DREADFUL PLEASURES

by Jim Twitchell

Horror art is not, strictly speaking, a genre; it is rather a collection of motifs in a usually predictable sequence that gives us a specific physiological effect—the shivers. As the Fat Boy said in Charles Dickens' The Pickwick Papers, "I want to make your skin crawl!"

We do not have to know what is going on to be affected. An audience, in fact, may search for artificial horror without much intellectual explanation or sophistication. The art demands audience participation or, better yet, conspiracy: like children huddled around the campfire asking for "just one more scary story."

No one has ever tracked the major carriers of horror—the vampire, the werewolf, and the "hulk with no name"—from their lairs in the subconscious, up through folklore, into the printed text of Dracula, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and Frankenstein. From them came a veritable jungle of cinematic monsters.

Critics have uniformly neglected the word they so readily invoke—horror. It is a difficult word primarily because we think we know what it means: what is horrible is what we are frightened of. Give any journeyman moviemaker a razor and a young lady, or lumbering beast and a shrieking ingenue, and he should be able to scare the wits out of any audience. This is true as far as it goes, but horror really refers to a rather specific effect of that fright. To understand the meaning of "horror" we are initially taken back to the Latin word horrere, which means "to bristle," and it describes the way the hair stands on end during moments of shivering excitement. From this comes creeping flesh or, more simply, the "creeps." Hence both real and artificial horror—such as in Tales From the Crypt—offer a moment of ecstatic dread, a second of fully-passioned fixity, of panic and exultation. The experience is commonly known as gooseflesh. What we call gooseflesh is usually caused by abrupt changes in body temperature and is the warm-blooded animal's attempt to shove up its thermostat. Our teeth chatter, knees knock, and skin shivers. We stand still and shudder, suddenly paralyzed.

At the height of horror we must scream or the tension, the pressure inside us, will cause us to go insane!

Terrof, as differentiated from horror, must start anew in each generation, not because the objects we fear are so changeable, but because the images of them are. We now don't fear space invaders; we fear what we might bring back from space. A generation from now there will be a different "terror in the aisles." But horror is different. We will keep returning to watch the werewolf transform, or the vampire bite the virgin, or Dr. Frankenstein experiment in the laboratory, or Dr. Jekyll meet Mr. Hyde, and we will probably continue this interest until we resolve whatever it is in these myths that is unresolved within us.

(continued on inside back cover)
HEH, HEH! GOT A COLLECTORS' ITEM FOR YOU FIENDS! GOT A REAL GREAT CHILLER-DILLER! GIVE THE MAN YOUR GRIMY LITTLE DIME IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO ALREADY, AND COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! THIS IS THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY WITH ANOTHER OF MY TALES OF HORROR! SO SIT DOWN ON THE TANBARK FLOOR, AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURDLING YARN I CALL...

LOWER BERTH!

LONG BEFORE THE ADVENT OF RADIO, MOVIES, TELEVISION AND COMIC BOOKS, THE ONLY ENTERTAINMENT FOLKS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ENJOYED WERE THE TRAVELING CARNIVALS, WHICH SET UP THEIR GAILY-COLORED TENTS ON VACANT TRACTS OF LAND AT THE OUTSKIRTS OF THEIR TOWNS! ABOUT 80 YEARS AGO, ONE OF THESE CARNIVALS CAME TO A SMALL TOWN IN THE OZARK MOUNTAINS...

RIGHT THIS WAY, FOLKS! SEE THE SIDE-SHOW! SEE THE GREATEST COLLECTION OF ODDITIES EVER TO BE ASSEMBLED UNDER ONE TENT! RIGHT THIS WAY, FOLKS!
The side show of this particular carnival was owned by a man named Ernest Feeley. Patiently, over the years, he had assembled a fabulous collection of oddities and freaks. He had the usual attractions... see Fanny, the Fat Lady, folks! Four hundred and fifty pounds of female pulchritude! See Hadnar, the sword-swallower... Skull-face, the living skeleton... Fego, the fire-eater...

But Ernest Feeley had one attraction... a headline attraction. That never failed to draw the crowds... to separate the curious from their quarters...

And last but not least, folks... the star attraction of Feeley's side-show... the most unusual oddity ever to be put on display anywhere... anytime! Inside... in its original sarcophagus... is Myrna, the only female Egyptian mummy in existence! Twenty-five cents... folks! Right this way...

Myrna, the Egyptian mummy, was owned by Zachary Cling, a retired archaeologist. Ernest Feeley paid Zachary Cling a very large salary for the privilege of exhibiting Myrna...

... and now, folks... if you will step this way... Doctor Cling, who found Myrna the Egyptian mummy, will tell you all about her and show her to you...

Five times a day, Zachary Cling would narrate how he discovered Myrna, and then show her to the gaping customers! He'd even undo part of her wrappings...

Myrna, the only female Egyptian mummy in America was found in the Valley of the Kings by my expedition! Her tomb was deep in the cliffs that tower over the Nile river...

On the tomb walls, we found the inscriptions describing her incarceration! It seems that Myrna, or Myranah, as the Egyptians called her, was a lady-in-waiting to the Pharaoh's wife...

Bring me my perfume, Myranah! Yes, mistress!

Myranah was very beautiful, and soon caught the Pharaoh's fancy! But loyal Myranah, faithful to her mistress, repelled the Pharaoh's advances...

Do not struggle, my pet! I am your king! You must do as I wish! No! No! I will not! Never! Never.

The Pharaoh, in anger, ordered that she be buried alive as punishment! Myranah was forcibly wrapped in the ceremonial burial windings...

She fights like a cat, sire! She will fight no more! Hurry! Eeemmmpff!
AND SO, FOR FOUR THOUSAND YEARS, THIS POOR GIRL LAY IN HER TOMB UNTIL I UNCOVERED HER AND NOW... I GIVE YOU.

MYRNA!

I GASP! I CHOKED!

THE MUMMIFIED BODY OF THE UNFORTUNATE SERVANT GIRL STOOD IN ITS SARCOPHAGUS, ITS ARMS FOLDED ACROSS ITS CHEST. THE CARNIVAL CUSTOMERS NEVER FAILED TO GASP AND SCREAM WHENEVER DOCTOR CLING WOULD UNCOVER IT.

AND NOW... I WILL REMOVE SOME OF THE WRAPPED!

THE SIGHT OF THE MUMMY WAS REVOLTING. HER UNWRAPPED FACE WAS EVEN MORE SO! THE WRINKLED DRIED FLESH CLUNG TO HER SKULL LIKE WET TISSUE PAPER. HER EYES HAD RECEDED DEEP INTO THEIR SOCKETS! LIPS WERE DRAWN TIGHTLY BACK IN A LEERING GRIN! SOME CRIED OUT... SOME TURNED AWAY...

GOOD LORD!

BUT THERE WERE ALWAYS MORE THE NEXT NIGHT! MORE OF THE CURIOUS! WORD TRAVELED FAST IN SMALL TOWNS! THEY FLOCKED TO SEE MYRNA... SHE WELL EARNED HER KEEP! ERNEST FEELEY PAID ZACHARY CLING HIS SALARY HAPPILY! AND THEN, WHEN THE CARNIVAL HIT THAT SMALL OZARK TOWN...

YOU MR. FEELEY? MY NAME'S JEB SICKLES. I UNDERSTAND YOU OWN THIS HERE SIDE-SHOW, MR. FEELEY! I THINK MAYBE YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN WHAT I GOT!

WHAT'S THAT, MR. SICKLES?

I'M THE DOG 'ROUND THESE PARTS, MR. FEELEY! AIN'T GOT NO LICENCE OR NUTHIN', BUT FOLKS LIKE WHAT I DO FOR 'EM SO THEY COME 'ME 'BOUT TWO YEARS AGO, THIS HERE CRONE CAME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS! I'D NEVER LAID EYES ON 'ER B'FORE! SHE BEGGED ME 'T COME BACK WITH HER...

LOOK, MR. SICKLES! I'M A BUSY MAN! GET TO THE POINT! WHAT IS IT YOU'VE GOT THAT I'D BE INTERESTED IN?

I'LL GET TO IT, MR. FEELEY! TAKE IT EASY! ANYWAY, THIS OLD CRONE BEGGED ME SO BAD! I WENT! SHE TOL' ME HER SON WAS SICK... TERRIBLE SICK! SHE SAID HE WAS A-DYIN'! SHE TOOK ME UP INTO THE MOUNTAINS TO THIS HERE CAVE! I NEARLY THROW'D UP AT WHAT I SAW!

WHAT WAS IT, MR. SICKLES?
"It war her son, Mr. Feeley! Her son had two heads! It was horrid..."

"Choke! Kin yuh... Kin yuh do anything for Enoch?"

"He was too far gone for me to save! He died 'bout an hour after we got t' the cave..."

"I'm sorry, ma'am! I done all I could. Enoch is dead."

"Take 'im away! Take 'im... sob... out of my sight!"

"He musta been twenty-two. Mr. Feeley, I took his body back down the mountain and put it in a moonshine still! I didn't want nobody t' see it!"

"And you still make it... the two-headed body?"

"It's been in the still for two years, Mr. Feeley! The moonshine seems t' have preserved it! You..."

"Take me to it! Quickly!"

"Thar she is, Mr. Feeley?"

"C'mon!"

"The light from the lantern cast an orange glow into the huge wooden still-vat! Below the surface of the moonshine, the pulpy white faces of the two-headed corpse stared up at Ernest Feeley..."

"That's him... Gulp!"

"Mr. Feeley and the quack doctor pushed their way through the crowd ogling at Myrna, the mummy! Outside the carnival grounds, a horse and wagon waited? They drove to a hidden still..."

"Eh? Wal, I dunno! I... I guess I'd like that!"

"How would you like to join my show, Jeb? Do what old Doc cling does! Exhibit this here Enoch! Tell how you got him? I'll pay you a good salary!"

"Join up with you fellers, eh? Wal, I..."

"Ernest turned to Jeb sickles... his eyes wide... his face flushed..."
So, JEB SICKLES TOOK HIS TWO-HEADED PRESERVED BODY OUT OF THE STILL AND JOINED ERNEST FEELEY'S SIDE-SHOW. Enoch was placed in a specially made glass tank filled with formaldehyde, and put on exhibit.

And now folks, I give you Doctor JEBSON SICKLES... AND ENOCH!

It didn't take long for Ernest Feeley to realize that the thing in the huge glass tank was a really valuable exhibit and deserved star billing, like Myrna...

That's right, JEB! I'm movin' you up to star attraction! You'll share it with Doc Cling, here!

THANKS, HMMPH... MYRNA... ENOCH...

And five times a day, the curtain hiding Enoch's tank was withdrawn revealing the twisting, turning preserved corpse...
The carnival moved on from town to town. The crowds flocked to see Enoch and Myrna! And jealousy between Zach Cling and Jeb Sickles flamed...

