Here are tales that will usher you into

The Haunt of

FEAR

Featuring

[Images of characters and a lion]
BAD 1950s EC COMICS!

HERE ARE TALES THAT WILL Usher YOU INTO

THE HAUNT OF

FEAR

FEATURING...

THE OLD WITCH

THE VAULT-KEEPER

THE CRYPT-KEEPER

NO. 8 AUG

200

27¢ CANADA

TO: VINCENT BORDISON

EXPLORER
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THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! WELCOME AGAIN, ALL MY DEAR LITTLE FIENDS! WELCOME AGAIN TO THE HAUNT OF FEAR! COME IN! COME IN! I'VE LIT THE FIRE UNDER MY CAULDRON ONCE AGAIN, AND NOW IT'S EVIL BREW IS BUBBLING AND STEAMING! JUST SIT YOURSELVES DOWN ON THAT MARBLE SLAB OVER THERE. CUP YOUR LITTLE HANDS IN FRONT OF YOU... AND YOUR HOSTESS, THE OLD WITCH, WILL DISH OUT ANOTHER OF HER TASTY TALES OF TERROR... I CALL THIS LITTLE CHILLER-DILLER!

HOUNDED TO DEATH!

The horrible events that occur in this tale I am about to tell you began long ago on the vast estate of a wealthy sportsman by the name of Edward. The impressive structure that served as the main house of the Garson estate was shrouded in darkness save for one light, high in a bedroom window. The blackness outside the house was filled with the blood-curdling howls of countless hounds.

Edward: I can't stand them! They're hungry. Am they haven't eaten all day?
THEY WHY DON'T YOU GO DOWN AND FEED THEM, EDWARD?
NO! THAT WOULD SPOIL THEM FOR THE HUNT TOMORROW! STARVING HOUNDS CATCH THE FOX!
IT'S CRUEL! CRUEL! YOU STARVE THOSE POOR HUNTING DOGS SO THEY'LL SABRELY TRACK SOME A HELP-LESS FOX! YOU CALL THAT SPORT?
OF COURSE! LISTEN TO THEM! I PITY ANY ONE WHO D HAPPEN INTO THEIR KENNELS TONIGHT!
THEY'D RIP HIM TO SHREDS! TELL HIM TO STOP IT! I HATE THEM! HATE THEM...
YOU HATE ME TOO, DON'T YOU AND? YOU HATE THIS HOUSE... AND OUR MARRIAGE!
YES! YES! I HATE EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS PLACE! YOU KEEP ME COOPE UP HERE LIKE ONE OF YOUR DOGS! NEVER LET ME GO OUT
BEVER LET ANYONE COME HERE! YOU'RE AFRAID, AREN'T YOU, EDWARD? AFRAID OF LOSING ME? AFRAID I'D FALL IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE ELSE!
YOU BE MINE! MINE! ALL MINE! AND I INTEND TO MAKE SURE IT STAYS THAT WAY!
IF EVER I FIND YOU AS MUCH AS SMILING AT ANOTHER MAN, I'LL... I'LL KILL HIM!
I WON'T STAND FOR IT! YOU CAN'T KEEP ME LOCKED UP LIKE THIS! I WANT TO ENJOY MYSELF... DO THINGS... GET AWAY FROM THIS PLACE FOR A CHANGE!
DO YOU? GOOD! THEN I'LL LET YOU COME ON THE HUNT TOMORROW! YOU'LL LIKE THAT, Won'T YOU?
EDWARD! YOU KNOW I DON'T LIKE HUNTING!
The next day, Edward Garson, his lovely wife, and his neighbors from around the countryside gathered at the hunt club. Your pack of hounds should be ferocious today, Garson! They ought to be! They didn't have a bite to eat yesterday!

At a signal from Edward, the yelping, gargling dogs were released... and they streaked across the field, howling...

All right! You said you wanted to get out for a change! Suit yourself, Garson! Only YOU said you wanted to get out for a change!

The neo-coated horsemen galloped after the baying dogs, hooting and shouting...

The stranger was tall and handsome. He smiled down at her...

The stranger was tall and handsome. He smiled down at her. My name's Steve Baxter! What's yours?... Ann Garson. Why aren't you on the hunt, Mr. Baxter?

