out from beneath the doorway drape...<br>

Look! Look! Blood! But he ain't bleedin'!

Look! Look! Blood! But he ain't bleedin'!

No! I'm not bleedin'!

Lionel got to his feet! He moved away from the doorway...<br>

There, attached to Lionel's back, was the body of his Siamese twin... twisted grotesquely dead...<br>

All our lives we've lived here! Everybody knew about us! Everybody but you!

What... what are you going to do to us?
Then he pushed them out of the cabin and into the shallow grave they'd dug for him.

We've been buried from society all these years! Buried alive... just as you are going to be!

Lionel began to tie the two killers up... back to back...

There! Now you'll know the helplessness we knew... my brother and I...

But Lionel showed no mercy! The soft black earth choked off red and Nick's screams as Lionel filled their grave.

Yaa... gree... eee... hnh.

Huh, huh! Yep! Nobody in that small New England town knows why Lionel Byno sits on his hearse... never gets down from it but we know... don't we, kids? Lionel had to buy that hearse after his Siamese twin's death! When Lionel came to the small New England town, his twin's body was in the back... behind the curtain... and every time he comes into town, it's there! You... you look like you don't believe me! Well, just sit tight! Lionel's coming up the road now!

There! He's in front of his old house way out of town... the one with the curtained-up windows! See how he looks around... making sure prying eyes aren't watching! Now... now he's getting down! There! Take a good look...

Well, after all, Lionel's twin has been dead a year! Any body would start decaying by then! What do you think the toilet water is for? And that's my story, fiends! Now I'll turn you back to the vault-keeper! His column, which contains information on obtaining actual photos of us Ghouliniatics follows the text which follows me! "Bye! Now! Remember! A man's nearest is his... neh, heh!"

The End.
WE AT E.C. ARE PROUDEST
OF OUR SCIENCE-FICTION
MAGAZINES! LOOK FOR...

THROUGH THE MURKY BLUE-GREEN WATER NEAR
THE BOTTOM OF THE REEF, HENDERSON COULD
DIMLY MAKE OUT HIS PARTNER'S BULKY FORM
MOVING ABOUT CLUMSILY IN THE DIVING SUIT. THE
OSYSTER-BED FOR WHICH THEY HAD ORGANIZED THIS
PACIFIC VENTURE WAS A COMPLETE FAILURE SO FAR
... IT MIGHT EVEN BE THAT THE TATTERED MAP
THEY HAD BOUGHT WAS A FRAUD! FOR 2 DAYS NOW
HENDERSON AND HIS COLLEAGUE HAD BEEN PLUNGING
INTO THESE WATERS, HOPING TO DISCOVER THE
FABULOUS OYSTER BED SAID TO HOUSE A TREASURE
IN BLACK PEARLS... FOR 2 DAYS THEY HAD BEEN
SEARCHING IN VAIN! UNLESS THEY FOUND WHAT
THEY HAD COME SO MANY THOUSANDS OF MILES
FOR, THE EXPEDITION WAS GOING TO PROVE AW-
FULLY COSTLY. AND THERE WAS ALWAYS THE DANG-
GER OF ENCOUNTERING ONE OF THE HUGE OCTUPI
SAID TO LURK IN THESE TROPICAL WATERS...

A SWIRL OF BUBBLES MADE HENDERSON LURCH
AROUND AND FACE HIS PARTNER, WHO WAS POINT-
ing EXCITEDLY WITH ONE GLOVED HAND. HENDER-
SON PONDEROUSLY CROSSED THE OCEAN FLOOR; ONE
GLIMPSE WAS ENOUGH. A HUGE OYSTER, ITS TOP
CLAMPING SHUT EVEN AS HE WATCHED, HAD RE-
VEALED FOR A MOMENT THE PRESENCE OF A GLEAM-
ing PEARL! THE PARTNER MOVED TOWARD IT, HIS
SHARP KNIFE Ready TO CUT THE OYSTER FROM THE
REEF...

BEFORE THE MAN HAD A CHANCE TO DEFEND
HIMSELF, HENDERSON SWUNG SAVAGELY AND SENT
THE MAN SPINNING GROGGILY TO THE OCEAN FLOOR.
MOVING SWIFTLY, DESPITE HIS WEIGHTY DIVING
SUITE, HENDERSON JAMMED HIS DAGGER INTO THE
MAN'S CHEST... FELT THE BLADE TEAR THROUGH THE
CLOTH TOP OF THE DIVING SUIT... KNEW THE STEEL
had plunged home with deadly effect. Henderson stood erect and grinned. The pearls they had discovered were all his...

