

FIRST JOLTING ISSUE!



NO. 1
SEPT



1.50
1.80
CANADA

SHOCK

SUSPENSTORIES

**JOLTING TALES OF
TENSION
IN THE
TRADITION!**



WARNER

BRACE YOURSELVES FOR THE IMPACT OF THE SHOCKING WIND-UP TO THIS YARN!

THE NEAT JOB!

"GOOD LORD, LADY!
WHAT MADE YOU DO
IT?"

"YOU'D BETTER TELL US
ABOUT IT, MRS. BERGLEY!
START FROM THE
BEGINNING!"



**A CRIME
SUSPENSE STORY**

*Good
Story*

ELEANOR BERGEN'S FACE WAS A RIGID WHITE MASK WITH WIDE STARING EYES! SHE GAZED BLANKLY INTO THE SHADOWS OF THE CELLAR WORM SHOP! THE TWO DETECTIVES FROM BOWSIDE WAITED IN SILENCE FOR HER TO START HER STORY! WHEN SHE BEGAN TO TALK, HER VOICE WAS UNEXPRESSIVE... A LOW DREARY MONOTONE...

I... I MARRIED ARTHUR THREE YEARS AGO! I DON'T KNOW WHY I DID IT. PERHAPS I WAS AFRAID OF THE PROSPECT OF BECOMING AN OLD MAID...



...IN ANY CASE, I DID IT! I NEVER LOVED HIM! I JUST NEEDED A HUSBAND... BADLY...

AWAY, ELEANOR?

YES, ARTHUR! VERY! BUT... WHERE WILL WE LIVE AFTER THE HONEYMOON IS OVER?



I WAS GOING TO SURPRISE YOU... BUT I MIGHT AS WELL TELL YOU NOW! I'VE PUT A DEPOSIT ON A HOUSE IN BUCKLEY!

OH, ARTHUR! REALLY? HOW WONDERFUL! WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? IS IT FURNISHED?



YOU'LL SEE IT, ELEANOR! I'M SURE YOU'LL LIKE IT!

OF COURSE I'LL LIKE IT ARTHUR... IF YOU BOUGHT IT FOR ME! BECAUSE I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE IT!



I COULDN'T WAIT FOR THE HONEYMOON TO BE OVER! FRANKLY, I WAS BORED STUFF! NEVER HAVING LOVED ARTHUR, I FOUND THE WHOLE THING QUITE DULL! I LOOKED FORWARD TO THE PLEASURE OF LIVING IN MY OWN HOUSE WITH DELIGHTFUL ANTICIPATION! FINALLY WE ARRIVED!

THERE IT IS! ISN'T IT ATTRACTIVE?

Y... YES! VERY NICE!



I'D EXPECTED SOMETHING SMALL AND INEXPENSIVE, SINCE ARTHUR'D NOT BEEN WEALTHY... BUT I'D NEVER PICTURED ANYTHING LIKE THE HOUSE THAT LOOKED UP BEFORE ME! IT WAS ONE OF THOSE TREMENDOUS CENTURY-OLD MONSTROUS THAT THE VERY RICH OF THAT PERIOD HAD CONSIDERED QUITE ELEGANT! IT LOOKED MAGNIFICENT...



COME! LET'S GO INSIDE! IT'S COMPLETELY FURNISHED! YOU'LL LOVE IT!

YES! I'LL GO!

ARTHUR MADE A FEIBLE ATTEMPT TO GARRY ME ACROSS THE THRESHOLD BUT DIDN'T EXACTLY SUCCEED! AS HE STOOD INSIDE ME... BREATHING HARD... I SURVEYED THE HORROR HE'D DRAGGED ME INTO! THE PLACE WAS FURNISHED ALL RIGHT... IN FACT IT WAS OVER-FURNISHED! EVERY AVAILABLE INCH OF SPACE WAS OCCUPIED BY SOME NOISEMAKING DUST-CATCHER!



I LOVE ANTIQUES... DON'T YOU, ELEANOR?

OH, YES, ARTHUR! THEY'RE SO... SO INTERESTING!

THE MORE I SAW THE PLACE, I FELL IN LOVE WITH IT, ELEANOR! I WANT IT REPT JUST EXACTLY AS IT IS... EXACTLY!

OH... I WOULDN'T CHANGE A THING, ARTHUR! EVERYTHING IS PERFECT!



I HATED THE PLACE! WHEN WE SETTLED DOWN TO A DAILY ROUTINE AND ARTHUR RETURNED TO WORK, I TRIED REARRANGING THE FURNITURE TO MAKE IT LOOK A LITTLE BETTER! BUT, THE NIGHT AFTER I DID IT...

HAVE A HARD DAY AT THE OFFICE, DEAR?

NOT SAD, EL... WHAT IN BLAZES!



THE DOOR HED AS A BEEHIVE BLEW UP! WHAT DID YOU DO? I THOUGHT YOU TOLD YOU TO REARRANGE THE FURNITURE? NICK...



YOU THOUGHT I NEVER MIND WHAT YOU THOUGHT? I TOLD YOU I WANTED THIS HOUSE LEFT EXACTLY AS IT WAS! I MEANT IT! NOW CHANGE IT ALL BACK AGAIN!

YES... ARTHUR!



IT'S FUNNY HOW YOU GET TO KNOW A MAN AFTER YOU'RE MARRIED TO HIM! SO I GOT TO KNOW ARTHUR! OH, LORD, YES! AND THE MORE I LEARNED, THE MORE I BEGAN TO DESPISE HIM...

A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING... AND EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE, ELEANOR!

YES... ARTHUR!



HE WAS RIDICULOUS... A PRIDE FOR RELIABILITY! EVERY NIGHT HE'D COME HOME FROM WORK AND GO THROUGH HIS DRAWERS TO SEE THAT I HADN'T DISTURBED THEIR PROPER ARRANGEMENTS!

ELEANOR! THE LADYBIRD GONE BACK TODAY, DON'T IT!

YES... ARTHUR!



HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU MY SHORTS GO ON THE LEFT... FOLDED IN HALF... BUTTONG UP?

YES... ARTHUR!



IT WAS WAGGERS! HE'D GO THROUGH THE HOUSE ON A WHITE-GLOVE INSPECTION...

TOO...TOO! THE TOP OF THIS DOOR JAMB IS *DUSTY*. ELEANOR! YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO BE *LESS SLOPPY* WHEN YOU CLEAN!

YES... ARTHUR!



HE'D EVEN CRITICIZE THE WAY I'D SET THE TABLE...

THIS IS *NOT* THE WAY WE *FOLD* NAPKINS, DEAR! YOU MUST LEARN TO DO IT *RIGHT*!

YES... ARTHUR!



'IT GOT WORSE AND WORSE...

LOOK AT THIS TABLE, ELEANOR! THERE'S *DUST* ON IT! YOU'LL HAVE TO BE *NEATER* THAN THAT!

YES... ARTHUR!



'BY OUR FIRST ANNIVERSARY, HE'D MADE A NERVOUS WRECK OUT OF ME! IT WAS ABOUT THAT TIME THAT HE'S BEGUN BUILDING HIS WORKSHOP HERE IN THE CELLAR.'

WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE, ARTHUR?

YOU'LL SEE, DEAR!



'HE'S SPENT A SMALL FORTUNE ON THE MACHINING TOOLS HE'S INSTALLED IN THE WORKSHOP! HE'S BOUGHT EVERY SLEAZEBAG HOW SO YOU LIKE IT, DEAR?

IT LOOKS VERY NICE, DEAR!



YES! AND IT'S GOING TO *STAY* THAT WAY, TOO! TAKE *LESSONS* FROM THE WAY I KEEP *THIS* PLACE, DEAR! YOU'LL *SEE* WHAT *NEATNESS* AND *ORDERLINESS* MEAN!

YES, ARTHUR!