Enoch pulls 'em in too, Zach! I've been underpaying Jeb! He and you get the same from now on! I'm lowerin' your pay, and raisin' his!

The bloated body with the staring pairs of eyes swayed in the formaldehyde! The dried remains in the rotted wrappings stood silently! Five times a day they gazed upon each other...

What do you mean you're cutting my salary? If it wasn't for Myrna...

I'm movin' you and Myrna out front, Cling! We need a draw for the admissions! Jeb and Enoch are the stars now...

And so, when the rotted wrappings were removed from Myrna's sunken, mummified eyes, she looked out across the crowd and saw nothing...

I give you... Myrna...

And when the curtain was pulled back uncovering Enoch's tank, he looked out across the crowd and saw nothing...

I give you... Enoch!

Thus, in the black of night, when the carnival folk lay asleer, a dried and boney hand moved... slowly... hesitantly... pulling away its rotted brown wrappings...

...While a bloated, pale hand slid upward and over the tank-rim, pulling its chalky, pulpy body after it...
He stole enough! He stole Myrna! Calm down, you two!

Use your heads, you fools! If both are missing, neither of you could have done it!

A piece of Myrna's wrappings! Drops of Formaldehyde! They go that way!

The three men followed the fragments of Mummy wrappings and the droplets of Formaldehyde out of the side-show tent and into the morning sunlight! The trail was clear... very clear... It leads to that house! Look at the sign! Gasp! Justice of the Peace! Good Lord!

The justice of the peace was very friendly! He told the side-show men all he knew...

Coup[le] came last night! Yep! Wanted to get married! I did it! I performed the ceremony!

Jus[ti]ce of the Peace was very friendly! He told the side-show men all he knew...

Cou[ple] came last night! Yep! Wanted to get married! I did it! I performed the ceremony!

Shucks! All I can say is they must've been drinking! Smelled mighty bad... like as if they'd been! But five bucks is five bucks!

Didn't see nuthin'! Can't see! I'm blind, y'know! Didn't see nuthin'! Can't see! I'm blind, y'know! Good Lord!
HEH, HEH! CAREFUL NOW! DON'T PEEL! HERE COMES THE FINISH! BRACE YOURSELVES! FIRST, LET ME SAY THAT MR. FEELEY, JEB, AND ZACH LOST MYRNA AND Enoch's TRAIL AFTER THEY LEFT THE J. P. I JUST COULDN'T FIND 'EM! IN FACT, IT WASN'T TILL A YEAR LATER, WHEN THE CARNIVAL RETURNED TO THE VERY OZARK TOWN WHERE Enoch HAD FIRST JOINED THE SIDE-SHOW...

... THAT MR. FEELEY HEARD ABOUT THE STRANGE DOIN'S UP IN THE MOUNTAINS... SOMEBODY SAID THEY SEEN 'EM, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE 'EM! WHO EVER HEARD OF A LIVIN' MUMMY AND A TWO-HEADED CORPSE...

WHERE'S WHERE DID THEY SEE 'EM?


HEH, HEH! YEP! THAT'S IT, KIDDIES!

But the three men were out of earshot when the wail drifted out from deep in the bowels of the crone's cave! They never saw the infant-thing crawl out into the sunlight... its eyes streaming with tears... crying for its parents...

WAHHH!

WHERE'S WHERE did they see 'em?

And the three carnival men dragged their long-lost oddities back down the mountain...

MYRNA, MY MYRNA! Enoch, my boy! At last! Over a year!

But the three men were out of earshot when the wail drifted out from deep in the bowels of the crone's cave! They never saw the infant-thing crawl out into the sunlight... its eyes streaming with tears... crying for its parents...
HEH, HEH! NOW IT'S TIME FOR A JAUNT INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, CREEPS! THIS IS YOUR VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO RELATE THIS BLOOD-CURDLING TALE FROM MY COLLECTION! SO COME IN, SIT DOWN ON THAT BLOOD-STAINED HOTEL ROOM RUG, AND I'LL TELL YOU HOW IT GOT THAT WAY! I CALL THIS SICKENING SOJOURN INTO THE SCREAMING SEMI-DARKNESS OF SORROWNESS...

THIS TRICK'LL KILL YOU!

Herbert Markini moved through the milling Calcutta crowds, mopping his perspiration-bathed face! The blazing Indian sun was directly overhead! The heat was unbearable! Herbert cursed...

Why I ever came to this disease-infested hell-hole, I'll never know! I haven't found one new illusion since I've been here! Indian fakirs? Bah! Lucky thing I left Inez at the hotel! She'd pass out in this heat!
The coin tinkle to the cobble-stones at the girl's bare feet; she picked it up, examined it, and lifted the lid off the basket, tossed the coin in! Herbert peered down. Inside the basket lay a coil of heavy rope, old and frayed.

Sure! I've heard tell of it; but that's all! Just talk! I don't believe that there is such a thing.

Satisfied that there was nothing new to see, nothing he could add to his fabulous magic act, Herbert would move on from one fakir to the next! Then, in a dark alley off the teeming market place, he saw her! The dark-haired, flash-eyed Indian girl...

Hello! What's that? She wears a fakir's shawl! I wonder what she has in the basket!

The great Markini, famous in the United States for his astounding feats of magic, pushed his way through the dark-skinned throng...stopping for a few minutes to watch as each squatting Indian fakir would perform his tricks and illusions...

Hmph! The old cabbage-in-the-ground illusion! Old as the hills!

The coin tinkle to the cobble-stones in the girl's bare feet! She picked it up, examined it, and lifted the lid off the basket...tossed the coin in! Herbert peered down! Inside the basket lay a coil of heavy rope, old and frayed...

The girl pulled a small reed instrument from the folds in her gown and put it to her lips! She took a deep breath and began to blow softly! The weird note trembled! The coil of rope in the basket stirred...

What the...?

The single note continued! One end of the coil of rope stood up...swaying like an entranced cobra...

Good Lord!

What the...?

And as the girl's breath ran out and the note began to fade...the end of the rope began to rise higher and higher into the air...

I don't believe it!
She pulled herself easily, hand over hand, till she reached the top.

"I'll buy it! I'll pay you anything... anything!"

The girl got to her feet and moved to the rope. As Herbert watched, horrified, she began to climb it.

"God, Lord!"

"When the last vibration ended, the rope stood upright at its full uncoiled length. Fifteen... maybe twenty feet into the air..."

The dark-haired, flashing-eyed native girl slid to the ground once again and the rope collapsed into the basket...

"How much do you want for the trick? Name your price, girl!"

"I cannot sell the rope! It was my mother's and her mother's..."

"Tell me how it is done!"

"Tell me the secret!"

"I'll make my own..."

"There is no secret, sahib! It is the rope! You cannot make one! It is impossible!"

"Ban! Keep your rope!"

"There must be a trap door below... no hole out of which a pole could be extended... nothing..."

"The rope! And the rope is not for sale!"

"The girl lifted the basket! There was no trap door below... no hole out of which a pole could be extended... nothing..."

"Impossible! There must be a trick to it!"

"You see, sahib? It is the rope and the rope is not for sale!"

"And there must be a trap door!"

The dark-haired, flashing-eyed native girl slid to the ground once again and the rope collapsed into the basket...

"I cannot sell the rope! It was my mother's and her mother's..."

"Tell me the secret!"

"I'll make my own..."

"There is no secret, sahib! It is the rope! You cannot make one! It is impossible!"

"Ban! Keep your rope!"

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"You see, sahib? It is the rope and the rope is not for sale!"

"And there must be a trap door!"
That night, the great Markini paced his hotel room nervously! Finally the door opened and a woman entered...

**INEZ**! It's about time! Did you see her? Did you see the trick?

I saw her! And I saw the trick! We'd knock 'em dead in the States with that one...

Could you buy the secret from her, Inez? Did she tell you how she does it?

I couldn't make any headway either! She gave me the same line she gave you! She said it was the rope... and no gimmicks! And she wouldn't sell the rope!

**INEZ**! I want that trick! I've got to know how she does it!

Take it easy, Herb! She'll be here any minute!

Be... here? She's coming here?

Yes! I accused her of props! I dared her to show us the same thing here! She fell for it!

Fell for it? What do you have in mind, Inez?

Don't be naive, Herb! That trick is worth a fortune! We've got to have it... at all costs! Even... murder!

**INEZ**! Murder?!

Think of it, Herb! You... in the center of the stage... blowing that weird little pipe... and me... in a scant costume... climbing the rope... the trick that everyone said couldn't be done!

You're right, Inez! If she won't tell us... we'll kill her for the secret!

If she does it here, the gimmick is inside the rope or in the basket! After we knock her off, we'll find out what it is... shhhhh! She's coming!
There was a timid knock on the hotel room door. Herbert swung it open.

Come in! Come in! Ah! I see you have the basket.

You! You are the man I performed for this afternoon!

Yes! My name is Markini! In the United States, I am a famous magician! This is my wife, Inez.

Ah! The lady that invited me here! She said I would not be able to make the rope rise here!

That's right. Money! I think you've got some wire arrangement in that alley back there!

I told you both! It is the rope. Nothing more! Watch...

The girl placed the basket on the floor of the room. Then she took out the curious reed instrument and began to blow. The weird note filled the room. The rope began to rise...

It's in the basket, Herb! The gimmick must be in there... or in the rope...

I'll get 'er...

Suddenly... the weird-sounding, trembling note was cut short! The rope collapsed! Herbert's powerful fingers held the Indian girl's neck in a vice-like grip...

Don't let her scream, Herb! I... gasp... won't...

Soon, the throttled native girl's body went limp and she slid to the floor...

She... she's dead!

O'ver? Let's look at that rope!

The murderers rushed to the collapsed rope lying on the hotel room rug. Herb searched the and examined it closely. Inez picked it up in the basket...

The rope... it's not hollow! There's no wire! It's... it...

There's nothing in the basket! Nothing!
Inez and Herbert stared at each other...

No gimmick! No prop! But...but...

We saw it start rising! It was working!

The pipe, Herb! Try the pipe!

But...but what good will that do?

Look, Herb! Look!

The frayed end of the rope began to rise...

Keep blowing, Herb! Keep blowing!

Higher and higher the rope rose until it touched the ceiling of the room! Herb's breath ran out and the note faded. The rope stood stiffly.

She...gasp...she wasn't lying! It is the rope. There's something about it...

We've got a gold mine, Herb!

A gold mine!

Inez moved to the rope. She closed her hands around it and began to pull herself up...

It holds me, Herb! I can climb it!

We'll knock them dead, Inez! Just wait till we get back to the states! We'll...
Herbert Markini stared at the spot near the ceiling where Inez had been! She'd simply vanished! Her hysterical shriek came from very far away...