The natives up in the boat might begin to ask Henderson questions about his partner, so he diligently ripped loose the air-line and watched it float off through the murky water. When he surfaced, he'd tell the boys that his partner had been killed by an octopus...

His knife ready to slice free the oysters, Henderson whirled in terror as a gigantic shadowy form flickered toward him. Before he could yank on his safety-line, a long sinuous tentacle reached out and circled his arm. He recoiled with revulsion, slashing out frantically with his knife, but he was being completely engulfed by a hideous rubbery mass which was all around him in the same instant. Just before he felt the air-line break, Henderson screamed aloud... OCTOPUS...

Squirming loose from the paralyzing grip was impossible, Henderson realized in panic. The pressure was unbearable... his breath was strangling in his throat. Then two hideous eyes... something out of a nightmare... moved close to Henderson's face, and a grotesque mouth opened ominously...

A blinding pain rocketed through his body and Henderson blanked-out. When he came to, he seemed to be floating semi-consciously through a haze of indescribable agony. With horror that almost made his heart stop beating, he saw what had happened to make him faint. His left leg had been torn from his body... and now a savage tentacle was closing around his other leg.

Henderson felt a torturous wrenching and tearing... and he prayed for a quick death... prayed that this being devoured piece by piece would be over in another second...
NO! NO! Not again! I won't DO it! I WON'T! My readers aren't interested in answers to that dagn letter. I was good enough to give you space to run two issues back! I gave you HALF MY COLUMN! Isn't that ENOUGH already? But V.K. Those were only the first few replies that came in. We've had THOUSANDS since! We've GOT to print more! —ed! Ay, you'll only print the ones that agree with you, anyway! (No, V.K! We've got THREE that agree with Mrs. Phelan! —ed!) YOU HAVE? (Sure! An' we'll even print those FIRST! —ed!) And you'll give me what you promised? (If we can locate one! —ed!) Oh, Gandy! A brand new BLADE for my GUILLOTINE! The old one's all corroded from blood! I must remember to clean THIS one every time I use it.

Dear Editors —
I heartily agree with Mrs. Phelan in calling your magazines dust and lint! As to their being shameful! I don't think you could truthfully deny this — E. Manning — N.Y.C

I agree with Mrs. Phelan strongly. I do not think that you live up to your trademark, for I have hardly been entertained by your comics. I am sure that you'd be able to make ample money by writing stories according to the Legion of Decency — P. O. Hagan (no address given).

I realize it's a million dollar business robbing candy from babies. We can't make people stop reading the trash, but if it wasn't published, then they wouldn't have it. There are so many cute stories that could be published. I can't understand how you sleep nights thinking of how you jamapt children's ten cent pieces thinking by letting their little minds with these horrible stories — Mrs. R. Colvin — San Francisco, Calif.

I wonder what's a good polish for guillotine blades? Hold on a minute, V.K! There are more letters from fans who do NOT agree with Mrs. Alice Grandon Phelan of Kansas City! —ed!

That letter from Mrs. Phelan was enough to make anyone regurgitate — Mrs. Loranza F. White — Mirandale City, Texas.

If Mrs. Phelan had read some of your war issues she would have noticed that you received letters from boys in Korea who are sacrificing their lives to keep her safe and sound in her home so she can forbid her children to read magazines that explain the truth and tell of war — Dorothy F. Perdoleck — St. Clair Pa.

Mrs. Phelan's neighbors must have shaken their heads after reading their latest issue of The Vault of Horror! Thank the Lord my mother is more broad-minded. She herself can hardly wait for the next issue — Johnny Knisely — Pleasant Hill Ohio.

This woman from Kansas states that your trash will not only warp little minds but turn them into juvenile delinquents! Has she ever seen how a criminal ends in one of your stories? He is either led to a really tragic death or devoured by some strange and hideous creature or worse! If this bothers her! Then I hope to be a delinquent then his reasoning powers need some last relreading! — C. Penning — Orange, N.J.

She says that only a "low-type-person" could derive any enjoyment from that trash. In that case, I guess my mother and father, my brothers and sisters, and all of my relatives are low type persons, for we all enjoy your "shameful, horrid, and disgraceful" magazines — Judith Tripp — Johnson City, N.Y.

The least I can say is that Mrs. Phelan is being rather unfair and very one-sided. — Mary Margaret Bye — Carthage, Mo.