'OH, LORD, HE KEPT THAT WORKSHOP *NEAT*! EVERYTHING HAD A SPECIFIC PLACE WHERE IT WAS KEPT, STORED, OR HUNG! HE HAD *SHELVES* OF *JARS*, EACH LABELED CAREFULLY, WHERE THE SCREWS, NUTS, AND OTHER ITEMS WERE SORTED AND FILED...

I KNOW WHERE *EVERYTHING* IS! *EVERYTHING*! THAT'S *NEATNESS*, ELEANOR!

YES, ARTHUR!



BY THE END OF THE SECOND YEAR I WAS READY TO WALK OUT... DRUCK EVERYTHING AND LEAVE! HE'D MOVED INTO THE KITCHEN WITH HIS PERVERTED MAMA FOR OSSELINESS...

ELEANOR! YOU BOOZED A CAN OF TOMATO SOUP AND DIDN'T CHECK IT OFF THE LIST! AND YOU DIDN'T FILL IN THE EMPTY PLACE WITH ONE FROM THE BASE!

I I FORGOT, ARTHUR!



YOU FORGOT! THAT'S SO EXCUSING! YOU MUSTN'T FORGET! DON'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN!

YES, ARTHUR!



HIS IDIOTIC CHECK-LISTS BLAMED ME! HE HAD ONE FOR THE FOOD WHICH HE KEPT IN THE PANTRY! IT WAS AN INVENTORY OF THE CANNED GOODS! WHEN I USED A CAN, I WAS SUPPOSED TO CHECK IT OFF THE LIST SO IT COULD BE REPLACED...



OHMY! BURNING LOW ON SHERRARD, I SEE THAT

HE KEPT ANOTHER ONE IN THE BATHROOM ON THE INSIDE OF THE MEDICINE CABINET DOOR! IT LISTED ALL THE DRUGS AND THEIR QUANTITIES! REGULARLY HE'D COUNT THE PILLS IN THE BOTTLES!

ELEANOR! YOU USED TWO ASPIRIN TABLETS AND DIDN'T CHECK THEM OFF!



HE EVEN STARTED ORGANIZING THE WAY I KEPT THE KITCHEN UTENSILS...

FROM NOW ON, POTS AND PANS WILL BE KEPT IN THEIR PROPER PLACES IN THE CUPBOARD! NO MORE THROWING THEM HAPHAZARDLY INTO THE STOVE!



THEN HE'D MOVED INTO MY BEDROOM... CRITICIZING THE WAY I KEPT MY CLOSET...

HARBERS SHOULD ALL HANG OVER THE HOD FROM THE FRONT! AND YOUR CLOTHES SHOULD ALL HANG THE SAME WAY... BUTTON SIDE FACING LEFT! THAT'S NEATNESS!

YES, ARTHUR!



HE ASSEMBLED MY DRAWERS...

KEEP YOUR SHIRTS TO THE RIGHT... STOCKINGS IN SMALL BOXES... SWEATERS TO THE LEFT... BLOUSES IN THE MIDDLE...

YES, ARTHUR!



'THEN HE'D CHECK TO SEE IF HIS ORDERS HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT.'

YOU CALLED ME, ARTHUR?

ELEANOR? YOU'VE GOT A PAIR OF BLACK PUMPS IN AMONG THE BROWN SHOES IN THE SHOE RACK! LORD, WILL YOU EVER LEARN TO BE NEAT? BROWN SHOES ON ONE SHELF, BLACK BELOW!



'SOMETIMES... SOMETIMES I FELT LIKE...'

ELEANOR! THIS MAGAZINE IS UPSIDE DOWN IN THE STAND! TITLES UP... COVERS OUT... PLEASE!

YES... ARTHUR!



'ONE DAY, I NEEDED A THUMB TACK AND HAD SEARCHED ARTHUR'S WORKSHOP FOR ONE' THAT RIGHT.'

ELEANOR? WERE YOU DOWN HERE IN MY WORKSHOP?

Y. YES, ARTHUR! I NEEDED A...



KEEP OUT OF HERE, UNDERSTAND?

THIS IS THE ONE PLACE I CAN KEEP NEAT! DON'T YOU COME AROUND BLOWING IT UP WITH YOUR MESSY HATS... DO YOU HEAR? I FORBID YOU TO COME DOWN HERE AGAIN!

YES, ARTHUR!



'THEN, YESTERDAY, A PICTURE'D COME LOOSE FROM THE WALL! THE NAIL THAT HELD IT WAS SO OLD, IT JUST BENT AND...'

WHAT WAS THAT?



'I'RUSHED DOWN TO THE GLAZIER TO HAVE THE BROKEN PICTURE GLASS REPLACED AND RETURNED BEFORE ARTHUR'D GOTTER HOME...'

I'VE GOT TO HANG IT BACK UP AGAIN OR HELL HAVE A FIT!



'I WENT DOWN TO THE CELLAR AND TOOK A HAMMER' I NOTED CAREFULLY WHERE I'D TAKEN IT FROM, SO I COULD REPLACE IT EXACTLY RIGHT...'

HE'LL BE STEAMING IF HE FINDS OUT!



THEN I TOOK DOWN ONE OF THE HUNDREDS OF LABELED JARS THAT LINED THE SHELVES... ONE WITH NAILS THAT LOOKED LIKE THE RIGHT SIZE...



JUST ONE NAIL! HE SURELY HADN'T COUNTED THESE!

I TOOK A NAIL OUT OF THE JAR AND STARTED TO PUT IT BACK IN ITS PROPER PLACE ON THE SHELF, WHEN...



OH, MY GOD! KEEEE!

THE JAR SHATTERED INTO A THOUSAND PIECES ON THE CEMENT CELLAR FLOOR AND THE NAILS LAY SCATTERED CRAZILY ABOUT! FOR A MOMENT I STARED AT THE MESS... GUMFONDED.



THEN I BEGAN TO CRY! THE TENSION...THE NERVOUSNESS OF VIOLATING ARTHUR'S WORK SHOP-SANCTUARY WAS TOO MUCH FOR ME! SUDDENLY UPSTAIRS...A DOOR SLAMMED.



ELEANOR? IN... SASH? NOW? ARTHUR!

I LISTENED TO HIM MOVING THROUGH THE HOUSE! I HEARD HIM STOP FOR A MOMENT! THEN I HEARD HIM SHOUT.



ELEANOR! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE PICTURE... HERE?

OH...LORD... HELP... HELP... YES... HE...

I COULD HEAR HIM STAMPING TOWARD THE CELLAR DOOR! HE WAS ANGRY! I COULD TELL! I WAS FRIGHTENED! WHAT WOULD HAPPEN WHEN HE FOUND ME...AND THE BROKEN JAR...



ELEANOR! YOU DOWN THERE ARE YOU IN MY WORKSHOP? ARE YOU... WHAT, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

PLEASE, ARTHUR DON'T BE ANGRY! I WAS ONLY TRYING TO...

HE GLARED AT THE BROKEN JAR AND THE NAILS SCATTERED OVER THE WORKSHOP FLOOR! HIS FACE GREW RED... HIS EYES GLAZED.



I TOLD YOU TO KEEP IT OUT OF HERE, DIDN'T I?

I WANTED TO HANG THE PICTURE BACK \$1.50 YOU WOULDN'T BE ANGRY.

THIS FACE WAS GRIMONT HE HATED
WILLY... YOU WANTED TO HANG
THE PICTURE UP... SO YOU CAME
DOWN HERE FOR A NAIL... EH? ONLY
YOU BROKE THE JAR, EH?
SLOPPY... SLOPPY ELEANOR...
BROKE THE JAR!



I FELT EVERYTHING SPINNING...
MY FACE GREW HOT... MY CHEEKS
BLURRED!

CAN'T YOU DO ANYTHING
NEAT? CAN'T YOU?
CAN'T YOU?