**Inez! Inez! WHERE ARE YOU?**

Suddenly a wave of nausea swept over the great Markini! Objects rained down from nowhere about him...falling to the Calcutta Hotel room floor! Horrible objects! Quivering pieces of Inez's body...

**Inez! YAAAAAA!!**

The complaints of neighbors brought the manager of the Calcutta Hotel to Herbert and Inez Markini's room! He found the master magician hanging from a rope...swaying crazily! The rope ended at the ceiling...apparently unattached...

The rope curled upward...the frayed end still in the basket whipped outward...wrapping around Herbert's neck...

**AARGGH!**

Heh, heh! That about wraps it up, kiddies...neatly knotted! When they tried to cut poor Herbie down, the rope just collapsed and he fell to the floor amid Inez's dismembered remains! As for the Indian girl...they found no trace of her! What happened to her body? Next time you're in Calcutta, look for her in that alleyway! She'll be there...with her rope! Just be careful! Don't let her string you along...

Good Lord!

And slowly...steadily...the rope continued to rise...until...

**U-N-N-N-N-N-N-N-N-G-G-G!**

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**AARGGH!**
A RARE E.C. OFFER

Seventeen years ago a small publishing company called East Coast Comix reprinted a dozen of the original E.C.s in full color as regular 32-page comic books. Without national distribution the market was not able to sustain their continuation. Shortly after they ceased production we bought the remaining small inventory, realizing they would become real collector's items someday. With the return of E.C. through Gladstone, that day has come! None of these 1973 and '74 reprints is scheduled to be duplicated by Gladstone before 1992 and some later than that. The Two Fisted Tales and Shock SuspenStories comics have no place on our schedule at the present time. The following are available individually or as a lot while the very limited supply lasts.

1. The Crypt of Terror 1, Feb. 1955 $12.00
   Planned to debut as E.C.'s fourth horror title, it instead became the last issue of Tales From the Crypt, number 46. It contains a Jack Davis werewolf story and George Evans famous razor blade sizzler, "Blind Alleys." Highly recommended. Very very limited.

2. Weird Science 15, Sept. 1952 $8.00
   Incredible issue, with the first E.C. story by Al Williamson, who quickly became a favorite and "The Martian," one of Wallace Wood's best. Also, a photo and biography of Joe Orlando, who draws captive earthenm in "Bum Steer.""Incredible story, two miracles. And a murderafs alkalohol is portrayed in "Deadline" by Jack Kamen.

3. Shock SuspenStories 12, Dec. 1953 $6.00
   Drug abuse is dealt with for one of the first times in comics in the powerful Joe Orlando effort, "The Monkey" Reed Crandall's "The Kidnapper" generated mail from many parents. Wally Wood touches on suicide in "The Fall Guy." And a murderous alcoholic is portrayed in "Deadline" by Jack Kamen.

4. The Haunt of Fear 12, Mar. 1952 $5.00
   Two rotting corpse stories highlight an issue of great art by "Ghastly" Graham Ingels and Jack Davis. Johnny Craig has a story, biography and a photo. His story of a love triangle involves two shootings and a mysterious tattoo that miraculously implicates the killer.

5. Weird Fantasy 13, May, 1952 $5.00
   Special issue with two tales illustrated by Wallace Wood, including "Home to Stay," an unforgettable adaptation of two Ray Bradbury short stories. E.C.'s science fiction and horror editorial artist Al Feldstein has a bio with photo.

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

7. The Vault of Horror 26, Aug. 1952 $6.00
   Putrid palpitations of a ghoul and a vampire in love. Werewolves, walking corpses and a voodoo curse are all rendered in color by Johnny Craig, Jack Davis. Sid Show and Graham Ingels.

8. Shock SuspenStories 6, Dec. 1952 $6.00
   One story each of crime, suspense, sci-fi and horror, plus a biography and photo of fan favorite Wally Wood. Graham Ingels illustrates a rare appearance of the Old Witch outside the Horror titles. Wood’s "Under Cover" is a shocker dealing with overt prejudice that was largely ignored by society in the 1950s. Great issue!

9. Two Fisted Tales 34, July, 1953 $5.00
   Jack Davis writes and draws the lead western, "Betsy," and Wally Wood conceives "Trial by Arms," a medieval story of treachery and murder. John Severn inks a desert epic and George Evans illustrates his specialty—a finale about World War I flying aces.

10. The Haunt of Fear 23, Jan. 1954 $5.00
     Jack Kamen does one of his famous "Grim" Fairy Tales. This time a horrific version of Hansel and Gretel. A dark, brooding, beautifully drawn Jack Davis swamp tale and a werewolf story are also featured.

A complete set of all ten classics, while all are still available $50.00

TERMS: Please add 50¢ per comic ordered to help defray postage and handling. List each comic ordered by number or indicate complete set. Each comic will be shipped individually bagged and securely wrapped. Make checks or money orders payable to Bruce Hamilton, P.O. Box 4235, Prescott, AZ 86302.
Once upon a time, long, long ago, in a kingdom far, far away, there was a castle! And in this castle dwelt a king... a queen... and a young dashing prince...

Prince Junior! How many times have I told you not to dash through the halls like that!

Sob... I fell oh my royal... sob...

Now the king and queen of this far, far away kingdom were very busy... kingly and queening! They'd had no time to take care of young Prince Junior! So... they'd hired a nurse when Junior was just a babe...

How is Prince Junior today, Nurse? May we see him? Hush! He's sleeping! You can have just one peek... that's all!
Prince Junior, what have you done? Oh, dear...

I giggle... I tied you up with string... beware! He is attached!

I tied you with strings to me.

Would scold him when he was naughty... I told you not to get dirty... you bad, bad boy!

Would read to him when he was good... I read to me about the wicked witch who cooks the bad little peasant children in her oven, Nurse Fanny!

Would tuck him in at night! Good night, Nurse Fanny! Just one more story, Nurse Fanny! The one about the wicked witch who cooks the bad little peasant children!

Nurse Fanny was more of a mother to Prince Junior than the queen... I love you, Nurse Fanny! And I love you, little prince!

And so, when Prince Junior woke up one morning and found Nurse Fanny lying very still... Nurse Fanny! Nurse Fanny! Tell me!

Naturally, as Prince Junior grew, he became more and more attached to his old nurse...

Every day, Nurse Fanny (for that was her name) would dress Prince Junior...

There! You look very nice! Now don't get dirty! Your mother and father are coming to see you soon!

Yet, Nurse Fanny! Nurse Fanny! The one about the wicked witch who cooks the bad little peasant children!

And so, when Prince Junior woke up one morning and found Nurse Fanny lying very still... Nurse Fanny! Nurse Fanny! Tell me!

Nurse Fanny was more of a mother to Prince Junior than the queen... I love you, Nurse Fanny! And I love you, little prince!

And so, when Prince Junior woke up one morning and found Nurse Fanny lying very still... Nurse Fanny! Nurse Fanny! Tell me!
But Nurse Fanny did not speak! Nurse Fanny was very cold and very white...

She is dead, my son!

Do not cry, my child!

Do the Queen's pleading could not make her little boy stop crying...

Thob...I want nurth... Fanny! Thob...Thob... I want...Thob... my nurth...

Do something, so Heinrich! His little heart is breaking!

She dead.

She dead.

She dead.

She dead.

Make something up! Promise him something! Anything!

Prince Junior! You shouldn't... I cry! Think of all the candy!

Candy! What candy?

At the funeral!

Funeral? What...Thob... is that?

When someone dies, my son, they make a funeral! We'll have a funeral for Fanny! We'll invite all your cousins...

What about the candy?

And we'll serve candy... and cake...

With whipped cream... and we'll play games and give prizes...
...AND I'LL WIN A PONY?

WELL, I DON'T KNOW!

THOB... THOB... ALL RIGHT YOU'LL WIN A PONY!

GOODY, GOODY! A PONY! WE'RE GONNA HAVE A FUNERAL... WE'RE GONNA HAVE A FUNERAL!

COME, (YOU'RE MY DEAR, SO CLEVER, HEINRICH!) HE'S ALL RIGHT NOW!

AND SO, PRINCE JUNIOR SKIPPED HAPPILY THROUGH THE CASTLE...

...WE'RE GONNA HAVE A FUNERAL...

AND I'M GONNA WIN A PONY...

...UNTIL HE CAME TO A DOOR WITH A BIG BLACK BOW AND RIBBON HANGING FROM IT...

...AND I'M GONNA WIN A...

...GULP!

THITH MUTH BE WHERE NURTH FANNY ITH LYING IN THITATE? I'LL JUTH OPEN THE DOOR AND TAKE A PEEK! JUTH TO MAKE THURE...

GATHP!
Suddenly, the room was filled with an eerie moan...

She...she's alive!

Fanny, you see, suffered occasional cataleptic fits which made her appear dead, and after all, how good were doctors in those days, anyhow?

Suddenly Prince Charming thought about all his cousins...not in a million years...

...and then he thought about all the candy...

...and I'd never leave my baby...

...because you're my baby...

Pop!

Oh, dear! I must have had an attack! I haven't had one of those in years!

You're not dead!

No, my dear! I'm not dead! You know I wouldn't leave you!

Oh, nurth Fanny! I... I...

Nurse Fanny was stretched out on a velvet-draped bier! At her head, two candles burned! The room was dark, save for the glow from the two flickering flames! But there was enough light for Prince Junior to see...

Gathp! She... she moved!
And then he thought about the cake... with whipped cream... because I love my baby...

AND WHEN YOU LOVE SOMEONE...

NOT IN A MILLION YEARS!

POPI!

AND THEN PRINCE JUNIOR THOUGHT ABOUT HIS PRIZE... THE PONY...

...YOU NEVER GO AWAY...

AND SO, PRINCE JUNIOR PICKED UP ONE OF THE HEAVY CANDLESTICKS...

...IS WHAT MAKES THE WORLD...

HEH, HEH! AND AFTER THAT, HAPPY PRINCE JUNIOR DID HAVE HIS FUNERAL... WITH THE COUSIN, CAHOY, AND CAKE... AND HE DID GET HIS PONY... AND HE LIVED HAPPLY EVER AFTER! POOR NORTH FANNY WAS BURIED AS PER SCHEDULE, AND NOBODY EVER KNEW THAT THE OLD GAL HAD DIED OF A SPLINTERED SKULL! AFTER ALL, AS I SAID BEFORE, HOW GOOD WERE DOCTORS IN THOSE DAYS, ANYWAY? AND NOW, THE OLD WITCH AWAITS YOU... SO HOLD YOUR NOSE AND SHHIFT YOUR BLEARY EYES RIGHT!

AND SO, PRINCE JUNIOR PICKED UP ONE OF THE HEAVY CANDLESTICKS..

...IS WHAT MAKES THE WORLD...