She probably just wanted to get her name into an E.C. mag — Bob Hoopengarner — Kansas City, Mo.

I am in favor of raising Merry Hearts and abolishing the Bluecoats — D. C. MacLarty — Baltimore, Md.

She can jump in the lake — Hardy Myers — (no address given).

She has rocks in her head — Ralph Becker — Chicago, Ill.

She can go by a kiss — Hector M. Culler — Laredo, Texas.

I think Mrs. Phelan is a little off her rocker — Felix Camps III — (no address given).

She's a screwball! — George Ramming — Union City, N.J.

I have two children eight and fifteen years old. They could do a lot worse than just read horror stories — Mrs. L. Collins — Osburt, N.J.

I think you should let Mrs. Phelan know that the boys who fought for freedom and lost arms and legs should be the first in my opinion to say whether your books should be outlawed. Over half the patients at McGuire Veterans Hospital have read them. I think she has a nerve — Mrs. J. Rakes — Richmond, Va.

How about DRIED MUMMY DUST? Will THAT polish a guillotine blade nice? (Oh, very nice!) — ed. Are you guys through? Can I have my column back? (Sure, V.K! Take it away! —ed!) Well, THANKS! It's about PASTEL-COLORED ANEMIC VAMPIRES! There's hardly any column left to take away! (Oh, there's enough to announce that E.C.'s second annual TALES OF THE FOG, Pulp Magazine Anthology is still available containing 15 E.C. yarns, originally published in 1931.) 128 pages of great entertainment for 25c! And there's enough room to announce that the sets of five by seven autographed photographic reproductions of you C.K. and O.W. are still 25c, also that subscriptions are available. 75c six issues come in envelopes! —ed.) Highway robbers overpriced! Don't waste your money!

Mail wasted money criticisms, complaints, suggestions, picture orders, T of T orders, and subscription orders with your clearly printed name and address to The Vault-Keeper Room 706, Dept 27 225 Lafayette St. N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.
YOU MIGHT SAY THAT
THIS TERROR-TALE IS
STRICTLY FROM
HUNGER!

YOU SURE, PHIL? I
SEEN IT, I TELL YUH!
G'MON! LET'S
GO IN AND
GET IT!

YOU SURE IT'S
IN THERE?

I SAW IT BEFORE YOU
SAY SOMETHIN' ODD?
WHY DON'T YOU
TIP US OFF?

NO! WAIT! DON'T
GO IN THERE!
IT WON'T DO ANY
GOOD! LISTEN TO ME!

THE POSSE STOOD BEFORE THE CAVE ENTRANCE, THEIR
GUNS LEVELLED AT ITS YAWNING BLACK MOUTH...

WE GOTTA GET IT, DOC... WHATSOEVER IT IS! IT'S
KILLED TEN TOWNSFOLK ALREADY... STRIPPEE 'EM
OF THEIR FLESH! PHIL'S THE FIRST GUY WHAT'S
SEEN IT... THAT'S RIGHT, DOC! I FOL-
LOWED IT! IT COME FROM
PETE FEELEY'S
PLACE! PROBABLY GOT HIM,
TOO!

NUH? THEN WHY
DIDN'T YOU
SAY SOMETHIN' ODD?
WHY DON'T YOU
TIP US OFF?

YEAH! YOU
MIGHT'VE
SAVED SOME
LIVES...

BECAUSE
WHEN I SAW
IT, IT WASN'T
WHAT IT IS
TODAY!

PHIL'S THE
FIRST GUY WHO
SEEN IT...

SO YOU
SURE IT'S
IN THERE?

I SAW IT GO IN! IT WAS
HORRIBLE... HORRIBLE!

PHIL'S THE
FIRST GUY WHO
SEEN IT...

...BECAUSE
WHEN I SAW
IT, IT WASN'T
WHAT IT IS
TODAY!

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KILLED TEN TOWNSFOLK ALREADY... STRIPPEE 'EM
OF THEIR FLESH! PHIL'S THE FIRST GUY WHAT'S
SEEN IT...
WHAT I SAT! THEN I'LL TELL YOU 'BOUT IT' QUICK! GET A FINE 'BUILT' A BIG ONE!

YOU BETTER START TALKIN'! OOG! AR TALK FAST!

FIRST DO WHAT I SAY! THEN I'LL TELL YOU 'BOUT IT' QUICK! GET A FINE 'BUILT' A BIG ONE!