Call me Steve! Can't get a bad ticker? The doctor says it could kill me if I strain it too much. Say, Garson... you must be Ed Garson's wife. Yes! I am! Why the surprised look?
Steve moved close to Ann, looking deep into her eyes. But... there's no reason for him to feel that way, is there, Ann?

Steve's breath was warm on Ann's cheek. She felt her heart pumping harder... harder, and now, I don't know.

Suddenly, she was in his arms, her lips against his...

The galloping sound of approaching horses tore them apart. The hunt was returning.

When can I see you again, Ann? Don't please if Edward found out, he'd kill you.

The gleaming, sweat-covered horses with their red-coated riders pulled up before the hunt club... I'm sorry, Edward. I didn't think I could do it. It's been so long since I rode your wife and I have been on hiatus, Edward.
Edward Garson glared fiercely at Steve Baxter... and why weren't you remember, Mr. Baxter? You on the hunt, Mr. Baxter? Get on your horse, Ann! Yes, Edward! Good morning, Mrs. Garson! Thank you for your interesting company.

Later, back at the Garson Manor:

Edward! Believe me! We just talked! It was harmless!

It was nothing, Edward! Believe me! We just talked! It was harmless!

The next day, while Edward was away on business:

Steve! May I come in, Ann?

Please, Steve! If Edward catches you, he'll—

He's gone into the city! I saw him get on the train! We've got two hours... at least!

A surge of emotion that she couldn't fight swept over Ann and she flung herself into Steve's arms:

Oh, Steve! Steve! I hoped you'd come!

Later:

You'd better go, Steve! If Edward comes home and finds you here...

But, I'll want to see you again! Call me, dearest... call me the next time he goes away!

If you need more information or have any further questions, feel free to ask!
AND SO THE TWO LOVERS BEGAN TO SEE EACH OTHER EVERY CHANCE THEY COULD! WHEN EDWARD WOULD LEAVE ON A BUSINESS TRIP ANN WOULD PHONE STEVE! THEY'D BE TOGETHER EVERY MINUTE EDWARD WAS AWAY THEN THEY WOULD PART FINALLY... ONE MIGHT...

LISTEN TO THOSE AWFUL NOISOS! THEY HAVEN'T BEEN PED FOR TWO DAYS! BUT, ANN? WHY NOT? JUST BECAUSE EDWARD'S AWAY?

HE LEFT ORDERS! THERE'S SOUND GOING TO BE A HUNT WHEN HE COMES BACK AND HE WANTS THEM GOOD AND HUNGRY!

PLEASE STEVE DON'T TALK ABOUT THEM! EDWARD WILL BE HOME TOMORROW MRS ME. ANNE DEAREST... WHAT'S THAT?

IT WAS THE SOUND OF A KEY IN THE FRONT DOOR LOCK. IT'S MY HUSBAND! HE'S HOME EARLIER THAN HE SAID! IF HE CATCHES NENE HE'LL KILL YOU!

QUICKLY LIE DOWN ON THE FLOOR! PRETEND YOU HAD A HEART ATTACK! I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING YOU'D BETTER MAKE IT GOOD HERE GOES!

STEVE STRETCHED OUT ON THE FLOOR AS THE FRONT DOOR SWUNG OPEN! EDWARD GARSON STOOD FRAMED IN IT HIS EYES SLANTING... OH, EDWARD THANK GOD YOU'VE DONE! HE'S DEAD! WHAT HAPPENED?
Ann stabbed out her story as Edward stared at the prostrate form on the floor. He forced his way in. He said he'd been thinking about me even before he met me at the hunt. He tried to molest me! I fought! Suddenly he stiffened up! Then he fell down—like that dead.

Edward lifted Steven's limp form and slung it over his shoulders. You go to your room! We'll speak further when I set back.

Edward carried Steven's body out of the house and across the large well-kept lawns towards the garage... dead. Eh? Think I'm a fool, eh? Think I don't know what's been going on?

Ann smiled to herself. Edward, the old fool, was falling for her story. Why not take his boot down, toss it over his shoulders, you go to your room! We'll speak further when I set back.