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...IS WHAT MAKES THE WORLD...
WELL... HEE, HEE... IT'S ME... YOUR HOSTESS IN THE HAUNT OF FEAR, THE OLD WITCH, READY TO RUSTLE UP ANOTHER REVOLTING RECIPE IN MY CRUDDY CAULDRON! SO, CRAWL IN, CREEPS! KNOT YOUR DRIBBLE NAPKINS AROUND YOUR SCRAWNY NECKS... FASTEN YOUR DROOL CUPS... AND I'LL DISH OUT THE TALE OF TERROR I CALL...

NONE BUT THE LONELY HEART!

IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN A SIMPLE MATTER FOR HOWARD. AFTER ALL, HE WAS RATHER GOOD-LOOKING IN A MATURE SORT OF WAY! OLD MAIDS AND WIDOWS WERE ATTRACTED TO HIM! BESIDES... THE PHOTOGRAPH HE'D SEND THEM WAS A PARTICULARLY GOOD ONE...

HEH, HEH! LISTEN TO THIS, KING!

DEAR HOWARD,
I RECEIVED YOUR PICTURE ALONG WITH YOUR DELIGHTFULLY WRITTEN LETTER TODAY! YOU LOOK VERY NICE! ENCLOSED IS MY PHOTO! I'M SORRY IT ISN'T A RECENT SNAP! IT WAS TAKEN TWO YEARS AGO...
Howard patted his dog’s head and smiled...

Well! She’s sent us her picture, boy! Shall we brace ourselves and take a look?

He lifted the picture from the envelope and gasped...

Why... she... she’s beautiful, King!

Indeed, Howard’s latest proposed victim was beautiful! Howard studied her for a moment, thoughtfully...

You know, King? With a woman like this, I might decide to wind up this racket and settle down for good!

Howard sat back, the picture in his lap, and lit his pipe. The smoke curled up lazily, thinning as it drifted toward the ceiling...

Remember the first picture we ever got, King? Let’s see! Almost seven years ago it was! What was her name? Oh, yes! Matilda! Matilda Filby.

We got her name from a lonely-hearts club list! Remember? That was back when I first decided to start this little ‘love for money’ game! After a couple of warm letters crossed, it came...

Whew! What a face! Look at this, King! How could I ever love an ugly wench like this...

But she had money, didn’t she, King? Remember? She wrote, describing her house... the furnishings!

She’s rich though, King! She’s got loot! And she lives alone! Maybe... Choke... Maybe looks aren’t everything!

So we took the plunge, eh, boy? We wrote passionate tomes of love, and finally proposed! And she accepted! So we pawned my watch, bought a new suit of clothes... and a ticket... and went...

Howard... dear one! Matilda... my pet!
"How long was it after our wedding, King? Six months? Not much more! Poor Matilda! She never even knew we'd loosened the top cellar stair...

Matilda? What is it?

The fall didn't kill her, did it? We had to go down and finish the job! Messy business...

Howard... gasp... I'm hurt... gasp... I... I...

Howard!

Heh, heh! So we moved on, eh, King? And about three months later, we contacted our second victim! She'd advertised in a personal column, hadn't she? Yet it began again...

Well, at least she's better than the last one, eh, King? Lord! Aren't there any pretty rich widows?

Toward... gasp... I'm hurt... gasp... I...

Howard...

Ephie... my dear...

We didn't waste much time with her, eh, King? She wasn't as wealthy as we thought! Sometimes it's hard to tell, isn't it? And you can't very well ask! How long did Ephie last before she fell from her apartment window?...

The fresh-air-friend! Heh, heh! It was so easy to push her! She had jewelry, though! How much did we get? Five grand or so, wasn't it?

We hate to see you go, Mr. Prince!

The apartment... well... it's so big and... empty now!

Yeah, alright!
I leaped from the car just as it went over the cliff! Oh, you should have been there, King! You'd have been proud of me! And what a sight! The car going over and over...down...

That real estate brought us seventy grand huh, King! Yes! But that was a mistake! Selling it later, they found out there was all the luck! Oh, well! We made up for it on number four! Remember her?*

Poor Veronica! The poison made her go into such painful convulsions before she died! But a hundred thousand dollars wasn't hay, was it, King?

You're sure you want to sell, Mr. Royal? After all... Yes, Mr. Bibbs! I'd rather! I couldn't go on without...her!

Heh, heh! How many were there all together, King? Seven? Yes! Seven! Why...we could have retired easily with the fortune we'd made from them! But then we read this one's... Janet's ad... Hmmm! Listen to this, King! 'Lonely woman desires correspondence with refined gentleman.'

The factory that Veronica's first husband had left her was worth a small fortune! Chemicals! It spelled her own undoing, Eh, King? Remember how I learned about that non-traceable poison?'

Howard! That coffee! I...gasp... Yes, Veronica? What about it?
We couldn't resist, could we, King? We had to write! And then her answer came.

Dear Mr. Throne, your letter arrived today, and I read it with much interest! You sound very cultured and well traveled! I would enjoy corresponding with you!

Janet Lane

Can't you see her, King? This ravishing woman living alone on this palatial estate in a huge fieldstone house! Why... it sounds almost too good to be true...

KING, M'BOY! I think it's time that you and I were settling down! We're not getting any younger, you know! And if Janet...

Howard picked up the photograph of the lovely woman... If Janet looks like this, I think we've found the right one, this time! Why, you'll have that big estate to romp around in... with the hand-wrought-iron gates and the gardeners and trees... flowers... and a big stone house...

Howard put his pipe down and smiled. He shuffled through a sheaf of papers.

So we started writing, eh, King? Let's see! Here's her second letter...

Dear Howard... if I may be so bold, I reside in a sturdily built stone house. The property is very large... almost twelve acres... and very well kept! But for a woman such as myself, being alone as I am... without anyone living for miles around... life can be very hard. Your letters are a great comfort.

Listen to this letter! 'Marble floors... say! 'Furnished in exquisite taste... 'Hard woods... 'Bronze trims...' Satin draperies...' Stained glass windows...'

KING! You're not thinking of agreeing to this correspondence, are you?
Three days later, Janet's answer came...

She's accepted, King! She'll marry me! Oh, I wouldn't let myself hope...but now I'm so happy!

Howard packed his bags...

No more wandering around for us, boy! No more aliases...no more false love-making! We're settling down...for good...

Howard sent a telegram on ahead announcing his expected arrival date, and he and King set out by car for Janet's home...

That's all right, Officer! I'll find it! Thanks!

Bayberry Road was a long narrow tree-lined lane off the main highway! There were few houses along it! Finally...

There's the wrought-iron gate, King! We're here!

As Howard's car swung in at the gate, his headlights fell across...

What the...?
A CEMETERY!

The letters were rusted and old, but very clear...

Suddenly, the car door swung open! King yelped...

GOOD LORD!

Steady, boy! steady! We must have made a mistake...

Suddenly, the car door swung open! King yelped...

...King began to whine softly...

The rotting, decayed thing grinned...reaching outward! Its flesh crawled with the slime of death! Its voice rasped like a worn out gramophone cylinder...

Howard... da-a-arling!

Janet! Gasp! No! No!

The female-thing dragged the screaming man into the satin draped mausoleum with the stained glass window...across the marble floor and into the hard-wood, bronze-trimmed coffin! And all the while, as it closed the lid down, it kept murmuring...spewing its foul-smelling breath upon his terror-stricken face...

It's been so lonely here... my dear! But now... that's all over.

Hee, hee! What a love affair, eh, kiddies? All over. Now is right... for Howie, that is! Oh, by the way! In case you're wondering what happened to King, rest your fiendish minds! Janet had a dog... nameo Queenie... and now, it's time to close that putrid crypt-keeper's mag! We'll all see you next in the vault-keeper's mess, the vault of horror. 'Bye, now!' And if you get any love letters signed Janet or Howie... hee, hee, well...

The end
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Note: Your first Collector-Pak will be mailed out in August 1990.
William Acton rose to his feet. The clock on the mantel ticked midnight. He looked at his fingers and he looked at the large room around him and he looked at the man named Arthur Huxley lying on the floor who was dead and would say no more sayings nor brutalize more brutalities. William Acton, whose fingers had stroked typewriter keys and made love and fried ham and eggs for early breakfasts, had now accomplished a murder with those same ten whorled fingers...
Now what? His every impulse exploded him in a hysteria toward the door. Get out, get away, run, never come back. Board a train, get a taxi, get, go, run, walk, saunter, but get the blazes out of here...

His hands hovered before his eyes, floating, turning. It was not the hands as hands he was interested in, nor the fingers as fingers. He found interest only in the tips of his fingers. The clock ticked upon the mantel...

He knelt by Huxley's body, took a handkerchief from Huxley's pocket and began methodically to swab Huxley's throat with it. He brushed and massaged the face and the back of the neck with a fierce energy...

He stopped. There was a moment when he saw the entire house, the halls, doors, furniture; and as clearly as if it were being repeated word for word, he heard Huxley talking and himself talking just as they had talked only an hour ago...

I want to see you, Huxley. It's important.

Oh! It's you, Acton. I don't see...well, all right. Come in. We can talk in the library.

Now, squatting on the floor beside Huxley's cold body with the polishing handkerchief in his fingers, he stared at the house, the walls, the furniture, stunned by what he realized. He shut his eyes, wading the handkerchief in his hands, biting his lips with his teeth, pulling in on himself. The fingerprints were everywhere.

Now, a pair of gloves. Before he did one more thing, before he polished another area, he must have a pair of gloves. He put his hands in his pockets, walked to the hall umbrella stand, the hatrack, Huxley's overcoat. He pulled out the overcoat pockets. No gloves...

A pair of gloves. Before he did one more thing, before he polished another area, he must have a pair of gloves. He put his hands in his pockets, walked to the hall umbrella stand, the hatrack, Huxley's overcoat. He pulled out the overcoat pockets. No gloves...
His hands in his pockets again he walked upstairs. He untied the seventy or eighty drawers in six upstairs rooms, left them with tongues hanging out. At the bottom of the eighty-fifth drawer he found gloves.

Down onto the hardwood floor he dropped Mr. Huxley, with William Acton after him they rolled and tussled and clawed at the floor printing it with their fingertips.

He shined the doorknobs, curried the doors from head to foot. He went to all the furniture and wiped the chairs and rubbed the fabric. Fingerprints can be found on fabric. He went to the body, turned it now this way, now that, and burnished every surface of it. He even shined the shoes, charging nothing.

He walked upstairs. He untied seventy or eighty drawers in six upstairs rooms, left them with tongues hanging out. At the bottom of the eighty-fifth drawer he found gloves.

Gloveo, William Acton returned to the room and laboriously began swabbing every infested inch of the floor. Inch by inch, he polished till he could most see his intent sweating face in it...