OOG! YOU TRYIN' TELL US THAT... THAT THING IR THEE IS PETE FEELEY? LON! THAT AIR'T NOthin' HUMAN!

THAT'S RIGHT! I WAS COMIN' ACROSS THE VALLEY...

OKAY, DOC? 'THERE'S YOUR FINE!' NOW OET ON WITH IT! IT'S GETTIN' DARK?

YOU SAY YOU FOLLOWED IT FROM PETE FEELEY'S PLACE... EH, PHIL?

SUN'I, PETE FEELEY? NOT ACTUAL! YOU SEE...

PETE TURNED WHITE AS A GHOST! HE GOT REAL SCARED...

A. A DANGER! AM I GONNA DIE? OOG?

OUNKO, PETE! DUNNO FOR SUNE! THERE'S TWO KINDS OF TUMORS! ONE'S MALIGNANT, IT'S BAD! THE OTHER'S BENIGN, IT'S GOOD! THE MALIGNANT ONE KEEPS GROWIN' TILL IT KILLS YOU! TAIN'T NO USE HEMOVIN' IT. THE BENIGN ONE CAN BE CUT AWAY, AND THAT'S THE LAST OF IT!

YOU SEE, PETE CAME TO ME MORE'N A YEAR AGO! HE WAS SCARED! HE SHOWED ME THIS LUMP ON HIS ARM!

WHAT IS IT, OOG? IT'S... IT'S GETTIN', BIGGER EVERY DAY!

YOU SEE, PETE TURNS WHITE AS A GHOST! HE'S GETTIN' REAL SCARED...

THAT'S RIGHT! I WAS COMIN' ACROSS THE VALLEY...

ID YOU SEE PETE?

SHUCKS, NO! WHEN THE THING CAME OUT OF HIS CABIN, I HIRED TALED AFTER IT! I KNEW IT MUST'VE BEEN WHAT'S BEEN ONR THE KILLIN' S ROUND THESE PARTS!

THAT'S RIGHT! I WAS COMIN' ACROSS THE VALLEY...

NO? THAT ISN'T PETE FEELEY? NOT ACTUAL! YOU SEE...

What's been onr the killin' s round these parts!

You see, pete turned white as a ghost, he's got real scared...

A. A danger! Am I gonna die, oog?

Ounyo, pete! Durno-for sune. There's two kinds of tumors! One's malignant, it's bad! The other's benign, it's good! The malignant one keeps growin' till it kills you. It ain't no use hemovin' it. The benign one can be cut away, and that's the last of it!

Soon, a cracklin' fine crackled before the cave entrance! The posse members stood around oog chambers, glaring at him angrily...

The posse members stood around doc chambers, glaring at him angrily...

You say you followed it from pete feeley's place... eh, phil?
Even in the short time it took to get back the lab report, Pete's tumor had grown. Which one's this, Doc? Which one?

I sent a sample of Pete's blood and a spinal tap to a big lab in Chattanooga. And they told me... sorry, Pete! Won't do you no good cuttin' this tumor away. It's malignant.

Even in the short time it took to get back the lab report, Pete's tumor had grown. Which one's this, Doc? Which one?

I sent a sample of Pete's blood and a spinal tap to a big lab in Chattanooga. And they told me... dunno. Pete?

I'll have to take some tests! Spinal tap! Blood sample!

So, Pete? I'd say. Two. Maybe three months. No, no. I ain't wanna die! I'm scared o' dyin'! I... sob. I'm afraid so, Pete. It's say... Mm... maybe. Three months... or no?

I don't wanna die! I'm scared o' dyin'? I'm scared o' dyin'!

I'm scared o' dyin', sob. I'm scared o' dyin'. I'm scared o' dyin'!

I'm scared o' dyin'. I'm scared o' dyin'. I'm scared o' dyin'!

I didn't die! He did what he swore he did. He went up to old Baldy, to the Hag.

That's how I felt! What could she do? So I went to see Pete a couple of months later. It was horrible! His arm had all but been swallowed up by that awful tumorous growth. By all rights he shoulda been on his last legs...

Take it easy, Pete! These things happen. We just gotta face 'em.

Pete started blubberin' like a baby. He really was scared of dyin', an' there was nothin' I could do...

That was how I felt! What could she do? So I went to see Pete a couple of months later. It was horrible! His arm had all but been swallowed up by that awful tumorous growth. By all rights he shoulda been on his last legs...