The starved hunting hounds yelped and howled as Edward passed close to their kennels. They're so hungry. They'd tear a man to shreds.

Suddenly Edward flung Steven over the high fence into the midst of the snarling, bellowing, screaming hounds. They'd even tear a dead man to shreds—or even a man playing dead.

It must have been his heart! You remember? He said I couldn't go on the hunt because of his heart! What will we do, Edward? Think of the scandal! Yes! We can't afford to have a scandal! I... I must get him out of here.

They'd even tear a dead man to shreds—or even a man playing dead.
Outside, in the fenced-in kennel, the pack of hounds whined as they backed away from their victim, backed away with their bellies flat against the ground, their tails between their hind legs.

Edwards Barson turned and walked back to the house. He listened while Steven's screams ended in a choking cough as the blaring fangs of the starved hounds ripped and tore—

...and now to take care of my loving wife!

Upstairs in her room, Ann heard the blood-curdling screams and realized what her husband had done.

He knew! He knew Steven was alive! The fiend! The horrible fiend!

At the foot of the stairs leading to Ann's bedroom, Edwards paused.

That's funny. The hounds have stopped barking!

Outside, the pack of hounds whined as they backed away from their victim, backed away with their bellies flat against the ground, their tails between their hind legs:

Edward reached the top of the stairs, one of the hounds outside began to howl. A chilling howl that echoed across the mountains.

What in blazes has gotten into those blasted butts?

Suddenly, Edward froze. His eyes opened wide in sheer horror. The front door downstairs had opened, and stumbling across the mangled foyer and up the stairs came a tattered, shredded corpse! Bits of flesh and blood soaked clothes fell away as it moved up, up, up the stairs.

No! No! It can't be! It's Steven Baxter!

Hee, hee! And that's my story, kiddies? Steven took good care of Edward! When Steve was finished, Eddie looked worse than he did! Oh! You look jolly! Do believe me! It's possible! I know! I saw him! Oh, and by the way! If you'd like a real god of a stony, the vault-keeper awaits with a yarn to drive all you maniacs sane. I'll see you later in this issue.
I see by the mail that many of you like mummy stories. Well, I've got a chiller-chiller for you this time! Come into the vault of horror! Sit down next to me, the vault keeper, and I'll begin my story. Neat? Good! I call this blood-cungerler

The Very Strange Mummy!

North of the city of Coptos on the left bank of the Nile River in modern day Egypt, our story begins at the base of the cliffs that rise majestically over the sandy wastes. A small archaeological expedition makes its way north of Alvin. Jim:

What is it?

See anything?
James Loring, one of the archaeologists, gesticulates towards the towering cliffs. "Up there! Look! I see it! See it? To the left, something of that boulder! Shining!"

The Egyptian pack-canners stare in horror at the cliff face. "What's wrong with the pointers, Aydous? No, no want go up there!"

"Place of evil? Why? What's up there? Don't know! No one know! Legend say... Place of evil. Men no want to go!"

"All night! Stay here. Then, start setting up camp! C'how, Alvin! We'll go up and take a look!"

"Eune, Jim! You stay here, too. I'm coming with you!"

The two men and the binoculars begin the dangerous climb while the nervous Egyptians until their pack and begin setting up camp.

"Eupeneticque heathers! I wonder what they're afraid of!"

"Probaely just a legend with no foundation in fact, Alvin!"

"Most Egyptian legends are true. Jim!"

"Finally the three archaeologists reach a flat ledge. "Look, Jim! That's what was shining! A metal plaque!"

"There's some hieroglyphics scratched into it! You're the language expert, Eue! What's it say?"

"It says... er... this is the burial place of a person of evil. Do not enter!"

"Eat! Look! There's an open... no, behind this rock!"
Painfully, the explorers move the huge rock aside until there is room to slip through... Looks like a tunnel! What luck! This must be one of the ancient burial tombs! C'mon! You go first! You know how these trap entrances are usually planted with traps against trespassers!

The tunnel is long and low. Only one of the archaeologists can move along it at a time... half kneeling... half crawling. It seems to go down at a slight angle. Hope we don't encounter anything that might cause a cave-in!

After crawling through the tunnel for several hundred feet... there's an opening ahead! It's a large room. Look out! It's Pharaoh's tomb! Look! Not a bit of jewels or precious metal around! Here's the mummy case!