I'm sure I didn't touch them!

And I'm certain I didn't touch that!

While shining the shoes his face took on a little tremor of worry, and after a moment he got up and walked over to that table. He took out and polished the wax fruit at the bottom of the bowl...

Then he came to a table and polished the leg of it, its solid body, and on top, and he came to a bowl of wax fruit and he plucked out the wax fruit and polished them, leaving the fruit at the bottom unpolished.

Then he came to a table and polished the leg of it, its solid body, and on top, and he came to a bowl of wax fruit and he plucked out the wax fruit and polished them, leaving the fruit at the bottom unpolished.

Then he came to a table and polished the leg of it, its solid body, and on top, and he came to a bowl of wax fruit and he plucked out the wax fruit and polished them, leaving the fruit at the bottom unpolished.

After rubbing the table, he came to a picture frame over it...

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After rubbing the table, he came to a picture frame over it...
He went back to the body, but as he crouched over it, his eyelids twinkled and his jaw moved from side to side, and he debated. Then he got up and walked once more to the table. He polished the picture frame...

While polishing the picture frame he discovered... the wall!

That... is silly.

He glanced at the four walls. Ridiculous.

From the corners of his eyes he saw something on one wall...

I refuse to pay attention. The next room, now. I'll be methodical. Let's see, we were in the... hall, the library, this room, the dining room and the kitchen.

There was a spot on the wall behind him...

Well, wasn't there?

He turned, angrily, and he went over and he couldn't find any spot. Oh, a little one, yes, right there. He dabbed it. It wasn't a fingerprint anyhow?

He looked at the wall and the way it went over to his right and over to his left and how it went down to his feet and up over his head and he said softly...

But unknown to his eyes, his gloved fingers moved in a little rubbing rhythm on the wall...
He peered at his hand and the wallpaper. He looked over his shoulder at the other room. His face hardened. Without a word he began to scrub the wall, up and down, back and forth, up and down, as high as he could stretch and as low as he could bend...

He got one wall finished, and then... he came to another wall. He looked at the mantel clock. An hour gone. It was five after one. He turned away from this new fresh wall...

Silly, it's flawless. I won't touch it.

From the corners of his eyes he saw the little webs. When his back was turned the little spiders came out of the woodwork and spun their little fragile half-invisible webs upon the three walls as yet untouched. Each time he stared directly at them, the spiders popped back into the wood-work only to spindle out as he retreated...

THOSE WALLS ARE ALL RIGHT! I WON'T TOUCH THEM!

Fingerprints!

But those aren't mine! I didn't put them there! I'm sure I didn't! A servant, a butler, or a maid perhaps!

THE WALL WAS FULL OF THEM...

Look at this one here, long and tapered, a woman's, I'd bet on it!

Would you? I would?

Are you certain?

Yes?

Positive?

Well... yes.

Absolutely?

Yes, yes!

Wipe it out, anyway!

Oh, all right!

In a rage he began to sweep the wall up and down and back and forth with his gloved hands, sweating, grunting and swearing, bending and rising and getting redder of face...

He went to a writing desk at which Huxley had been seated earlier. He opened a drawer and took out what he was looking for. A little magnifying glass Huxley sometimes used for reading. He took the magnifier and approached the wall uneasily...

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He went to a writing desk at which Huxley had been seated earlier. He opened a drawer and took out what he was looking for. A little magnifying glass Huxley sometimes used for reading. He took the magnifier and approached the wall uneasily...
He finished the wall at two o'clock, he took off his coat and put it on a chair. He walked over to the bowl and took out the waxed fruit and polished the ones at the bottom and polished the picture frame. He looked up at the chandelier...

His fingers twitched at his sides. His mouth slipped open and the tongue moved along his lips and he looked at the chandelier and looked away and looked back at the chandelier and looked at Huxley's body and then at the crystal chandelier with its long pearls of rainbow glass.

He got a chair and brought it over under the chandelier and put one foot up on it and took it down and threw the chair, violently, laughing, into a corner. Then he ran from the room leaving one wall as yet unwashed...

In the dining room he came to a table. He paused over the table where the boxes of cutlery were laid out, hearing once more Huxley's voice.

Look at this silver, Acton. Exquisite craftsmanship. Look at it?

Now Acton wiped the forks and spoons and took down all the plates and special ceramic dishes from the wall shelf... remembering all the touchings and gesturings...

Here's a lovely bit of ceramics by Gertrude and Otto Natzler, Acton. Are you familiar with their work?

Pick it up. Turn it over. See the fine thinness of the bowl, thin as eggsHELL. Incredible. Handle it. Go Ahead. I don't mind.

Handle it! Go Ahead! Pick it up!
Acton sobbed unevenly. He hurled the pottery against the wall. It shattered and spread, flaking wildly upon the floor...

An instant later, he was on his knees. Every piece, every shard of it, must be regained. Fool, fool, fool, he cried to himself, find every piece, you idiot... Not one fragment of it must be left behind. He gathered them...

Are they all here? He looked under the table again and under the chairs and found one more piece by match-light and started to polish each little fragment as if it were a precious stone...

He took out the linen and wiped it and wiped the chairs and tables and doorknobs and window-panes and ledges and drapes and wiped the floor and found the kitchen, panting, breathing violently, and took off his vest and adjusted his gloves and wiped the glittering chromium...

And he wiped all the utensils and the silver faucets and the mixing bowls, for now he had forgotten what he had touched and what he had not. Huxley and he had lingered here, in the kitchen, they had idled, touched this, that, something else, there was no remembering what or how much or how many...

And he finished the kitchen and came through the hall into the room where Huxley lay. He cried out. He had forgotten to wash the fourth wall of the room. And while he was gone, the little spiders had come out of the fourth unwashed wall and swarmed over the already clean walls, dirtifying them again! On the ceilings, the chandelier, in the corners, on the floor, a million little whorled webs hung billowing at his scream...

Tiny, tiny little webs, no bigger than, ironically, your... finger! As he watched, the webs were woven over the picture frame, the fruit bowl, the body, the floor. Prints wielded the paper knife, pulled out drawers, touched the table-top... touched, touched, touched everything everywhere...
He polished the floor wildly, wildly. He rolled the body oven and cried on it while he washed it and got up and walked over and polished the fruit at the bottom of the bowl. He put a chair under the chandelier and got up and polished each little hanging fire of it, shaking it like a crystal tambourine until it tilted bellwise in the air. Then he leaped off the chair and gripped the doorknobs and got up on another chair and swabbed the walls higher and higher and ran to the kitchen and got a broom and wiped the webs down from the ceilings and polished the bottom fruit of the bowl and washed the body and doorknobs and silverware and found the hall banister and followed the banister upstairs.

Three o'clock! There were twelve rooms downstairs and eight above. One hundred chairs, six sofas, twenty-seven tables, six radios, and under and on top and behind. He yanked furniture out away from walls and, sobbing, wiped them clean of years-old dust, handling, erasing, rubbign, polishing, and now it was four o'clock! And his arms ached and his eyes were swollen and staring and he moved sluggishly about, on strange legs, his head down, his arms moving, swabbing and rubbign, bedroom by bedroom, closet by closet...

They found him at six-thirty that morning. In the attic. The entire house was polished to a brilliance. They found him in the attic, polishing old trunks and old frames and old chairs and toys and vases and rocking horses and dusty Civil War coins. He was half through the attic when the police officer walked up behind him with a gun...

On the way out of the house, Acton polished the front doorknob with his handkerchief, and slammed it in triumph!
He was an oldish man, greying at the temples. His face was puffy and lined. His eyes were dim and bloodshot. He nodded...

Then this is it! The wind-up! The finish?

Ronald stared at Anita. His mouth fell open...

What do you mean, Honey? This isn't the end at all! I can get a job. Things will be tight for a few years, but we'll have each other!

In other words, you're broke, Ronald! Your dough's run out? Is that right?

I... I guess I bled the business dry, Anita! They came with their books and their long list of figures and they showed me that I'd pushed the company into bankruptcy!

Ronald stared at Anita. His mouth fell open...

What do you mean, Honey? This isn't the end at all! I can get a job. Things will be tight for a few years, but we'll have each other!

Anita stood before the huge penthouse apartment windows, staring out at the sprawling city below her. Her face was a sculptured mask... cold and expressionless. As she listened, she puffed on her gold cigarette holder, sucking the smoke in and blowing it out through heavily painted lips. The light from a nearby lamp rippled over her sheer negligee, accenting her curvacious figure. Behind her, Ronald's broken voice droned on...

I... I guess I bled the business dry, Anita! They came with their books and their long list of figures and they showed me that I'd pushed the company into bankruptcy!

Then this is it! The wind-up! The finish?

Then this is it! The wind-up! The finish?
THEN I'LL FIND SOMEBODY WHO CAN AFFORD IT!

I NEVER LOVED YOU, YOU CHUMP! I LOVED THIS...

NOW THAT THE DOUGH'S RUN OUT, I'LL FIND ME ANOTHER SUCKER!

ANITA! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? WE...LOVE EACH OTHER!

ANITA! MY GOD! YOU...YOU MADE ME DIVORCE HELEN! YOU PROMISED YOU'D MARRY ME...

IT WAS ALL IN THE GAME, BUSTER!! NOW, WHY DON'T YOU RUN ALONG? HUH?

I CAN'T AFFORD THIS PLACE NOW, ANITA! I...

SUIT YOURSELF! ONLY MAKE IT SNAPPY, HUH? I WANT TO GET DRESSED!

I'LL...I'LL GET MY THINGS...FROM THE DRAWER!

AND THEN HE PITCHED FORWARD, SPRAWLING OFF THE BED INTO THE FLOOR AT HER FEET. HE WAS DEAD? SHE LOOKED DOWN AT HIM AND SMIRKED...

HE STOOD UP, HIS TONGUE CURLED ACROSS DRY LIPS. HE LOOKED AT HER WITH WET EYES. SHE TURNED AWAY, GAZED OUT OF THE WINDOW, AND SUCKED ON HER CIGARETTE...

HE STUMBLED ACROSS THE LUXURIOUS LIVING ROOM INTO THE BEDROOM AND SLAMMED THE DOOR. SHE CURSED HIM UNDER HER BREATH. NEXT TIME SHE'D BE A LITTLE MORE CAREFUL WHOM SHE PICKED.

SUDDENLY...

THE GOLD CIGARETTE HOLDER DROPPED FROM HER MOUTH. SHE DARTED TO THE BEDROOM DOOR AND PLUNGED IT OPEN. THE ACID SMELL OF GUNPOWDER FILLED THE ROOM. A TINY WHISP OF SMOKE CURLED UP FROM THE MUZZLE OF THE .45 HE HELD IN HIS HAND. HE SAT ON THE BED, STARING AT HER WITH BLIND EYES, BLOOD TRICKLING FROM THE HOLE IN HIS TEMPLE...