CAN'T YOU DO
ANYTHING NEAT?



I BACKED AWAY AND MY HAND CLOSED ON SOMETHING... A HANDLE OF ONE OF ARTHUR'S TOOLS! I
PULLED IT FROM ITS PLACE AS EVERYTHING WENT
BLACK...



ELEANOR NODDED TO THE LITTLE FILE OF NAILS, SCREWS,
AND ODD ITEMS THAT SHE'D KNIPPED OUT OF THE FORDS
OF JARS.



I REMEMBER DOING THAT! I REMEMBER
WANTING TO SHOW HIM I COULD BE
NEAT! I REMEMBER I WANTED IT TO BE
A NEAT JOB! I CLEANED UP
EVERYTHING WHEN I WAS
FINISHED!

THE DETECTIVES FROM HOMICIDE TURNED TOWARD THE ROWS OF JARS THAT LINED THE SHELVES! EACH ONE WAS
IN ITS PLACE, BUT ARTHUR'S PRECISE CAREFULLY LETTERED LABELS HAD BEEN REPLACED BY NEW ONES (IN ELABORATE
NERVOUS SCRAM)! THEY EACH BRIEFLY DESCRIBED THE CONTENTS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE JARS.



LOOK FOR YOURSELVES!
I CLEANED UP THE
BLOOD... EVERY DROP!

YEAH, LADY! YOU
CERTAINLY DID A
NEAT JOB!

CHIME
KFF
WANT

THE
END

HERE IS A TALE OF TENSION WITH AN ELECTRIFYING FINISH!

YELLOW!



**A WAR
SUSPENSORY**

COLONEL CLARK HENDERSON STUDIED THE MULTI-COLORED TERRAIN MAP THAT HUNG ON THE BATTERED WALL OF THE LOW BOMB-SCARRED BUILDING HE'D CHOSEN AS HIS TEMPORARY HEADQUARTERS! IN THE DISTANCE, MUFFLED EXPLOSIONS DENOTED THE CLOSE PROXIMITY OF THE ENEMY ARTILLERY...

GET ME HEADQUARTERS ON THE PHONE, SERGEANT... **RIGHT AWAY!**

SORRY, SIR! CAN'T SEEM TO GET THROUGH! OUR LINES MUST BE CUT!

THE COLONEL CURSED ANGERLY AND STRODE TO THE OPEN DOORWAY WHERE A SENTRY STOOD AT ATTENTION!

GET CAPTAIN WELLS OF "B" COMPANY OVER HERE, IMMEDIATELY! TELL HIM IT'S URGENT!

YES, SIR!



THE COLONEL STRODE BACK TO HIS DESK, LIT A CIGARETTE, AND PUFFED IT ANXIOUSLY. FINALLY, CAPTAIN MILLERIN STEPPED THROUGH THE DOORWAY AND SALUTED SHARPLY. COLONEL HENDERSON RETURNED THE SALUTE.

YOU SENT FOR ME, COLONEL?

AT EASE, CAPTAIN. YOU CAN SMOKE IF YOU LIKE!



COLONEL HENDERSON POINTED TO THE MAP... HIS FACE GRIM...

THE SITUATION IS SERIOUS, CAPTAIN! THE GERMANS HAVE BROKEN THROUGH HERE... HERE... AND HERE! THEY'VE COMPLETELY BY-PASSED OUR LEFT FLANK AND HAVE BEGUN MOVING THROUGH THE HEDGE-RONS AT OUR REAR!



SERGEANT MAURER, HERE, REPORTS THAT COMMUNICATION WITH HEADQUARTERS IS IMPOSSIBLE, WHICH PROBABLY MEANS THEY'VE LOCATED OUR PHONE LINES AND CUT THEM!

LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE TRYING TO SURROUND US, SIR!



EXACTLY! I WANT THOSE PHONE LINES REPAIRED, CAPTAIN... AT ANY COST! WE'VE GOT TO GET THROUGH TO HEADQUARTERS FOR HELP BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

YES, SIR! I'LL ORDER A SQUAD OUT AT ONCE!



SOOO? OH, BY THE WAY, CAPTAIN? HOW'S MARTIN... ER... MY SON, LIEUTENANT HENDERSON, GOING? THIS IS HIS FIRST TIME IN COMBAT!

MAY I BE FRANK, SIR?



WHY... YES? SO AHEAD? WHAT IS IT?

WELL, SIR! I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PUT THIS... BUT... WELL, SOME OF THE MEN IN HIS PLATOON ARE GROWLING! HIS SERGEANT, WHO'S AN OLD TIMER, TOLD ME... WELL... HE CALLED YOUR SON... THAT IS.



WELL, MAH! SPEAK UP! WHAT DID HE CALL HIM?

HE CALLED HIM 'YELLOW', SIR! HE ASKED TO BE TRANSFERRED TO A DIFFERENT PLATOON! HE SAID LIEUTENANT HENDERSON IS A COWARD... SIR!



COLONEL HENDERSON STUDIED CAPTAIN MILLIKEN... SHOOKED AT WHAT HE'D JUST HEARD! THEN HE BEGAN TO SPEAK... HIS VOICE WAS LOW AND HUSKY... WITH A GRIM DETERMINED TONE...



THAT MISSION, CAPTAIN! THE ONE I JUST ASSIGNED TO YOU! I WANT LIEUTENANT HENDERSON TO LEAD THAT SQUAD OR IF IT IS THAT CLEAR?

Y-YES, SIR!

COLONEL HENDERSON GLEATED SHAKELY, DISMISSING THE CAPTAIN! AS MILLIKEN DISAPPEARED OUT OF THE OPEN DOORWAY, THE COLONEL SANK INTO HIS CHAIR SLOWLY... STARRING BLAMBLY AFTER HIM! HIS EYES CLOSED... REFLECTING THE LIGHT OF THE REDUCED LAMP OVERHEAD...



I DON'T BELIEVE IT! MARTIN! MY OWN SON! A SQUAD? THEY... THEY MUST BE MISTAKEN!

COLONEL HENDERSON SAT, HEAD IN HANDS, FOR SOME TIME... LISTENING TO THE DISTANT DALL REPORTS OF THE ENEMY BARRAGE! SUDDENLY THE CLONCHING FOOTSTEPS OF MARCHING MEN OUTSIDE MADE HIM LEAP TO HIS FEET! A SQUAD ON A MISSION WAS PASSING BY...



LIEUTENANT HENDERSON!

THE COLONEL WATCHED THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT BREAK FROM THE HEAD OF THE SQUAD AND MOVE TOWARD HIM! MARTIN HENDERSON... LIEUTENANT... INFANTRY... U.S. ARMY! HIS SON!



YOU HAVE YOUR ORDERS, LIEUTENANT?

YES, SIR!

SEE THAT YOU CARRY THEM OUT, LIEUTENANT!



YES, SIR!

THE COLONEL WATCHED THE SQUAD MOVE OFF IN THE DARKNESS! HE WHISPERED UNDER HIS BREATH AFTER THEM...



MAKE ME PROUD OF YOU, MY SON! SHOW THEM THEY'RE WRONG ABOUT YOU! SHOW THEM YOU'RE GOING FORWARD!

OVERHEAD, A SHELL WHIRLED INTO THE NIGHT, EXPLODING OFF TO THE WEST! THE COLONEL TURNED AND REENTERED THE SHELL-WARRED BUILDING AND SAT DOWN TO WAIT...



IF I DON'T GET THROUGH TO HEADQUARTERS SOON, WE'LL BE SITTING-DUCKS OUT HERE!

IT WAS TOWARD MORNING WHEN LIEUTENANT MATTHEW HENDERSON STUMBLED INTO THE COLONEL'S HEADQUARTERS, GASPING FOR BREATH...

"MATTY? MY BOY? WHAT HAPPENED?"