Cautiously, the three archaeologists slip under the lethal blade and enter into the large underground room. The walls are covered with hieroglyphics! This must be the burial chamber!

Why, that's strange! I've never run across anything like this before! Let's open it up! This is no Pharaoh's tomb! Look! Not a bit of jewels or precious metal around! I've never opened this mummy case before. The mummy case is pegged shut! Keep looking!
Carefully, the rotted decayed windings are removed from the mummy...

A poor shade on linen! Looks like they didn't like this guy much.

Gasp! Look at his face!

Impossible! Impossible! There's no sign of decay! This man looks like he died yesterday.

But the wrappings... and his costume! They're definitely ancient Egyptian! What do you make of it, Alvin?

I'm stumped! Perhaps the hieroglyphics on the walls will tell us something!

Look, boys! It's getting late! We'd better start back! It will be dark in an hour!

Yes! Come! I'd hate to try descending that cliff face in darkness!

We'll come back up tomorrow morning!

As the last trace of daylight pades in the west, the weary explorers reach their camp.

Sahib! Sahib! Why are they frightened? They don't want you stay the night.

Tell them there's nothing to worry about, Abidos! Nothing at all.

Early the next morning.

He—He's dead! Look! On his neck... snake-bite?

But during the night.

Eeeaaagghh
NO, SABIR! NO SNAKE DO THIS! THIS MAN BLEED TO DEATH NOT POISONED!

BUT... THERE'S NO BLOOD AROUND...

WHAT'S THAT, ALVIN? WHAT'D YOU SAY?

I SAID... A VAMPIRE? A VAMPIRE SUCKS BLOOD.

OH, BUT IT OUT, AL! VAMPIRES ARE A MYTH! THEY DON'T EXIST!

THEN HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN HIS DEATH...?

Nahim? You find mummy?

Yes, up there! It's a perfect specimen, too! The most perfectly preserved mummy I have ever seen! We'll want to... wait...

The terrified natives gather up their meager belongings and rush out across the burning sands...

Wait, you fools! Come back! You haven't been paid!

Look at the time! We've wasted the whole day! We won't be able to make it up the cliff and back by dark...

That's too bad! And I wanted you to get to work on those hieroglyphics... tomorrow... bright and early... we'll start out... okay?

Later, after the native porter is buried...

Sahib's my men are leaving. They say this is a place of evil.

Blast them! Superstitious idiots... let them go, no! Wait! We'll need them to carry the mummy back!

The poor devils! They're scared!

S... so am I.
But that night. And the next morning...

Good Lord! Alvin! Dead! Killed the same way? It is a vampire! It is!

There's no such thing, Eve! Mon! We'll have to bury him!

Alvin said it was a vampire. I believe he was right!

After digging a grave and burying Alvin, Jim decides that it is too late to start up the cliff to the tomb during the night. However, while Jim sleeps, Eve takes a lantern and climbs the cliff face...

The mummy case! It's empty! The mummy's gone!

Then Eve begins to translate the hieroglyphics on the wall of the tomb...

"Here lies a member of the living dead... a night-walker... a sucker-drink blood... who was captured while in the act of drinking of his... victim... base! The mummy! The mummy was once a vampire!"

Eve continues...

"...having no knowledge of how to kill a living dead... he was wrapped in the burial clothes and placed... alive in the casket... the lid was then secured and sealed... but we... we unsealed it! The ancient Egyptians... didn't know how to destroy a vampire... so they nailed him into his coffin! And we freed him!"

Suddenly, Eve hears a noise behind her! She turns...
Suddenly the vampire stops! Its head turns toward a streak of grey in the East... The dawn...

Oh, thank God! Thank God!

Yes, Jim! I'm all right! Come up! Bring a wooden stake with you!

Eve! You all right up there?

Look, Jim! The mummy's falling apart! Turning to dust?

Eve! It's really been dead a long, long time!