AND THEN HE PITCHED FORWARD, SPRAWLING OFF THE BED INTO THE FLOOR AT HER FEET. HE WAS DEAD? SHE LOOKED DOWN AT HIM AND SMIRKED...

RONALD? CHOKE...
Anita was just about ready to give up in disgust when the old woman came in. She looked around self-consciously and sat down at a booth. She looked about sixty...timid and shy...not the type one would expect to find in an establishment like that.

Anita studied her. She was well dressed. She wore a large diamond ring on one hand and a sparkling bracelet on her wrist. When the bartender served the lemonade, she opened her bag and took out a wallet filled with green bills...

"That'll be forty cents, ma'am!"

"Oh, dear! I hope you can change a fifty dollar bill!"

Anita gasped. This old bat was loaded. What was she doing in a joint like this? Anita slipped off her bar stool and approached her.

"Hello! You look lonesome! Mind if I join you?"

"Of course not, my dear! I'd love someone to talk to!"

Anita slid onto the booth bench opposite the old woman...

"My name's Anita Shelby! And mine's Mrs. Harriet Walker, but you can call me Harriet!"

Anita smiled...

"All right...Harriet! Say, what's a woman like you doing in a place like this...anyway?"

"Just as you said, Anita! I'm lonely! Just a lonely old woman looking for someone to talk to..."

Anita thought of Mrs. Walker's thick wallet...crammed with big bills...

"Don't you have a husband, Mrs...I mean...Harriet?"

"No, my dear! I've been a widow for fifteen years! It wasn't so bad until six years ago when I lost Eric!"

Anita was her old stamping grounds. It had paid off before. It could pay off again. Anita sat at the bar, nursing her drink. Ignoring the bartender's dirty looks, it was here that she'd first 'met' Ronald. Now Ronald was dead. Anita's meal ticket had been all punched out. She had to find another...

Not much business...this time of day, eh?
Eric, my son! But I'd rather not talk about it. Tell me about you, my child!

Nothing to tell, Harriet! I'm just a lonely girl myself.

You're a very lovely girl, Anita. There's no reason for you to be lonely.

You're very kind, Harriet! But, well... I never met the right man, I guess.

You would have liked Eric six years ago! He...

You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to, Harriet!

What do you do, Anita? I mean... for a living?

Well, as a matter of fact I'm unemployed at the present time! My last... er... employer recently went broke and I lost my... position!

Oh! That's too bad! I'm sorry! What are your plans?

Anita's plans? Why they were forming... right now! This old bag with the thick bankroll! Why not? Why try to dig up some fat old rich guy who'll take everything he can get, when the old gal could be such easy pickings...

Anita's plans? Why they were forming... right now! This old bag with the thick bankroll! Why not? Why try to dig up some fat old rich guy who'll take everything he can get, when the old gal could be such easy pickings...

N-no! Go right ahead! I like you, Anita! You seem like a nice girl! I'm lonely and I have money! How would you like to become my paid companion? Live with me?...
Good luck? Yes, Anita was having good luck! This time there'd be no pawing cigar-smoking male to tolerate and please. Yes, this was luck...

Okay, Harriet! Let's go!

Come, my dear! I have a cab waiting!

Harriet gave the cab driver the address. It was over on the swank east side. Anita sat back and smiled...

Why... you're smiling, Anita!

I was just thinking how lucky I am, Harriet!

Anita took the fifty! She hurried to her hotel room! So easy! So very easy...

I'm checking out! What do I owe... That'll be thirty-two fifty, Miss Shelby! Any...

Forwarding address?

I'll let you know so long!

Good-bye, Miss Shelby? Good luck?

I'll take the job?

Good! When can you start?

All right, Harriet? It sounds wonderful! I'll take the job!

A paid companion! Live with you! But...

I'd make it worth your while, Anita! And having you around would make me so happy!

It was going to be so easy! Like taking candy from a baby! She'd go and live with the old woman, work into her good graces, and end up with all her dough...

Why, right now! I'll get my things! I live in the hotel up the block!

Good! I'll wait here! Here's some money to pay your bill!

It was going to be so easy!

All right, Harriet? It sounds wonderful! I'll take the job!

A paid companion! Live with you! But...
The trip took some time. Cross-town traffic was slow. Anita found a good opening and began to pry...

Your husband must have left you very well off, then! He made a great deal of money! We had everything! When he died, he left us almost half a million!

Yes, Eric! Eric was fifteen when my husband died! My how I spoiled the boy! He got everything he wanted! Everything! And then, six years ago...

It was one of those fast-disappearing East-Side mansions set back in the shadows of the towering apartment houses that had sprung up around it. They climbed the steps...

It's beautiful, Harriet! Not any more! It used to be beautiful, but not any more!

The old woman fumbled in her purse for her key! Her diamond ring sparkled! Anita stared at it! Someday that ring was going to be hers. She felt her face flush...

The huge door slammed shut behind them. They stood in the shadowed marble foyer, Anita heard the lock snap into place...

All alone? Oh, no! Why, there's me... and Eric!

Something moved in the darkness beyond the foyer. Something dragged itself toward them...

I said I lost Eric, Anita! I didn't say he died!

Ithubn 0x0}
He came out of the shadows! He was huge and ugly! His hair hung over his perspired brow, his massive arms hung at his sides. His eyes burned like white-hot coals and a drop of spittle oozed from his mouth and down his unshaven chin...

This is Eric, my dear! Six years ago he was a normal twenty-four year old with everything to live for! And then he fell in love...fell in love with a woman who wanted him only for his money...

He moved toward Anita...? Her name was Norma! She used her lovely body to lure him to break his heart! He had a mental breakdown! Went completely mad...

And so, every year on the anniversary of Eric's "loss", I have to bring him a beautiful girl like Norma so that he can have his revenge...

Oh, Lord! And today I've brought him you!
Dear Crypt-Keeper,

Your origin story, "Lower Berth," was tops in nausia. So THAT'S where you came from! WOW! How horrible can you get?

Stuart Glass
Lynbrook, N.Y.

...I almost chewed my claws off reading "Lower Berth."

Nidred, the Were-cat
Salisbury, N.C.

...In the title, "Lower Berth," didn't you mean to spell the second word "Birth"?

Astupe Observer
Bloomington, Ind.

No, Astute, I didn't mean to spell "Berth" "Birth"...but I wanted "Berth" to mean "Birth"...get what I mean? I mean...(OH, SHUT UP! Get on with the column, if you know what WE mean!—ed.) Ooooh, you're so mean! (That's what we mean!—ed.)

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I'm getting a big kick out of those Grim Fairy Tales. "The Funeral" was the greatest!

Dick Mandel
Boston, Mass.

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I'm thoroughly convinced that E.C. magazines are of the highest quality money can buy. There is not another comic on the stands today that can compare, even in part, with the high standards maintained by your magazine. Being a fifth year art student, I am constantly critical of comic art, and in my estimation, the artwork in your books rates supreme.

Roger A. Nipress
Bridgeport, Mich.

...I would go over Niagara Falls WITHOUT a barrel for an E.C. magazine.

Fred Barth
Peoria, III.

How touching, I tell you, when I think of my delightfully deranged fan(atic)ism of yore, I get fevers in my eyes!

And now, here's a some original commentary on this issue's Crime SuspenStories offering:

Dear Editors,

In Crime SuspenStories No. 17, I especially enjoyed the way you intermingled the two narratives ONE FOR THE MONEY, and TWO FOR THE SHOW. As usual, not knowing what to expect till the ending of the latter, I was completely taken by surprise. I sincerely hope that you'll pull a switch like that again.

David S. Spiel
Milford, Mass.

...I've read many a different, cunning, and interesting story in your mags, but those two just about top them all...

Alian Katz
Kaw Gardens, L.I.

...I fear, gentlemen, you have made a mistake. Mother always sends their bodies to Kalamazoo...not Peoria. Oh, goodie! She's brought me another surprise! So if you'll excuse me...NORMA! NORMA!

Art "Eric" Walker
Binghamton, N.Y.

Dear Editors,

I would jump off the Empire State Building for an E.C. magazine

John Reid
Hollywood, Calif.

We suppose you expect US to pay your plane fare aatall!! But seriously, John...don't jump off the Empire State Building...jump on your newsdealer! He'll be glad to sell you an E.C.

Dear Editors,

I just don't know what to say, I wonder how you can keep on publishing such good stories. I'm afraid you're going to run out. If you do, I'll just stop reading comics. Because E.C. are THE ONLY comics!

G. W. Sheridan
Gainesville, Ga.

Ah, memories! And I fully expect to collect a whole bunch of new ones from you modern, 1990s kinda readers. So find yourselves a cozy, clammy nook, pick up your poison pens, and WRITE already!
For the second part of this month's putrid ramblings, I'd like to acquaint and resqueuint you besid-eyed perusers with the part of my column that's always been nearest my tender old heart. (That's it...up there on the shelf in the most tenderizer! Gettin' tenderer every day!) I'm referring to the section wherein I used to list the titles of popular songs, movies and anecdotes of the day...but titles that my readers had, heh heh, transmogrified with a scream-theme in mind. Here are some examples, starting with these horrific song titles:

BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL GROUND EYES
AFTER THE MAUL IS OVER
I BELIEVE (THAT FOR EVERY DROP OF BLOOD
THAT FALLS, A VAMPIRE GROWS)
WITH A TONG IN MY HEART
I'M SLITTING BY THE WINDOW (WATCHING THE
BLOOD-DROPS FALL)
THE SQUEAL OF TORTURE
I'M WINCING WITH SPEARS IN MY THIGHS
RATTLE HYMN OF THE REPULSIVE
ON THE TAINTED SIDE OF THE MEAT
WHO'S GOING NOW?
DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEX
YOU'D BE SO NICE TO COME GROAN TO
THE GIRL THAT I BURY
SEND ME ONE DOZEN NOSES
JUNE IS GUSHING OUT ALL OVER
HAVE I TOLD YOU LATELY THAT I LOATHE YOU?
GOULS RUSH IN WHEN HUMAN BEINGS ARE DEAD
LET'S HAVE ANOTHER CUT OF COFFIN, (AND
LET'S HAVE ANOTHER PIECE OF EYE)
RED LIVER VALLEY
DON'T LET THE BLOOD GET IN YOUR EYES
(DON'T LET THE CRUD CAKE IN YOUR
HEART)
I'M BACK IN THE COFFIN AGAIN (OUT WHERE
A FIEND IS A FIEND)
STAKE ME OUT IN THE BALL PARK

These additions to our LURID LITERATURE LIBRARY
were sent along by Jimmy Crow of Dallas, Texas;
Jimmy Teel of Pineville, W. Va.; and Drury Moroz of
Springfield, Ill.:

SQUISH FAMILY ROBINSON
WITHERING SIGHS
HOW GREEN WAS MY SALLY
THE LASH OF THE MOHICANS
THE GIZZARD OF Ooze
ROMEO...THE GOUL HE ET!
LORNA'S DOOM

Darrel Gould of Grand Lake Stream, Maine and Sue
Campbell and Amelia Alexander of Waynesville, N.C.
came up with these MORbid MOVIES:
A STREETCAR MAIMED MY SIRE
THE AFRICAN'S SPLEN
HIGH STREWN
THE GREATEST CHOKE ON EARTH
WRING SOLOMON'S SPINE

So, now that you've read all this dire doggerel, maybe you're feeling inclined to come up with some
of your own lostsome titles. If so, the Vault-Keeper, the Old Witch, and I would love to see 'em...so
send 'em on in...but keep in mind that us coots are now more than 100 years old and we haven't been
let out of our tombs lately—so we're not heap to some of this modern trash you kids call entertainment.
So let us know what the real titles are, okay?