"AMBUSH!... WIPED OUT THE WHOLE SQUAD... SASP! MARCHED TO GET AWAY!"



"THE LINES! DID YOU REPAIR THE LINES?"

"DODDLEWIT! SASP!... THEY WERE WAITING FOR US, SASP! IT WAS A TRAMP SOB... SOB..."



THE COLONEL MADE A MOVE TO COMFORT HIS TREMBLING SON? SUDDENLY, A SOUND IN THE DOORWAY MADE HIM LOOK UP! CAPTAIN MILLIKEN STOOD THERE, SUPPORTING AN WOUNDED DISHEVELED BLEEDING SERGEANT...

"CAPTAIN? L.I.I. WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE SERGEANT THERE?"

"TELL HIM, REPRESENT GO AHEAD? FELL HIM?"



THE SERGEANT LIFTED HIS EYES... STARING AT THE COLONEL'S TREMBLING SON? HE GRIMACED IN PAIN... COUGHING UP BLOOD...

"HE... HE RAN OUT ON US? HE LEFT US... TO FIGHT THEM OFF... WHILE HE HIGH-TAILED IT OUT OF THERE?"

"WHAT? IS THAT TRUE, LIEUTENANT?"

"NO! NO!"



"IT IS TRUE? IT... COUGH... COUGH... IT IS! HE'S FELLOW! FELLOW! FELLOW! FELLOW!"

"IS LIEUTENANT HENDERSON COMMANDING OFFICER... SIR, I INSIST HE BE PLACED UNDER ARREST TO FACE COURT-MARTIAL... FOR NEGLECT OF DUTY AND DEFECTION OF HIS MEN WHILE UNDER FIRE?"



THE COLONEL'S FACE SHOWED NO EMOTION AS HE NEEDED...

"IF THAT IS YOUR CHARGE, CAPTAIN MILLIKEN, LIEUTENANT HENDERSON WILL STAND TRIAL... IMMEDIATELY!"

"ON YOUR FEET, LIEUTENANT!"



LIEUTENANT HENDERSON LOOKED AT HIS FATHER... HIS EYES FLASHING! THE COLONEL TURNED AWAY...

"COURT-MARTIAL WILL CONVENE IN TWENTY-MINUTES, CAPTAIN! NOTIFY THE OTHER OFFICERS THAT ARE AVAILABLE?"

"YES, SIR! LET'S GO, LIEUTENANT!"

"SOB... SOB..."



TWENTY MINUTES LATER, A COURT-MARTIAL HEARD THE CHARGES AGAINST LIEUTENANT HENDERSON.

LIEUTENANT HENDERSON? HAVE YOU ANYTHING TO SAY IN YOUR DEFENSE BEFORE THIS COURT PASSES JUDGMENT UPON YOU?

W...NO, SIR!



THE COLONEL CONTINUED! HE LOWERED HIS GAZE SO HE WOULD NOT HAVE TO SEE THE LOOK IN HIS SON'S EYES.

THE PENALTY FOR THIS OFFENSE, LIEUTENANT, IS DEATH BY A FIRING SQUAD!

NO!



I HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE THAN TO ORDER THE PENALTY TO BE CARRIED OUT!

DAD? HOW COULD YOU? HOW COULD YOU? SOB...



COLONEL HENDERSON STUDIED EACH OF THE SLIPS HANDED HIM? THE COLONEL WAS AWK. THROUGH AND PAROLED? NO SIGN OF EMOTION OR FEELING EITHER CROSSED HIS FACE OR COLORED HIS VOICE AS HE ANNOUNCED...

LIEUTENANT MARTIN HENDERSON! IT IS THE FINDING OF THIS COURT-MARTIAL, THAT, IN VIEW OF THE TESTIMONY GIVEN HERE, YOU ARE GUILTY AS CHARGED!

NO! NO!



THE COLONEL LIFTED HIS EYES AND WATCHED HIS SON BEGIN TO CRY...

IN VIEW OF THE SITUATION AT HAND... THE EXECUTION WILL TAKE PLACE AT 800... TWO HOURS FROM NOW!

SOB...SOB...SOB...



THEY TOOK MARTIN HENDERSON AWAY! THE COLONEL LIT A CIGARETTE? THE OTHER OFFICERS OF THE COURT-MARTIAL SAT UP SILENTLY! ONE OF THEM LEANED OVER AND SPOKE TO THE COLONEL...

I'M...SORRY, SIR! I...KNOW HOW TOUCH THIS MUST BE FOR YOU!

SO? TO BE GONE, MAJOR! DISCIPLINE MUST BE MAINTAINED! WE MAY HAVE TO FIGHT OUR WAY OUT OF HERE YET...



...AND WE CAN'T HAVE ANY OF OUR MEN LOSING FAITH IN THEIR COMMANDING OFFICERS, CAN WE? DON'T YOU AGREE, CAPTAIN?

YES, SIR!

GOOD MORNING, SIR!



AS MEN LIT UP THE OVERCAST SKY, AND THE ENEMY BARRAGE BEGAN AHEAD, A CHARGE SIGNAL MOVED TOWARD THE SMALL SQUAD THAT Housed LIEUTENANT MARTIN HENDERSON! SUDDENLY THE SOLDIER GRESSED FROM HIS HEAD—

...SMILED!



BEFORE YOU TAKE SERGEANT... I'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO HIM!

YES, SIR!

THE SOLDIER ENTERED THE GUARDED BUILDING... NOTICING THE SENTRY TO MOVE OUTSIDE! HIS SON LOOKED UP AT HIM WITH A TEAR-STAINED FACE...

GO AWAY! I HATE YOU!

YOU LET ME DOWN, MARTIN! I WANTED TO BE PROUD OF YOU!



YOU WANTED TO BE PROUD OF ME! THAT'S ALL YOU EVER WANTED! YOU DIDN'T CARE HOW I FELT! ALL YOU THOUGHT ABOUT WAS YOUR OWN POMPOUS SELF!

I'M ASHAMED OF YOU, MARTIN! YOU'RE A COWARD!



SOON I'M A COWARD! SOON I WAS SCARED STIFF! I RAN! YOU BET I RAN! SOON... AND I'M SCARED NOW, TOO! I DON'T WANT TO DIE! I DON'T WANT TO DIE!



SHUT UP YOU FOOL! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DIE!

I... I'M NOT! YOU... YOU'RE GOING TO FIX IT!



IT'S FIXED! LISTEN AND LISTEN CAREFULLY! IN AN HOUR I'M ISSUING ORDERS TO PULL OUT! YOU'LL BE LEFT BEHIND... SO YOU'LL BE ON YOUR OWN!

BUT THE FRONT SQUAD! THEY'RE OUTSIDE!



THEIR RIFLES ARE LOADED WITH BLANKS! WHEN MILLIKEN GIVES THE ORDER TO FIRE, YOU FALL... AND LIE STILL, FOR GOD'S SAKE! YOU'LL BE LEFT FOR DEAD! I WON'T GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO SHOT YOU!

BLANKS!



YES! I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU... AND FRANKLY, I DON'T CARE! MAYBE SOMEDAY WE'LL MEET AGAIN! GOOD-BYE, MARTIN!

COLONEL HENDERSON TURNED AND WENT OUT OF THE BRIDGE...

THANK YOU, CAPTAIN!

DEAR, LIEUTENANT LET'S GO!



LIEUTENANT MARTIN HENDERSON WATCHED INSIDE THE FIRING SQUAD TO THE LOW HILL THEY'D CHOSEN! HE SEEMED A LITTLE CALMER NOW...

O'ALL REARY! HE GRIED ALL RIGHT!

FELLOW BELL!

HE DON'T SEEM SO SCARED NOW!



THE SQUAD HALTED SOME YARDS FROM THE ENBARMENT, AND THE LIEUTENANT AND THE CAPTAIN CONTINUED ON! SEVERAL OFFICERS STOOD TO ONE SIDE, WATCHING THE SCENE...