And so my little yarn ends! I hope you liked it! What? You still don't believe in vampires? Well, don't take my word for it! Go ask your mummy! And now, why not read the old witch's niche? She's got subscription info, and tells you how to obtain back issues!
Dear Old Witch,
Yes! I liked the gruesome tales, especially "Room for One More!" I have a collection on these comics.
I love these gross, sick, scary disgusting tales.
Lawrence Minneses
Spring Lake, NC

Dear Old Witch,
I have just gone on reading your story "A Little Stranger!" and think it's awesome. I think it's great that you showed your mom and dad and I think you were ugly when you were a baby. I think you and The Crypt Keeper are the best. Mysteriously yours.
Mike McKnight
Cranston, RI

You read the 64-page RCP HAUNT #1! Available from us as a back issue! No use trying to butter me up with compliments, and then putting The Crypt Keeper in the same issue with me, Mike! I'm the best. He's a pest, and VK's just a mess.
—OW

Dear Old Witch,
My favorite HAUNT OF FEAR is the one with the "Horror in the School Room" and "The Mummy's Return".
The picture is from "Room for One More!".
Daniel Raimo
Ellenwood, NJ

The old "spring-loaded corpse trick." He-hum.
You'll have to come up with something trickier than that to scare me!
Ha! He! Just kidding! Love the drawing, and thanks!
—OW

Dear Old Witch,

Your comics are really scary. One of my favorites was RCP HAUNT 5. It was one of your best! When my dad was my age (eleven years old) he used to collect your comics. He threw most of them out, but he found one old HAUNT OF FEAR from 1953 and gave it to me. When I picked up my first issue of HAUNT something caught my eye—your eye! Your left eye always catches my attention. You're more scarier than most witches. That's why I like you so much. Here are two questions: I hope you can answer. Where do you live and do you have any kind of spells?
Stephen Langlois
Rutland, VT

I actually live in The Haunt of Fear, and I do admit to a little nervous tic now and again.
—OW

Dear Russ Cochran,
I love your magazines HAUNT, CRYPT, and VAULT. It's my favorite thing since MTV was invented. I think you should work The Old Witch and The Vault Keeper into the HBO show with The Crypt Keeper.
I've to ask The Old Witch to stay. Keep the magazine good and cool.
Wig Wilke
Sierraville, NV

Sure, I'll stay—wasn't going anywhere. Wait a minute! Do you know something I don't know?

Dear OW

My name is Joseph Petrosillo. I am 11 years old. I collect a lot of your magazines. One of my favorite stories is "A Grave Gap!" Here is a picture I drew that I hope you like. Bye now and nightly nightmares! I AM YOUR #1 FAN!

Joseph Petrosillo
Hicksville, NY

Who told you about my nightmares? Very good likeness, you've captured the real me! (Must of used a rat trap!—CK)

Sure! to you, Crypt-Keeper
—OW

Dear Old Witch,

There is a problem however. How did you get to be so ugly? Some of the living corpses in your stories look better than you do! I'm afraid that if I stare at your face too long, I'll turn to stone. How could it be that something as ugly as you was once a baby? You're disgusting! Have you ever thought about face lift or maybe a nose job? How about some retina-A? Do something! Take some of that text material that used to adorn the pages of EC mags and place it over parts of the mag where your face now appears. That would be helpful, I think.

Dunne Chandler
Houston, TX

You silver-tongued devil! Maybe I should get you and Mike McKnight (above) together and decide who's the biggest flirt is it a sale, boys?
—OW

I am still recovering from the effects of daylight savings time. Jim, I drive to work in the early morning darkness. And, it seems like there are probably vampires lurking in the shadows everywhere. EC had a vampire story involving...
being in the Arctic Circle in "Comes the Dawn!" in HAUNT #26 and they had a vampire story about going to a different time zone in "Dawn's Early Light" in CRYPT #42. But EC never had a vampire story involving daylight savings time. The vampire would say "HEE! HEE! HAI HAI HAO! You forgot that it is DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME! The sun does not rise for yet another hour yet!" And then the vampire would SPRING FORWARD and sink it's teeth into the victim's throat. When finished draining the blood, the vampire would just let go of the body and let it FALL BACK. Get it? SPRING FORWARD? FALL BACK? HAI! HAI! HAI! HAI! HAI! HAAAM!