The fire flickered before the cave entrance! The posse stood around, staring at Old Doc Chambers...

You mean that's why we ain't seen Pete Feeley? 'Cause he died?

No, Pete didn't die! He did what he swore he did. He went up to old Baldy, to the Hag.

That phony! What could she do?

That's how I felt! What could she do? So I went to see Pete a couple of months later. It was horrible! His arm had all but been swallowed up by that awful tumorous growth.

That's how I felt! What could she do? So I went to see Pete a couple of months later. It was horrible! His arm had all but been swallowed up by that awful tumorous growth.

He'd gone to see her. He'd begged her to hex him so's he wouldn't die. She'd refused, but he'd pleaded until if I do it, if I hex you so's you'll never die, will you make a promise to me? Eh? Hee, hee?

Anything? Anything at all?

It's the old Hag up on old Baldy, Doc! She said I ain't gonna die! She promised we made a deal!

It's the old Hag up on old Baldy, Doc! She said I ain't gonna die! She promised we made a deal!

It's... it's impossible! That tumor should have killed you long ago.

It's... it's impossible! That tumor should have killed you long ago.
So the old hag went through her incantations and black arts jibberish.

I promise! I swear it! Anything. Only keep me from dyin'! I'm scared!

I promise! You'll never ask me to break the hex! Promise me you'll never come back to Old Baldy! Hee, hee! Promise!

Go on! You 'spect us to believe that nonsense, Doc?

Yes, by all rights, he should have been dead.

Do you see Pete again after that, Doc?

Once more! I went up to his place about four months after he'd first come to see me! I expected to find his corpse... not in 'n' more!

He was still alive! By then the tumor'd spread to his body! It was awful... frightenin'! I'd never seen anything so ugly! An I got a strong stomach...

'Lo, Doc! Guess you never 'pected to find me alive!

N-no! Choke! I... didn't!

We talked for a while, he complained. The only thing is I'm hungry all the time! I keep eatin' like a pig!

'And you need the nourishment!'
"That's right! I went up about a month or two after that second visit, but..."

"But he wouldn't let me in! His voice sounded strange..."

"And when I tried about four months ago, his voice was incoherent... a jumbled gamble..."

"I tried to peek in the window to see... but he'd curtained 'em up good!"

"I thought it was some animal! Nothing else would strip a body of all its flesh leavin' only the bones! That is, nothing except... well, when Phil said he seen the thing come from Pete Feely's place, I knew..."

"Four months ago? You mean he lived that long?"

"What is it, Doc? Tell us!

"You know what a cancer is? It's a growth... a bunch of cells gone crazy! They feed on healthy cells and grow! They keep growin'... getin' crazier and crazier! An' when they've eaten enough healthy cells, the normal person dies!"

"Listen! It's comin' out!"

"Well, it started after 'em... other peoples' that thing in there is a living tumor... a mass of cancer cells gone wild..."
They began firing at it...pumping bullets into its slimy rolling surfaces.

Good Lord!

Bullets won't kill it! Nothing will kill it! We'll have to drive it back into the cave!

C'Mon' grab a torch...everybody...

Dog Chambers picked up a flaming faggot from the fire.

The hideous mass of diseased tissue recoiled as the searing torches were flung at it...

Finally it slithered back into the cave.

Now what, Doc? We've got to block up the cave entrance! Since we can't kill it, we've got to imprison it! Get some dynamite!

Dawn found the cave mouth sealed.

Just pray nobody ever uncovers this entrance that's all!

It's got to stay in there forever!

Heh, heh! 'Y' that's it, fiends! Pete Feeley's cancer growth is still slithering around in that blocked-up cave down there in the Great Smokey! Care to go prospectin' with me sometime? We might dig up somethin'...somethin' mighty hungry...and-row, I'll turn you over to the old witch for her fairy tale 'No kiddin', this time'! Bye, now!

The end.
Once upon a time, long ago, there was a tiny kingdom. But this tiny kingdom was an unhappy tiny kingdom. For this particular tiny kingdom was overrun with rats. It was so overrun with rats that the people of this tiny kingdom had to carry sticks when they went out of their houses.

Oddy: I'm afraid of the rats!  Don't be afraid of them, my son! I will keep you from harm!
There were all kinds of rats! There were brown rats... and grey rats... and greyish-brown rats... and brownish-grey rats...

They invaded the streets... the shops... the houses...