ANY LAST REQUEST, LIEUTENANT?

I'D LIKE A CIGARETTE, CAPTAIN!



THE CAPTAIN PLACED A CIGARETTE IN LIEUTENANT HENDERSON'S MOUTH AND LIT IT! THE LIEUTENANT PUFFED IT SLOWLY...

WOULD YOU PREFER TO BE BUNGOLFERS, LIEUTENANT?

NO THANKS! I'LL WATCH!



THE CAPTAIN RETURNED TO THE FIRING SQUAD AND BARRICK THE ORDER TO GET READY! MARTIN HENDERSON SEARCHED THE OFFICERS, FINALLY FINDING HIS FATHER! HE GRINNED AT HIM...

AH!



THE COLONEL SMILED SLIGHTLY AT HIS SON, WHO WINKED BACK KNOWINGLY...

FIRE!



THE FIRING SQUAD'S RIFLES BARRICK AND THE 30 CALIBRE LEAD BLOSS RIPPED THROUGH THE LIEUTENANT'S BODY... KILLING HIM INSTANTLY! THE ORN PROCE ON HIS FACE AS HIS EYES BLAZED AND HIS LEGS MELTED TO THE GROUND...



AS THE COLONEL TURNED AWAY, THE CAPTAIN PATTED HIM ON THE BACK...

AT LEAST YOU CAN BE PROOF OF THE FACT THAT YOUR SON FACED HIS DEATH LIKE A MAN, SIR!

E. FELT THAT HE WOULD, CAPTAIN!





His uncle planned to change the provisions of his Will. Young Canfield had the information first-hand from his uncle's lawyer . . . last week's bitter fight was undoubtedly the reason. At all costs he must keep that last Will and Testament from being altered. Canfield thought to himself. For years he had looked forward to inheriting one-half of his uncle's vast estate, and now this last-minute change of mind, occasioned by their furious disagreement, threatened to cut off young Canfield without a dollar!

The knob turned easily under Canfield's hand; the door opened noiselessly and he stepped into his uncle's second floor library. The old man looked up in bewilderment, his hawk-eyes glittering suspiciously.

"W-What do you . . . ?"

Before he could complete the question, his nephew had lunged across the room and scooped up the massive iron paperweight which dominated one side of the desk. Without pausing for an instant, young Canfield hurled it directly at his uncle's head. There was a sickening crash . . . then the old man, his head a bleeding pulp, lurched to his feet. His lips worked spasmodically, but not a sound issued forth. The old man sprawled his length on the carpet.

Trying to avoid the blood which spurted from the old man's head wound, Canfield dragged the corpse out of the library. His hands around the old man's ankles, he was dragging his victim up the wooden attic steps when he heard a curious fluttering sound. Startled,

young Canfield whirled and saw a sheet of paper settling to the floor at the base of the attic steps. *Something the old man must've been writing at the moment I interrupted him,* Canfield thought to himself. *I'll get it . . . and burn it . . . after I've stowed the body in the attic!*

It was ten minutes later that young Canfield, satisfied with the hiding place he had found for the body, started to descend from the attic. On the very first step his foot encountered a slick spot and his legs shot out from under him. With his arms flailing and a scream of surprise issuing from his lips, Canfield plunged headlong down the stairway. He and his thrill well stopped simultaneously on the landing below the attic. A look of surprise seemed to animate Canfield's face, but except for that he remained strangely still. His neck was broken.

From the back of Canfield's head, where it had struck the solid floor, blood oozed in a thin trickle. It merged with the rapidly darkening trail which made a distinct path from the inside of the old man's library to the attic above. It was his uncle's blood . . . warm and still fluid . . . so which young Canfield had skidded. Ironically, it was his victim's own blood which led to young Canfield's sudden downfall! And to his death!

Looking back his remaining fingers lay the sheet of paper which Canfield's uncle had clutched even after life had left his body. Across it, in a wavering handwriting, were the words:

"Knowing that I cannot survive this most recent stroke, I, Wendell Canfield, do hereby alter my last Will and Testament, as dictated to my lawyers only two days ago. To my impetuous nephew, Meredith Canfield, I therefore leave my entire estate . . ."

ALIBI!

As they waded through the rain in single file, Merrick thought to himself: *it was right HERE, only a month ago, that the two prospectors' bodies were discovered. The story going around was that the poor devils had been overrun by the hand of killers who roamed these lowlands. The two miners had been strangled to death, their gold dust stolen just the alibi Merrick needed!*

Merrick's eyes slowly focused on the rain-soaked shirt weaving in front of him. They were each seeing a thousand dollars in dust . . . be awful nice if Merrick could finish this job with *both* thousands! The idea had been fermenting in his mind for weeks, and the memory of those two strangled prospectors crystallized the thought. So suddenly Merrick glanced about him . . . not a soul in sight . . . not even tumbleweed scudding across the rain-swept horizon! It was now or never!

The fight was worse gasping than he had expected . . . his partner had somehow anticipated the downward plunge of Merrick's axe, for he swerved at the last moment and the blade skidded past his skull. Weak as they were from weeks of maggory food and makeshift shelter . . . from hours of arduous toil in the searing sun and the lashing of sudden and tempestuous rainstorms . . . the two men were able to call on hidden reserves of strength which even *they* did not know existed. For it was obvious from the first moment of onslaught that only one of them would survive!

It seemed agonized hours later that Merrick's fingers finally tightened around his partner's chest, and he felt the man slip and slump lifelessly. The epic struggle had completely exhausted him . . . his clothing was re-

wet and blood-soaked, his lacinated arms hung limply at his sides. Slowly, painfully, he wobbled to his feet and opened the soggy knapsack which had fallen to the ground. His mud-caked face relaxed in a haggard grin as he removed a long soup of damp leather. Nice of his partner to carry it along and furnish Merrick with such a wonderful *alibi!*

At last Merrick's fumbling fingers completed their task; the leathery noose curled tightly around his victim's throat. Then Merrick wrapped the remaining leather strip around his own throat. Not tight enough to choke, yet firmly enough to appear as if that was its purpose. After he had buried the gold in an obscurely marked grave, he sank to the wet ground beside his dead partner. A fleeting thought ran through his mind before he dozed off into exhausted sleep . . . other miners, soon passing along this path, would find the two bodies and conclude that once again the marauding killers had struck. They would rejoice at Merrick's survival . . . and he could return later to recover the fortune!

Ayons later he awoke, conscious of fiery heat drowning against his flesh. The rain had stopped, the sun burned down mercilessly. Instinctively he reached for the noose at his neck, knowing he had to relieve the drowning sensation which enveloped him. Instinctively he clasped at the leather strip . . . frantically he tried to gulp air. But even though his life depended on it, Merrick was too exhausted to tear it free. Then he understood: his partner's leather had been *rain-soaked*, which shrinks in the sun after it has been dampened! He had been too stupid to notice what kind of leather it had been . . . and now it was closing around his throat . . . tighter . . . tighter . . .

THIS SCIENCE-FICTION STORY WITH ITS SURPRISE ENDING SHOULD GIVE YOU A JOLT!

THE MONSTERS!

THE HUGE CLEANING NEEDLE-SHAPED SPACE-SHIP STOOD LIKE A GIANT'S FINGER POINTING SKYWARD! ITS ROCKET TUBES STILL GLOWED RED-HOT FROM THE LANDING THAT HAD JUST BEEN COMPLETED! OFF ON THE HORIZON, A TINY GLIMMER OF DUST ROSE, DRIFTING LAZILY... KICKED UP BY A JEEP SPEEDING ACROSS THE ARID WASTES TOWARD THE ALIEN CRAFT.

LOOK AT IT!
ISN'T IT
MAGNIFICENT?

HURRY, HINDEL!
HURRY!

I'M DRIVING
AS FAST AS
I CAN!