Warren Standifird
Sunnyvale CA

Dear Russ,
I preferred the EXTRA-LARGE SIZE COMICS and was sad to see them go. Here is an idea. How about around Christmas time you publish an EXTRA-LARGE TALES FROM THE CRYPT CHRISTMAS SPECIAL Reprint the seasonal stories that popped up in the EC comics line over the years. Maybe even a Halloween EXTRA-LARGE SIZE EDITION. Just a thought. Regardless, wish you continued luck with your EC comics.

Lawrence Loney Loftin
Monroe LA

You are talking about the tabloid-sized comic we did experimentally. Copies of that EXTRA-LARGE CRYPT are still available for $8 each.

We're sharing your special letterhead illustration with our readers. (Please don't tell that I wore a wig!) —OW

Dear Old Witch
Your story "Horror in the School Room" in issue #7 was the best story I've ever heard in my whole life. Good work. Please print my address.

Dana Conner
7927 Rambler PL
Cincinnati OH 45231

So, my trip to Ohio to read it to you was worth it. —OW

Dear Russ
I'm your biggest fan! I would like an issue of your TALES FROM THE CRYPT! I have number 3 of THE HAUNT OF FEAR. Thank you very much!

Ty Williams
Vinal Haven ME

As you well know by now, you can get all our back issues direct from us. See the little blurb at the end of the latter column for details.

A new twist on putrid-pictures; Construct-A-Creature. Thanks! —OW

Dear Old Witch,
Yo! What's up in The Cauldron? When are you going to show how you became The Old Witch?

Did you ever go out with CK or VK?

I like "The Baskets"! It was great. Can you show more "Grim Fairy Tales" please? I think they're the best stories in the whole book.

Hey, I like the comic book so far! Keep the good work! What I'm trying to say is, I dig you man

Brian Kurtie
address unknown

I didn't BECOME The Old Witch; I was born in "Grim Fairy Tales" show up here and there from now on in the 3 horror books. Yo! (Backwards is "Oy")! —OW

This month: INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION #9 and CRIME #8. Next month: The 5th issue of CRYPT! WEIRD SCIENCE AND SHOCK. Don't forget VAULT! WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-PISTLED! Get them at your local comic shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic for details)!

BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1-43 each (subject to availability). All others up thru issue 19, $1.25 each issue 20 and up, $2 each. Add $2 per order ($10 outside US) for S&H.

We want letters! Write for:

HAUNT
RUS COCHRAN
P.O. BOX 866
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

This comic reprints
HAUNT OF FEAR #6 (JULIUS 1851)

COVER by Al Feldstein
"Hounded to Death!"
"The Very Strange Mummy!"
"Diminishing Returns!"
"The Irony of Death!"

Graham Ingles
George Roussos
unknown
Jack Davis

The following letters are open. We cannot promise to acknowledge publish or answer letters. We can not answer promptly and long. The automatically printed great answers are on code paper which we can't figure out. We cannot check for any problems nor answer letters. The attempt to encourage publication of letters to do as you were your question on the individual letter.
More items of general EC interest, collected into this special column called...

FAN CLUB NEWS!
PRESENTED BY THE VAULT-KEEPER

I would like to present a notice to all EC fans (twelve or over)...

I wish to start a dream of mine, THE NATIONAL E.C. FAN CLUB. In my club all serious EC fans will receive great features including a yearly (six issue) subscription to the club's official fanzine—THE NATIONAL E.C. BULLETIN.

Upon joining the club you will receive the first issue of the BULLETIN, a membership certificate, and a free surprise EC comic!

The BULLETIN contains numerous articles and special EC features. There will be plenty of information on EC comics and the HBO series "Tales from the Crypt." Every issue contains a list of member's names and, if given permission, their addresses. Following the tradition of the original EC Fan Addict Club, there will be an E.C. TRADING POST where fans can swap sell or even give away their ECs! There has never been a better chance to find those rare and precious originals! The club has many more features which I refuse to divulge (my competitors may decide to take em!) You'll just have to join the club to find out!

Membership to the club costs $14.00. This money is just enough to cover the publication costs. I make no profit! If you decide you want to join and don't have $14.00 (US Currency), you may send just enough for your subscription ($12.00) and send the extra two bucks for your membership package later on.