Send your song, movie and book titles, your poems and lyrics, your proverbs and (thought I'd forgotten,
didn't you?) your letters of comment to me:

The Crypt-Keeper
P.O. Box 2079, Prescott, AZ 86302
If you like the book you're holding, then you'll love this comprehensive collection of every E.C. New Trend and New Direction comic book, packaged in 13 deluxe, slipcased sets, as illustrated above.

These oversized, 9" × 12" sets consist of 53 hardbound books, Smythe-sewn for durability, and printed in black and white, so the fine craftsmanship of the E.C. artists can be studied and enjoyed to its fullest. All covers are in brilliant full color!

Because of the care and expense that goes into producing each set, the retail price ranges from $50, for the two-book sets, to $110 for the five-book sets.

These books are not sold in chain bookstores, but are available only from the publisher and selected comic book specialty shops. For complete information, write to:

Russ Cochran, Publisher  P.O. Box 469  West Plains, MO 65775
PATRICIA GIBSON, OWNER OF THE CIRCLE-DIAMOND, OPENED THE DOOR OF THE RANCH HOUSE IN ANSWER TO THE HEAVY KNOCK. ROY WILLIS, ONE OF THE HIRED HANDS, STOOD OUTSIDE ON THE PORCH, HAT IN HAND...

WHY, ROY? WHY AREN'T YOU OUT ON THE RANGE WITH THE BOYS? I WANTED TO SPEAK TO YOU, MA'AM! MAY I... COME IN!

He was tall and broad-shouldered, and his windswept black hair fell in a drenched shock over his perspiring brow. He ambled toward Patricia, his eyes traveling over her...

OF COURSE, ROY! COME IN! WHAT IS IT? I BEEN MEANIN' TO SPEAK TO YOU FOR SOME TIME, MA'AM! THIS MORNIN'. WHEN I NOTICED YOU LOOKIN' AT ME, I MADE UP MY MIND THAT IT WAS TIME!

Patricia looked away. She stepped aside, allowing Roy to pass her...

I DIDN'T MEAN TO STARE AT YOU LIKE THAT, ROY! I'M SORRY... I'M NOT, MA'AM! I WAS HOPING... WELL, THAT I WASN'T MISSTAKEN ABOUT WHAT I SAW IN YOUR EYES, THIS MORNIN'!
He stood over her, she turned to him...

*What do you think you saw, Roy?*

I...I thought it was the look of a woman who wanted a man real bad, ma'am! This man...

And now his arms were around her, pulling her toward him...

ROY! DARLING...

PAT...

Roy shook his head...

*Can't, Pat! It ain't fair! Now, if I were foreman here... Runnin' the show... I could do as I please! I could stay if I wanted to!*

Is that what you want, Roy? To be foreman of the Circle-Diamond?

Outside the ranch house, Roy's horse whinnied and pawed the ground. Far away, a calf's cry of pain drifted across the still air. In the ranch house, Roy stood up. Pat looked up at him from the sofa...

I gotta go, Pat! The boys are waitin' on me out there! They got some calves tied and ready for brandin'!

Don't go, Roy! The boys can wait. Stay here for a while...

Roy nodded and sat down. Pat put her cheek against his lips...

*If it'll make you happy, Roy, the job is yours! All I ask is... you keep me happy... in return!*

It'll be a pleasure, Pat! A real pleasure...
The summer waned and round-up time came to the Circle-Diamond. The steers were herded and driven from the grazing lands to the corrals...

That doggie's strayin', Tim!
I'll bring 'er in line, Roy!

The cattle destined for the slaughter houses were separated from the rest of the herd and driven eastward. The young calves born out on the range were branded...

Miss Pat wants to see you, Roy!
Okay, Tim! Help the boys, here, huh?
Hold 'im, Neo!

And then winter moved in... bleak and cold. Around the pot-bellied stove in the bunkhouse, the hands would gather each evening...

Look! There goes Roy... cuttin' cross the yard to th' house.

Foreman! Bah! Just 'cause he's got big broad shoulders and a handsome face...

Hold yer tongue! If'n he hears yuh, you'll be lookin' for another job!

But long winters mean more than just cold weather. Long winters mean boredom...

Where you goin', Roy? Any objections?

N-no! You can go into town whenever you want! Anything wrong?

Just want a change of scene, that's all! I'm takin' the car!

And all through the long winter...

Nice here by the fire, huh, Roy?
Yeah! Cozy...

All right, Roy! I'll wait up for you!
Don't bother!

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And all through the long winter...

Nice here by the fire, huh, Roy?
Yeah! Cozy...

All right, Roy! I'll wait up for you!
Don't bother!
Roy sped off and Pat watched the yellow cloud of dust disappear into the gathering twilight, her eyes filling with tears. That night, in town...

Roy: Hello, cowboy! You look lonesome. Mind if I join you?
Pat: Huh? Oh! Sure! Sit down! Have a drink!

Roy: Thanks, cowboy! I like to be appreciated!
Pat: Care to dance, Miss Ryan? It is... Miss Ryan, isn't it?
Roy: Yep, it's Miss Ryan! I've got no ties either! How about that dance?
Pat: Nope! No ties. What about you?

Roy: My name's Amy. Amy Ryan. I sing here. What's yours, cowboy?
Pat: Roy Willis, ma'am! I'm foreman at the Circle-Diamond. I heard you sing! You got a nice voice!

Pat: It was early in the morning when Roy drove back to the ranch. Patricia watched from her bedroom window as he crossed the yard to the bunkhouse...

Roy: Roy... sob! Roy...

Roy's trips to town that winter became more and more frequent. He saw less and less of Pat...

Pat: Soon as I get enough dough saved up, I'll get me a ranch and we'll get married, Amy!

Amy: Oh, Roy! I can't wait...

And his friendship with Amy became warmer and warmer...
And then, one night, in a room over the saloon where Amy worked...

Roy, honey! When are we goin' t' get married? You been promisin'!

So, Roy! Tell me about us.

Tell her, Roy! Tell her about me.

I said, get out, Pat!

I thought you said you had no ties, Roy!

Pat! You got a nerve bustin' in here like this, get out!

Who's she, Roy?

It was Pat. She'd followed Roy to town. She stood in the doorway, her eyes blazing...

So this is how you've been spending your nights in town?

Pat! You got a nerve bustin' in here like this, get out!

Who's she, Roy?

She's all crazy, Amy! Leave, and you can take him with you!

I don't belong to anybody, Pat! Neither you... nor Amy! I take what I get! It's a big range, and I graze where the grass is greenest! Now I guess it's time for me to git movin'. I'll go back to the ranch with you and get my things...

Amy slammed the door. Roy and Pat stood outside in the hall shadows...

That wasn't nice of you, Roy... telling Amy you had no ties...

I don't, I still don't!

I don't belong to anybody, Pat! Neither you... nor Amy! I take what I get! It's all right, Roy! Let's go...
The boys in the bunk house watched Roy as he packed his clothes...

Leavin', Roy? Yeup! Nobody's goin' to hog-tie me!

Roy came into the ranch house, Pat closed the door behind him and silently locked it as Roy looked around...

What'd I forget, Pat? You forgot our deal, Roy! I made you foreman, and you got what you wanted! You're mine, Roy! You can't back off now... Not after all I've given you...

The blaze in the fireplace burned briskly...

Oh, no, Pat! You got no hold on me! We're not married! Remember? I can pull out anytime! There's nothin' says I'm yours! Nothin'...

Pat darted to the fireplace... snatching the black handle from the flames, the design glowed white-hot...

This says you're mine! It's my brand! The circle-diamond!

Pat! No! My God! Put that... EAAAAGH!

When the bunk house boys finally broke into the ranch house, they found Patricia Gibson sobbing hysterically, the cooling iron in her hands! And on Roy's face was the blistered and charred results of her work...

Good Lord! Choke!

The end...
She was dead. Harry stood over her, the dripping hatchet hanging limply. Deep down inside him, the last faint echo of the storm died away and a calm descended. The thunder in his heart was gone... the lightning in his eyes dimmed...

"It... it's done, Sarah. It's... done..."

There was a peace in Harry now... as if a great black cloud had been swept away and the sun was at last shining on him for the first time in a long time. And there was coolness there... the coolness of a determined man... a man who'd freed himself from the fires of hate. He took the shovel and began to dig...

"I'll bury you, Sarah... here... in the cellar. I'll bury you and then I'll report you missing. I'll tell them you went away and never came back..."

There was a peace in Harry now... as if a great black cloud had been swept away and the sun was at last shining on him for the first time in a long time. And there was coolness there... the coolness of a determined man... a man who'd freed himself from the fires of hate. He took the shovel and began to dig...
The hole in the cellar yawned hungrily. Harry fed it Sarah's body, and the blackness gulped it down... "In...you...so..."

Then the black mouth shut on Sarah as Harry shoveled the dirt back into the hole. He spread the excess dirt around and tamped it down... There! Finished...

Harry carried the shovel and axe up the cellar stairs into the kitchen. He turned on the sink tap and the water splashed from the chrome faucet. First... he rinsed the blood from the hatchet...

Harry went back inside and sat down in his favorite chair. He picked up the evening paper, lit his pipe, and began to read. It was as if no storm had ever lashed out that night. It was as if nothing had ever happened...

At midnight, Harry made his call. He acted upset...

That's right, Sarah Jameson, 125 Elm. She... she hasn't come home from work. Nor... no, she didn't go to a movie. She would have told me! No, she's not visiting! It's after midnight! She never stays out this late! What? You'll put out an alarm? Good. You'll stop by in the morning? All right.

In the morning, the detective came. Harry was ready...

"I thought something happened to her, Officer. I'm sorry. But after I spoke to you, I went to bed. I found this note... on my pillow, she..." She's left me!
The detective read the note Harry had carefully forged. He shook his head.