THINK OF IT!
A SHIP FROM
OTHER SPACE
EARTH'S FIRST
VISITORS FROM
ANOTHER WORLD!

THE QUATY JEEP WITH ITS FOUR OCCUPANTS BOUNCED AND ROLLED ON THE PARCHED NEW MEXICO DESERT SANDS, NEARING THE SILVER SPICE-CIARY...

TO THINK...THAT THREE GAYS AGO... MOST OF US WERE DISCOUNTING THE THEORY THAT LIFE EXISTS ON OTHER PLANETS...IN OTHER SOLAR SYSTEMS...

YES! THEN THEY MADE RADIO CONTACT WITH US...AND SHOOK THE ENTIRE SCIENTIFIC WORLD!



THE JEEP ROLLED TO A STOP BELOW THE TOWERING SHIP...

IT'S AMAZING HOW WELL THEY CAN SPEAK ENGLISH, CONSIDERING THAT THEY LEARNED IT ONLY BY THE FEW HOURS OF RADIO CONTACT THEY HAD WITH US!

IT APPEARS THAT CAPTAIN AND NOT THE MOST INTELLIGENT BEINGS IN THIS GREAT UNIVERSE, OH, GENTLEMEN!

A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSE STORY

THE OCCUPANTS OF THE JEEP GOT OUT AND STOOD SQUINTING UP AT THE DRIVING SPACE-SHIP...



STILL NO SOUND CAME FROM THE SHIP! THEN...SUDDENLY... A PORT IN ITS SIDE OPENED AND A LARGE METAL SPHERE WAS LOWERED SLOWLY TO THE GROUND...



BUT THERE *MUST* BE SOME EXPLANATION! WE SPENT THREE DAYS ARRANGING FOR THIS LANDING! ARE THERE TOO MANY OF US EARTHMEN HERE?

AS SOON AS THE SPHERE TOUCHED THE SANDY SURFACE, A LONGSPEAKER BOOMED FROM THE SPACE-CRAFT...



IT IS NOT THAT! YOU TOLD US YOU WOULD HAVE FOUR! NO, IT IS NOT THAT! NOW GET IN YOUR VEHICLE AND GO BACK!

NO SOUND CAME FROM THE SHIP! THE FOUR SCIENTISTS THAT HAD BEEN CHOSEN TO MEET THE OUTER SPACE VISITORS LOOKED AT EACH OTHER...



I THINK SOMETHING'S WRONG! WE'VE FOLLOWED THEIR INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER! PERHAPS THEY *STILL* DON'T TRUST US! I CAN'T SEE WHY!



WHAT'S WRONG? IT IS NOT LOOK! YOUR FAULT! NOT ARMED? IT IS JUST THAT WE HAVE CHANGED OUR MINDS! WE ARE LEAVING!



BUT YOU ARE SO MUCH MORE ADVANCED SCIENTIFICALLY THAN WE! TO LET YOU GO NOW, WOULD MEAN GIVING UP A THOUSAND YEARS OF PROGRESS FOR US ON EARTH! THERE IS SO MUCH YOU COULD TEACH US...SO MUCH WE COULD LEARN!

YES, IT IS REGRETTABLE FOR YOU! PERHAPS WE CAN SIMPLIFY OUR REASONS FOR LEAVING SO YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THEM!

PLEASE DO! THEY ARE! LET ME SEE IF WE CAN GIVE YOU AN ILLUSTRATION! TIGHT SUPPOSE...



SUPPOSE YOUR FACE WAS FAR ADVANCED IN ATOMIC RADIATION MORE SO THAN YOU CLAIMED YOU ARE IN OUR RADIO CONTACTS!



YES... GO ON!

SUPPOSE THAT ONE DAY...IN ONE OF YOUR ATOMIC LABORATORIES...

GOOD LORD! LOOK AT THAT RADIATION READINGS!

THERE'S A LEAF SOMEWHERE! WE'VE ALL BEEN EXPOSED!



SUPPOSE THAT LATER ON, ONE OF THESE SCIENTISTS THAT WAS EXPOSED TO THE RADIATIONS BECAME A FATHER...

DOCTOR! WHAT IS IT? YOU'RE WHITE AS A SHEET! MY WIFE! MY WIFE IS... NO, ALEX! YOUR WIFE IS FINE! IT... IT'S THE... THE BABY!



THE BABY IS DEAD! NO! THE BABY IS ALIVE! BUT... BUT... WELL... WHY NOT SEE FOR YOURSELF!



THE NEW FATHER WAS SHOWN HIS INFANT CHILD...

OH, MY GOD! I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY, ALEX! IT... IT MAY NOT LIVE...



AND THEN, LATER ON, A SECOND SCIENTIST THAT WAS ALSO EXPOSED TO THESE RADIATIONS BECAME A FATHER...

YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE HOLD OF YOURSELF! THESE THINGS HAPPEN! BUT DID YOU SEE IT? IT'S HORRIBLE! HORRIBLE!



'AND SUPPOSE A THIRD MONSTROUSITY WAS BORN TO ANOTHER OF THE SCIENTISTS THAT HAD WORKED IN THE SAME PLANT...'

THEY WARNED US NOT TO HAVE A CHILD! THEY TOLD WE ABOUT ALEX'S AND BERNARD'S...

THIS PROVES IT!



THESE... THESE THINGS ARE ATOMIC MUTANTS! THE RADIATION'S CAUSED THEM!

LORD! LOOK AT IT! IT... IT'S DISGUSTING!



SUPPOSE THE THREE MUTANTS WERE TAKEN FROM THEIR PARENTS AND SENT TO THE GOVERNMENT LABORATORIES TO BE STUDIED...!

TAKE THIS DOWN, JENNINGS! DESCRIPTION OF ATOMIC MUTANT... LAB REPORT NUMBER ONE-SEVEN-FIVE-FOUR! AGE ONE YEAR...



MUTANT HAS AN OVERSIZED GLOBULAR HEAD! VISUAL ORGANS ARE TINY AND DEEP SET... COVERED WITH A SLIMY LIQUID! BETWEEN THE VISUAL ORGANS, A LARGE POINTED OLFACTORY ORGAN EXTENDS OUTWARD BRANCHED! AT THE FAR END OF THIS PROBOSCIS ARE TWO LARGE VENTS FRINGED WITH FINE CILIA! BELOW THIS, A TREMENDOUS CAVITY LINED WITH MUCOUS MEMBRANE CONTAINING A PROTENSIBLE ORGAN COVERED WITH TINY WART-LIKE GROWTHS!



HARD, BONY APPENDAGES OF VARIOUS SHAPES JUT FROM THIS CAVITY AT ITS EXTREME EDGES... TOP AND BOTTOM! MUTANT'S HIDE IS POROUS AND COVERED WITH SLENDER, THREAD-LIKE FILAMENTS! HIDE COARSE AND THICK! PRESENTLY HIDE BECOMES DRENCHED WITH FOUL-SMELLING ACIDS WHICH Ooze FROM POROUS OPENINGS! OTHER LIQUIDS Ooze FROM OLFACTORY ORGAN AND MUCOUS-MEMBRANED CAVITY!



BODY OF MUTANT IS SHORT AND CYLINDRICAL WITH FOUR TRIPLE-SECTIONED APPENDAGES! EACH TRIPLE-SECTIONED APPENDAGE HAS SEVERAL ADDITIONAL TRIPLE-SECTIONED APPENDAGES PROTRUDING FROM IT! THESE END APPENDAGES ARE EACH ARMED WITH A HOOKY SCALE RESEMBLING A TALON!



MOVEMENTS OF MUTANT ARE ANKWARD AND... AND... JENNINGS! WHAT'S PROOF?

I... I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD, DOCTOR!



"SUPPOSE THE GOVERNMENT LABORATORIES RAISED THE MUTANTS, STUDYING THEM CLOSELY."