They ate the people's garbage... the people's food... the people!
Finally the people of the kingdom couldn't stand it any longer! They decided to kill off the rat population... destroy them! So one day, they all armed themselves with sticks... brooms... anything useable as a weapon...

...and they started killing off the rats...

They killed off grey rats...

...and brown rats...

...and greyish-brown rats...

...and brownish-grey rats...

They killed off the rats that invaded the streets and ate the people's garbage...

...the rats that invaded the shops and ate the people's food...

...and the rats that invaded the houses and ate the people...
Now, it seems that this tiny kingdom was governed by a pompous king and his pompous queen...

They lived in a pompous castle surrounded by a pompous moat...

Grey rats couldn't cross the moat...
Brown rats couldn't cross the moat...
Greyish-brown rats couldn't cross the moat...
And neither could brownish-grey rats cross the moat!

So the pompous king and the pompous queen in their pompous castle surrounded by the pompous moat had no rat problem! In fact, the only problem the pompous queen had was what to do next for her little pet white mice... Aren't they cute, Siegfried? I had those diamond collars made special... Just for them!

The pompous queen loved her pet white mice... She kept them in a diamond-studded gold cage... She fed them from a diamond-studded gold feeding tray... She dressed them in diamond-studded gold collars! There wasn't anything those little white mice lacked...

Gootchie... Gootchie, you little darlings! Here, sweets! Some roast peasant...

GWENDOLYN! COME... EAT!
And then, one day, the pompous king and the pompous queen learned from their pompous lord high advisor and legaleagle that the populace had almost conquered the rat situation. They are killing them off with their bare hands! It's amazing! Amazing! No! No! They mustn't!

Why not, Gwendolyn? Dear? The rats are a problem!

Rats are related to mice, Siegfried! I love my white mice! So I love their cousins, too! I forbid the people to kill the rats! It's cruel... I forbid it!

And so an edict was read all over the tiny kingdom...

Therefore, by order of Queen Gwendolyn and King Siegfried, it is a criminal offense to kill, mutilate, harm, or annoy any rat in this kingdom. Violators will be prosecuted! Punishable by a fine, imprisonment... or both! Article 69, Section 8, Penal Law, Kingdom of... 

The killing of the rats was halted soon, they once again began to overrun the tiny kingdom...

Once again they began to eat the people's garbage...

...The people's food...

And the people! Eeeeeeeeeee... My baby!
And once again, the people could stand it no longer! But this time they weren’t allowed to kill the rats...

WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?

HE’S BEING TAKEN TO PRISON!

HE KILLED A RAT!

And the rat situation got worse than ever...
WE’RE STARVING!

THE RATS EAT ALL THE FOOD...

THE KING AND QUEEN WON’T LET US KILL THE RATS!

And the people got angrier and angrier...

WHAT HAPPENED TO HUE?

He’s being taken to prison!

He killed a rat!

We’ve got to do something!

Follow me to the castle!

The crowd grew larger as it moved through the streets...

To the castle...

To the rat lovers!

C’mon!

...The people were shouting and yelling as they neared the castle...

Someone swam the moat and let the drawbridge down, and the crowd stampeed across...

The pompous king and the pompous queen were surrounded in their pompous throne-room by the angry mob...

Go home! Go back to your houses!

Seize them!

The people got angrier and angrier...

The crowd grew larger as it moved through the streets...

To the castle...

To the rat lovers!

C’mon!

...The people were shouting and yelling as they neared the castle...
The angry crowd seized the pompous king and the pompous queen.

Stop! Stop! Eeeeee! Bring the rats!

Someone came forward with a cage! Inside were two half-starved vicious-looking rats.

Here! Here they are!

One live rat was forced into the pompous king's mouth...

...and down his throat! The other rat was forced into the pompous queen's mouth...

...and down her throat! Then their pompous royal mouths were sewn shut...

And the crowd cheered as little by little, the hungry half-starved rats ate their way out of the pompous king and the pompous queen...

After that, the people of the tiny kingdom killed off the other rats and lived happily ever after! Nee nee! Well, kiddies! That's my fairy tale... and it was as I said, pretty grim, eh? So, that winds up the Vault Keeper's mag for this issue! We'll all see you next in my mag, The Haunt of Fear! Bye now! Remember! If you don't like rats and what happened to Gwenni' and Sigby, keep your trap shut! HEE HEE!
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ROGER HIRSCH was a 112 lb. 6 ft. WEAKLING. Look at him NOW - A MOVIE-STAR HE-MAN from Head to Toe as YOU can be SOON!

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