Also, if you are worried the club magazine SUCKS, you can order a sample issue for $2.00.

Philip M. Smith, President/Founder
THE INTERNATIONAL E.C. FAN CLUB
"The Only Choice For The Serious Fan"
c/o Philip M. Smith
President/Founder
5647 Colgate St
Philadelphia, PA 19120
PS: Allow four to six weeks for arrival!

Friend Ray Funk shares some insights on collecting in general in this special, lengthy letter.

Dear Russ,

I've never written to a comic or pulp or newspaper in all my 60 years so this is a first. True, I did articles in NEAR MIN on comics but that isn't the same. Also, I do not recall ever mentioning EC in any articles.

ECs and I go a long way back to the EC meaning Educational. Comics. I still have the 50¢ OLD TESTAMENT comic I bought at the corner and sent my quarter for THE LIFE OF CHRIST (to go back further, I still have the 39 RUDDOLPH THE RED NOSED REINDEER put out by Montgomery Ward, but now to the gist of this letter.)

All my life as far back as I can remember I've collected comics BLB pulp, hardbound and paperback books and anything I liked, and bought ECs as they came on the stands.

In the 1960s I decided to go for Fiction House as only WINGS had interested the (also PLANET) but I had always traded them off so only had the last issue of PLANET to start with.

I'd had an older cousin who went to the Army in WWII and he gave me his Disney collection so I continued it and after I'd left home my mother had kept some up and continued storing them (I was an only child and lived on a farm in Iowa.)

I traded all but BIBLE ECs and all Disney that I didn't give to friends who collected Disney and extra BLBs of sought after titles until some 20 years later I filled my Fiction Houses. Then upon divorce after 35 years, I sold off all of my Fiction House bought all your [hardbound] sets of EC I have the few reprints of Fiction House and wrote the foreword in (the reprint of) PLANET #1 which was fouled up by contents being from #5 (didn't know that until after publication as original artwork had gotten mixed around in vault.)

I bought Gladstone's reprints of Disney and they were good but only bought a couple of their ECs as they weren't good enough. When you sent the (EXTRA-LARGE CRYPT) I was tickled as it was the same size or large reprints of WHIZ, BATMAN and SUPERMAN which I keep stuffed in a cabinet. I kept comics in this manner long before plastic bags and they held up over the years.

Presently an Italian publisher is doing BUCK ROGERS in tabloid size and although I have all the old BR comics and FAMOUS FUNNIES, it's like seeing them again as I used to in [the papers]. Kitchen Sink is doing FLASH GORDON not overly-largy but clear good printing as you do so of course there I go again. When I find reprints I like, I sell or trade off old stuff as one can't keep everything forever and if you don't need them what's the use of having them?

I raised 4 boys and with TV today they don't care for the old stuff that to me was a joy to behold. Also, to those saving and expecting to make a bundle if everyone had saved [a lot was lost thru the old paper] today those old rare comics would be plentiful and not rare. And too I'm finding that the market for older stuff is falling off as the old collectors have tired but in all they want, have died off or just quit collecting due to excessive high prices.

I know that were I to try starting again I couldn't begin to afford today's prices of the old stuff advertised runs of comics and BLBs but sold very little, even though I only asked a small amount of list price. The market just isn't there. The same will be true with reprinted material as everyone saves it today so that the minute a possible high priced market looms they can unload, which of course will cause prices to plummet, so enjoy it for what it is. Instead of worrying about a string in hopes of making that elusive bundle I know that in later years, when I can't work and will need extra income, I will sell in mind for price paid or slightly less, as you cannot eat or drive comics too well.

WHIZ, CAPTAIN MARVEL and SPY SMASHER were favorites with me as a kid, but when I left the farm I gave them away to neighbor kids who were little so that they could enjoy them as I did.

I was at a bookstore when DC brought out SHAZAM! and I bought one to enjoy. When there's a fellow entered and bought all on the stand. After he left the clerk sighed and said, "Now I have to re-stock the stand again. Everybody comes in he takes every issue of SHAZAM! #1 and I've restocked 20 at a time several times now." I asked "How many copies do you have?" and she said, "We only took 600, but if he keeps coming we'll order a couple thousand more if need be." SHAZAM! never went up and was short-lived as they switched to modern artwork and killed it. I wonder if that fellow is still hoarding his SHAZAM! #1 is hoping to see prices go up?