Well...this kind of thing happens every day, Mr. Jameson. Maybe she'll come back, who knows...

I...I hope so. I...I guess I was a thoughtless husband. I never dreamed she'd...sob...

Harry opened Sarah's bureau drawer... her undert...things... everything gone. She must have come home from work and packed and left before I got home...

MIND IF I LOOK AROUND, Mr. Jameson... as long as I'm here?

Not at all. Go right ahead.

The detective opened the bedroom closet door. Harry had foreseen that. He'd burned Sarah's clothes in the furnace.

After I read the note, I looked in here. I saw she'd see... packed her things...

Hmmm. Yes, here. I saw she'd see... packed her things...

The detective went to the rack above the sink. He pointed at the two toothbrushes...

Mrs. Jameson's? Huh? Oh, yes! She... she must have forgotten it!

The detective shook his head. He looked at Harry, looked at him hard...

HE WENT TO THE RACK ABOVE THE SINK. HE POINTED AT THE TWO TOOTHBRUSHES... 

Mrs. Jameson’s? Huh? Oh, yes! She... she must have forgotten it!

The detective went to the rack above the sink. He pointed at the two toothbrushes...

Mrs. Jameson’s? Huh? Oh, yes! She... she must have forgotten it!

The detective shook his head. He looked at Harry.

For a woman who packed so carefully... to forget her toothbrush, Mr. Jameson? I hardly think so!

I...I don't understand, sir! What are you driving at?
I have a feeling, Mr. Jameson... a feeling that something's wrong here. If you don't mind, I think we'll investigate your wife's sudden disappearance after all.

Harry went up into the attic. He pulled the trunk from beneath the pile of dusty old relics... yes, yes, it's the only way. I've got to get her body out of the house... got to get rid of it. And I think I know how...

Sarah's battered and bloody body was stiff with rigor mortis when Harry lifted it from its grave. He dumped it into the trunk...

Now to make sure it will be an unidentifiable body.

The detective grimaced...

I have a feeling, Mr. Jameson... a feeling that something's wrong here. If you don't mind, I think we'll investigate your wife's sudden disappearance after all.

Harry dragged the trunk down into the cellar, then he went to the tool shed, and got the shovel and the hatchet and brought them to the cellar. He began to dig...

An unidentifiable body, in a trunk. How could they trace it to me...?

Harry picked up the hatchet and began to hack. The blade rose and fell... rose and fell... until the thing before him melted away into a mass of red blobs and white bone... countless severed sections of a once whole human body.

Ugh... ugh... ugh... Basp! There! That ought to do it!
The train pulled out and Harry breathed a sigh of relief after a while he went forward to the baggage car...

Harry checked his ticket... NO! 266-81... to Chicago! That oh... here it is, why they're almost exactly alike.

Harry went back to the club car, his blood froze as he entered, the detective was sitting there, drinking a lemonade...

Harry breathed a sigh of relief. A while he went forward to the baggage car...

Harry just checking. You have a brown trunk... oh... there it is!

Harry checked his ticket... no! 266-81... to Chicago! That oh... here it is, why they're almost exactly alike.

Don't worry, I'll be careful, sir!

Harry made his way back to the baggage car...

Harry ducked back, fast. His heart began to pound like a trip-hammer. That blasted detective. He was hounding Harry... following him to Chicago, and at Chicago, there'd be no Sarah to meet Harry... and he'd get suspicious about the trunk...

"The trunk of course! What a break!"

The baggage car was dimly lit as Harry entered. The clerk dozed in a corner. Harry slipped past him...

And I'll have the other one, I'll be safe!

Harry untied the tickets and switched them. He patted his trunk... the one with the grisly cargo...

So long, Sarah! Somebody in Peoria is going to be awfully shocked to see what's left of you...

Harry's breath came in short gasps as he walked back to the club car. The detective was sitting there, drinking a lemonade...

Harry made his way back to the baggage car...

Harry ducked back, fast. His heart began to pound like a trip-hammer. That blasted detective. He was hounding Harry... following him to Chicago, and at Chicago, there'd be no Sarah to meet Harry... and he'd get suspicious about the trunk...

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So long, Sarah! Somebody in Peoria is going to be awfully shocked to see what's left of you...
I'd like to buy a ticket to Chicago, please, on the next train pullman... lower berth...

That will be $42.50, sir! Here you are. You leave in twenty minutes...

Harry'd followed Harry. He suspected... Harry smiled...

Yes! it's my wife. She called... from Chicago. All is forgiven. I'm going there. See? my ticket.

Sarah took all our suitcases. It's the only thing I could pack my clothes into. You see, we're staying on a while... sort of a second honeymoon.

I'd like this trunk sent on to Chicago! Here's my ticket.

Well, give my regards to Mrs. Jameson when you see her.

Harry found his car and went inside. The detective followed, he smiled down at Harry...

Well, officer, and thanks again!

It was so simple. No name on the trunk. Nothing but a number corresponding to the ticket Harry never intended to use. That is, until...

Going somewhere, Mr. Jameson? Huh? Oh! It's you.

There are a few minutes left, Jameson! I'll walk you to your seat.

Harry'd have to go now. There was no way out. The train was leaving in ten minutes. Harry went through the gate absently, trying to think. What could he do with that trunk? How could he get rid of it? The detective was at his side...

Well, good-bye, officer. Thank you... for everything.

Then he locked the trunk and dragged it out to his car. After refilling the hole in the cellar and cleaning his tools once more, he drove downtown to the railroad station...

When he locked the trunk and dragged it out to his car. After refilling the hole in the cellar and cleaning his tools once more, he drove downtown to the railroad station...
Eric Cleverly, too.

I put an AN/TA ticket to Peoria, Illinois, and had it shipped on ahead of course. I'll never use the ticket...

Chicago's La Salle street station came up amid whistle screams and hissing steam. Harry peered out of the window. Someone leaned over his shoulder. The detective.

See her, Jameson? No! She probably didn't get my message...

I'm not! I saw you in the club car last night! Well, I've got to be going, officer!

Not so fast, Jameson! I happen to think your wife isn't going to show up here in Chicago at all. I happen to think you murdered her, and her body's in that trunk of yours.

You happen to be wrong, officer. Care to take a look?

Chicago's La Salle street station | I'm not.
| X |

Harry and the detective made their way to the baggage office, and Harry presented his ticket...

Go ahead, officer. Open 'er up!

Not here, Jameson. At headquarters. Oh, porter...

Good Lord! Well? Satisfied, officer? Now, can I... oh, my God!

They rode across Chicago to police headquarters in silence. Harry chuckled to himself. He'd been pretty clever. The trunk was brought into a small room. The detective lifted the lid...

A mass of red snot and white bone filled the trunk. Countless severed sections of a once human body. Harry screamed as the handcuffs were snapped on his wrist...

You switched them back! You switched the tickets back! You knew I killed her and you switched them back...

I don't know what you're talking about, Jameson, but thanks for the confession. C'mon, let's go!

Meanwhile, in one of those fast-disappearing east side mansions, Harriet Walker stood over her insane son, running her hand through his shaggy hair...

Did you... did you get rid of what was left of her, mother?

Yes, Eric. Cleverly, too! I put Anita's remains in an old trunk, bought a ticket to Peoria, Illinois, and had it shipped on ahead. Of course, I'll never use the ticket...
COMING UP NEXT FROM GLADSTONE

The Vault of Horror #1, featuring:
- "Star Light, Star Bright" by Johnny Craig
- "While the Cat's Away" by Jack Davis
- "Smoke Wrings" by Reed Crandall
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- "Only Time Will Tell" by Harry Harrison and Wally Wood
- "The Men of Tomorrow" by Jack Kamen
- "Trip into the Unknown" by Harvey Kurtzman

ON SALE JUNE, 1990
(continued from inside front cover)

ourselves. That is why Tales From the Crypt, The Vault of Horror, and The Haunt of Fear are as apt today as they were forty years ago.

If we see a victim being stalked by an ax-murderer with the requisite cleaver in hand, our sensation will be terror; but let that murderer be a zombie, a vampire, a werewolf, or anything akin, and our response is horror. That’s what E.C.s are all about.

In make-believe horror there is always something hidden, something still and ever-concealed, some forbidden knowledge, a kept secret. We don’t quite know. But we would like to find out if we could do so safely. That’s why Gladstone feels E.C. horror will strike the same responsive chord with readers today as it did in the 1960s. It’s generally acknowledged that horror is not just an aspect of human experience, but a central part of it!

Had Newton really been right, and had there really been laws to govern all change, there could be no horror; only temporary ignorance, only terror. The sleep of reason, contended Goya in 1798, produces monsters and monsters have always been the prime carriers of horror. They are always "out there," rising from the ooze of the subconscious, like sea-beasts on the horizons of ancient maps and they are never totally nonhuman. The ancient monsters—the centaur, the sphinx, the minotaur—are partly brute and partly human, and the brute part is not in itself frightening. So too the modern monsters—the vampire, the Frankenstein monster, and the werewolf—are images of horror not because they do dreadful things to us (although they may well), but because they block our attempts to classify, categorize, and hence control them.

H. G. Wells generated intense horror in The Island of Dr. Moreau (1896) simply by dispas-sionately describing the harmless mutants created by the "mad scientist" who infused human forms and attributes into the animal world; Victor Hugo achieved the same effect by "crossing" Quasimodo with the gargoyles.

It would be nice to think that a proper education could rid one of a hunger for horror, but theologians like John Wesley have always known better. Horror images have always been more than fear-jerkers; they are invariably the most subtle projections of buried and repressed fear. When it comes right down to it, the fascinating question is not why monsters were so suddenly obvious in the late eighteenth century, but how they could have been suppressed with such success for so long!

The invocation of horror has always been present in the English tradition from Beowulf on. In modern versions we forget the victims and even the hero, but we remember the monster! Everyone who read the original E.C.’s remembers a favorite today... and it is usually the monster or the deed that stands out. Thinking back to your own high school or college literature class, do you remember who, for instance, kills Dracula? How is the Frankenstein monster destroyed? Are we sure the werewolf is dead? Monsters have become bogeymen, and as the child in Halloween says, "Ya can’t ever kill the bogeyman."

We read for enjoyment, including horror. But we keep coming back because of memories. A cult of E.C. collectors began in the ’50s and has survived to this day, though most think of themselves just as "fans." Some of the same ones who made contact with each other through the Letters to the GhouLunatics pages in those days still are in touch with each other today.

(We would like to thank Jim Twitchell, who is currently Alumni Professor of English at the University of Florida, for his permission to excerpt portions from his book, Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror, published by Oxford University Press. We apologize for any points that may have been lost by our abbreviations of his words or any changes of meaning that may have resulted from our blending of his thoughts with an occasional brief insertion of our own.

—The Publishers)
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