"MUTANTS ARE DANGEROUS... FEEDING ON OTHER FORMS OF ANIMAL LIFE FOR SUSTENANCE?"

"GRR!"



"MUTANTS HAVE LITTLE INTELLIGENCE? APPEAR HELPFUL... RUTHLESS, DANGEROUS... EVOLUTIONARY."

"NAUSEATING!"



"MUTANTS HAVE LIFE-DRIVE APPEARS TO BE REPRODUCTION? OTHER DRIVES ARE SUBSEQUENT TO THIS?"

"HOW PRIMITIVE?"



"MUTANTS APPEAR TO DESPISE AND MALTREAT LIFE-FORMS INFERIOR TO THEIR OWN? IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY WOULD, IF THEY COULD, KILL US?"

"THEY SHOULD BE DESTROYED BEFORE THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM!"



"THE LOSS APPEARED IN THE CLEARING SKY-DRIFT BURNED ON..."

"WE HOPE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND, FRANKLY, NO? THEREFORE, WHY WE ARE LEAVING!"

"WE FORMED A MENTAL PICTURE OF THESE MONSTERS AS YOU WERE DESCRIBING THEM, NOT..."



"...WE DON'T SEE HOW YOUR ILLUSTRATION IN ANY WAY EXPLAINS WHY YOU NO LONGER DESIRE TO MAKE PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH US!"

"STAND BACK!"



"A BLAST OF SMOKE AND FLAME EXPLODED FROM THE TROCKET TUBES OF THE ALIEN CRAFT... SENDING THE FOUR WELCOMING SCIENTISTS SCURRYING TO SAFETY..."

"GOOD LORD!"

"CRAZY IDIOTS!"

"GOOD-BYE, EARTHWIDE!"



ONE SCIENTIST CUPPED HIS HANDS TO HIS MOUTH... SHOUTING ABOVE THE ROAR OF THE ROCKETS...

I DON'T SEE WHAT THESE DISGRACING MUTANT MONSTERS HAVE TO DO WITH US!

THE MUTANTS WE TOLD YOU ABOUT... ACTUALLY WERE BORN!



THE SHIP TREMBLED...

THEY WERE BORN TO MEMBERS OF OUR RACE... ON OUR PLANET!



SO WHAT?

SEE FOR YOURSELF! THAT CAPSULE CONTAINS TWO OF THEM!



THE SCIENTISTS WATCHED THE GRAY TRAIL OF ROCKET EXHAUST DISAPPEAR INTO THE BLUE...

THE ROAR WAS DEAFENING! THE SHIP SHUDDERED... RISING INTO THE SKY ABOVE THE SANDS OF NEW MEXICO... SLOWLY! THEN... FASTER AND FASTER...



CAPSULE?

THAT METAL BALL THEY LOWERED!

THERE THEY GO!

THE METAL BALL WAS MADE UP OF TWO REINFORCED... A TOWER OF A BUTTON RELEASED THEM AND THEY FELL APART...

NOT ME! I'M NOT GOING TO LOOK AT THE UGIOUS THINGS! NOT UNARMED!

I'VE GOT A GUN! I HAD IT UNDER MY SHIRT!

C'MON!



GOOD LORD! A MAN... AND A WOMAN... THE HORRIBLE MUTANTS THEY DESCRIBED... THEY'RE HUMAN BEINGS!



THE END

HERE IS A STORY, TINGED WITH HORROR, WITH A STARTLING BLOOD-CURDLING CLIMAX!

THE RUG!

A HORROR
SUSPENSE STORY



CONRAD SMILED AT HIS USUAL FLIRT-BOY GUESSES AS HE CLOSED THE DOOR.
CONRAD SMILED AT HIS USUAL FLIRT-BOY GUESSES AS HE CLOSED THE DOOR.

IT'LL DO YOU GOOD TO GET AWAY FROM THE SOCIAL WHIRL FOR A WHILE, ROSIE! THERE'S ALWAYS TO DO AROUND HERE! FISHING... HUNTING.

HUNTING? HOW DISGUSTING!

WELL, ROSIE? IS IT? HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?

HEHEHE! VERY ATTRACTIVE, CONRAD! BUT WE'RE AWAY FROM CIVILIZATION UP HERE! WHAT IN HEAVEN'S ARE WE GOING TO DO FOR AMUSEMENT?



CONRAD LIT ONE OF THE POLISHED KEROSENE LAMPS SCATTERED ABOUT THE LODGE AND THE ROOM GLOWED GRIEVOUSLY.

OH... COME, COME, FRED! YOU'RE NOT GOURMETS ABOUT *ANYTHING*, ARE YOU?

I ABHOR IT! ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU DO *THAT* TO YOUR VICTIMS!



FRED POINTED A WELL-MANICURED FINGER AT A LARGE BEAR-SKIN BUS THAT LAY BEFORE THE FIELD-STONE FIRE-PLACE! THE HEAD OF THE UNFORTUNATE BEAR STARED BACK AT HIM WITH UNBIDDING EYES... FANGS BARED...

WHAAT? SPIN THEM AND MAKE *HELL* OUT OF THEM? WHY A BUS LIKE *THAT* IS WORTH A *FORTUNE*!

IT'S HORRIBLE! LOOK AT THE POOR CREATURE'S EYES!



FRED SHAKED AS HE SAID AT THE BEAR-SKIN BUS CONRAD BEGAN TO LAUGH...

OH, REALLY NOW, FRED? THAT BEAR-SKIN'S BEEN DAMAGED AND THE HEAD STAFFED? THOSE EYES ARE JUST GLASS?

OH? WELL, THEY DO LOOK SO... SO ALIVE!



HOW'D YOU LIKE TO OWN A BUS LIKE THAT?

YOU MEAN YOU'RE OFFERING IT TO ME?



OH, NO! NOT *THAT* ONE! WE'LL GO OUT TOMORROW AND GET YOU ONE!

NO, THANK FRED! I'D RATHER NOT HAVE ONE, THEN!



DON'T WORRY, FRED! I'LL DO THE SHOOTING AND SKINNING! YOU JUST COME ALONG FOR THE *MEAT*!

WELL, I... THAT IS...



TOMORROW MORNING! BRIGHT AND EARLY! I'LL MAKE YOU! NOW I THINK WE OUGHT TO *HIT THE HAY*! IT'S GETTING LATE!

LATE? IT'S ONLY TEN-FIFTEEN! BACK IN NEW YORK THINGS ARE JUST GETTING WARMED UP AT THIS HOUR!



THE NEXT MORNING, SHORTLY AFTER SUNRISE, CONRAD AND REGGIE STEPPED FROM THE GRASS INTO THE STILL DEW-LADEN GRASS AND BEGAN MOVING INTO THE THICK WOODS ALONG AN OVER-GROWN TRAIL...

USH! WHAT A GOD-FORGOTTEN HOLE! HE'S PULLED OUT OF BED! I'M STILL HALF ASLEEP!

YOU'LL WAKE UP QUICK ENOUGH, SOON AS YOU SPOT A SHEEP!

GOOD HEAVENS, CONRAD! WILL I HAVE TO WATCH YOU KILL THE POOR THING?

POOR THING! THAT'S A LAUGH! ONE OF THOSE BABIES WEIGH OVER A THOUSAND POUNDS!



YES... YOU'D BETTER WATCH! YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN WHEN YOU HUNT WILDLY! IF YOU DON'T HIT HIM JUST RIGHT HE'LL KEEP COMING AT YOU AND CRUSH YOU TO DEATH!

OH, DEAR!

YOU'VE HEARD THE EXPRESSION, "BEAR-HUG"! WELL, A BEAR'S HUG IS NO SIGN OF AFFECTION! IT USUALLY KILLS YOU!

I DON'T THINK I'D LIKE ONE OF THOSE RUGS AFTER ALL! COME! LET'S...

A MOVEMENT IN THE THICKEST AHEAD OF THEM CAUGHT CONRAD SARTWRIGHT'S EYE...
SHEEP-SHEEP! I THINK I SEE ONE!
GULP!



THE LUMBERING BROWN HULL MOVED OUT INTO THE OPEN! IT STOPPED AS IT CAUGHT THE HUMAN SCENT! IT TURNED... STUDDING THE TWO HUNTERS WITH ITS TINY BLACK BEADY EYES! CONRAD SLID THE BOLT OF HIS RIFLE HOME...

CONRAD EDGED TOWARD THE BEAR! THE PURRED GIANT WATCHED HIM, STUNNEDLY FASCINATED.
COME! PLEASE
SHUT UP! JUST A LITTLE CLOSER... A LITTLE MORE...



A LOW HOWL TUMBLED OUT OF THE BEAR'S THROAT. WARNING THE HUMANS TO KEEP BACK! CONRAD LIFTED HIS RIFLE TO HIS SHOULDER...



THE SHOT EXPLODED THROUGH THE SILENT FOREST! THE BEAR TUMBLED OVER, HOWLING IN PAIN! CONRAD CURSED...



THE GRIZZLY STUMBLER FORWARD... UP ONTO ITS HIND LEGS! ITS REDDY EYES FLAMED RED AS IT RUSHED AT THE TWO MEN...



CONRAD WAITED UNTIL THE BEAR WAS ALMOST UPON HIM! CAREFULLY HE SIGHTED ALONG THE SHINING BLACK BARREL OF HIS EXPENSIVE RIFLE... THEN...



THE BEAR TRIPPED FORWARD ON ITS FACE, SKIDDING TO A STOP ALMOST AT CONRAD'S FEET! HE SMILED DOWN AT IT...



CONRAD UNZIPPERED HIS MOUNTAIN COAT AND BENT OVER THE DEAD ANIMAL...



HE'S GOING TO MAKE A TREMENDOUS SOG, REGGIE! HE... HE... REGGIE!

CONRAD LAUGHED AT REGGIE CLINGING BEHIND THE NEARBY TREE. RETURNING! THEN HE CALMLY PROCEEDED TO SKIN THE BEAR...



HEH, HEH! SWATTER, REGGIE! EXCITEMENT TOO MUCH FOR YOU? HEH... HEH...

THAT EVENING, BACK AT THE HUNTING LODGE, HESBIE AND CONRAD SAT BEFORE A ROARING FIRE.

I SEE THE COLORED SKIN'S FINALLY COME BACK INTO YOUR CHEEKS, HESBIE!

I FEEL A LITTLE BETTER, NOW!



SOOT THE SKIN IN THE ICE-HOUSE, HESBIE! THAT'LL KEEP IT FROM ROTTING! TELL WE CAN GET IT TO A TANNER-MAN!

PLEASE! CONRAD! I'D RATHER NOT HAVE IT!



DON'T BE SILLY, HESBIE! WHY NOT?

IT'S NON-HUMAN!



OH, CLING OFF IT, HESBIE! IT'S DONE EVERY DAY! LOTS OF PEOPLE BURN AND SKIN THEIR KILLS!

IT SEEMED TO BE STOPPED! IT'S BARBARIC!



WELL, I DON'T SEE ANYTHING WRONG IN IT! IF YOU DON'T WANT THE BEAN SKIN HERE, I'LL KEEP IT FOR MYSELF!

I... I'M TIRED, CONRAD! I THINK I'LL GO TO BED! GOOD NIGHT!



CONRAD WATCHED HESBIE MOVE DOWN THE HALL AND ENTER HIS BEDROOM! HE LISTENED FOR THE SNAP OF THE LOCK! THEN HE LIT A CIGARETTE AND SMILED AS HE STARED INTO THE DYING FIRE.

CONRAD SAT FOR A WHILE MEDITATING TO HIMSELF! HIS HEAD NODDED SLEEPILY... HIS EYELIDS WERE SHUT TIGHT... MIGHT AS WELL YAWN, TURN IN! BETTING TIRED... NO, NOW SLEEP!

YEAH, YEAH! HESBIE'S A REAL CHARACTER-HE TOUGH! SO PROUD! THREE BEAN-SKIN HOGS SHOULD BE OUTLAWED! HAH! WHAT A RIDE!



SUDDENLY THE SILENCE OUTSIDE THE CABIN WAS CHATTERED WITH AN EAR-SPLITTING ROAR! CONRAD JUMPED UP... REACHING INSTINCTIVELY FOR HIS RIFLE STANDING IN THE HALL-WAY.

WHAT THE... WHAT WAS THAT?
SOUNDED LIKE A BEEZZLE!



CARTWRIGHT PEERED THROUGH THE CABIN WINDOW OUTSIDE. THE NIGHT WAS THICK AND BLACK! HE SHIELDED HIS EYES FROM THE GLARE OF THE FIRELIGHT... HIS FACE SEARCHING THE SHADOWS OF THE CLEARING THAT SURROUNDED THE LODGE.

CAN'T MAKE OUT ANYTHING!



CONRAD SPUN AROUND ON THE MANTLE OF THE FIREPLACE STOOD A POWERFUL, BATTERY LANTERN! HE SNATCHED IT... FLICKED IT ON, FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR... AND SENT ITS POWERFUL BEAM SHINING OFF INTO THE GLOOM.

WHAT'S THAT? SOMETHING
SHINING OUT THERE!



THE HUNTER MOVED TOWARD THE GLEAMING OBJECT... HIS GUN READY.

LOOKS LIKE
LOOKS LIKE.



THE LANTERN BEAM ILLUMINATED THE OBJECT MORE AND MORE AS CARTWRIGHT NEARED IT! SOON HE COULD MAKE OUT ITS SHAPE QUITE CLEARLY.

IS IT? IT'S A
HUNTER'S KNIFE!



SUDDENLY A MASSY Hairy Paw, CLAWED HANDS REACHED INTO THE CIRCLE OF LIGHT CLOSING BRIBBLY ON THE HUNTING KNIFE.

CARTWRIGHT SWUNG THE LIGHT OVER! THE BLACK MOUNTAINOUS Hairy BEAST LOOKED UP... ITS TINY RED EYES GLOWING... ITS HORRIFIC MOUTH GRIPPING OPEN...

GOOD LORD!
A-A...



...GRIZZLY!



GOMRAD DROPPED HIS LANTERN, THE BEAM TILTING CRAZILY! THE BEAST CRIZZLY MOVED TOWARD HIM! HE RAISED HIS BUN, BUT...



FOR A MOMENT, GOMRAD SPARRED BACK... MOROSE GRAWLING UP HIS SPINE! THEN HE TURNED TO RUN! THE BEAR UTTERED A LOW-THROATED SHARL AND SPARRS AT HIM...



THE MASE BEAST ENVELOPED THE STRUGGLING HUNTER WITH ITS DIBAMTIC PARS... CRUSHING THE AIR FROM HIS LUNGS...



GOMRAD SLIPPED TO THE GROUND... THE BLACKNESS CLOSING IN! JUST BEFORE HE DRAFTED INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS, HE FELT A STINGING PAIN IN HIS CHEST AS THE KNIFE CUT THROUGH... RIPPING DOWN... AND AROUND...



IN HIS ROOM, REBBIE STARTED FROM A SOUND SLEEP! HE SAT UP, STARING INTO THE DARKNESS...



REBBIE RUSHED DOWN THE HALL INTO THE GARDN LIVING-ROOM! THE FIRE STILL GLOWED FAIRLY... CASTING IT'S EERIE GLOW ON THE BEAR-SKIN RUG BEFORE IT! BUT NEARBY... BELOW THE CHAIR THAT GOMRAD GARTWRIGHT HAD FALLEN ASLEEP IN... WAS ANOTHER RUG... A NEW ONE!