You can't take it with you so enjoy it now and stop trying to be a speculator as most seem to be today.

Thanks for your time to read this sensible keep up the good work and best always.

Ray Funk

Upland CA

Write to this department like so: FAN CLUB NEWS, RUSS COCHRAN, POB 469, WEST PLAINS, MO 65775

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HERE'S A CUTTING HORROR YARN I'M SURE WILL RATE TOPS WITH YOU! I CALL IT...

DIMINISHING RETURNS!

**In his expensively furnished New York penthouse apartment, Vincent Beardsley, the famous world explorer and guide, entertains a prospective client...**

"Yes, he has one! Only I know where the hidden Jivaro diamond field is located!"

"And this diamond comes from that fabulous field?"

**Me Beardsley: the wealthy sportsman and man-about-town, Clank Hagen! He holds a huge undug diamond in his well-manicured hand...**

"The stone must weigh at least forty carats... worth about one-hundred-thousand dollars! And you claim there are thousands more like this one?"

"I managed to escape from the Jivaros with that example! My companion was captured."
Absolutely, Mr. Hagen! The Jivaro have guarded the field jealously! You are familiar with the infamous Jivaro head-hunters, aren't you?

Correct! They indulge in the disgusting practice of shrinking heads to the size of a baseball!

Ouch! How disgusting! However, I'm willing to risk it.

To bat the least, Mr. Hagen! In both cases, we were captured by the Jivaro... But... luckily, I managed to escape! The poor devils that I had thought there were not as fortunate!

I suppose their shrunken heads now adorn some Jivaro chief's hut?

There's no doubt of it! Now, you see the risks involved in trying to reach the diamond field, Hagen?

Look here, Beardsley! I'll make it worth your while! I'll finance the whole trip! Pay you fifty-thousand for your services... and if we find what we're looking for, we'll split the take!

All right, Mr. Hagen! I'll be glad to guide you to the spot! Can you be ready to leave in a week?

I'll be ready here! Let me give you a check in advance! Say, ten thousand?

After Mr. Hagen leaves his penthouse home, Vincent Beardsley picks up the uncut diamond and opens a small strong-box inside are two more stones of equal size.

Men, men! Soon I will have four diamonds!
Several weeks later, a small boat moves slowly up the Pistaza River in the uncharted jungles of eastern Ecuador...

From over the steaming jungle comes the sound of distant drums...

Doom-dum-dum... Doom-dum-dum... What's that?

Jivaro drums!

Where is the diamond field located, Beardsley?

South of the Jivaro village. We'll have to ride the boat and take to the brush... keeping well out of sight!

Can't be sure if they did, we're done for! There! That ought to do it! C'mon! I hope we can find the boat again!

While the Jivaro drums beat incessantly, the small boat moves close to shore. Finally nosing in at a densely overgrown spot! The two pith-helmeted explorers disembark... quickly! Help me cover the boat with ferns and leaves!

Do you think they've spotted us, Beardsley?

I can't be sure if they did, we're done for! There! That ought to do it! C'mon! I hope we can find the boat again!

The two men move through the insect-ridden undergrowth! The jungle is silent now! The drums have stopped! The only sound heard is the occasional shriek of a tropical bird and the crack of a dried twig underfoot! But hidden eyes watch the two men...

Blasted bugs! Sh-h-h-h! Keep your voice down!

Suddenly the jungle around them becomes alive as hundreds of dark-skinned natives emerge from the brush...

Good Lord! We're surrounded!
HUGE NATIVE STEPS FORWARD! HE IS OBVIOUSLY THE CHIEF! BEARDSLEY AND THE NATIVE CONFER FOR A FEW MINUTES IN LOW GARbled TONES! THEN THE CHIEF ISSUES AN ORDER AND A NATIVE RUNS FORWARD WITH SOMETHING IN HIS HAND... TOOMAN...

BEARDSLEY! LOOK! HE'S BOY! YES, HAGEN, VOOM-ONE OF THE DIAMONDS!

Then the chief waves his arm and the circle of Jivaro opens to allow Vincent Beardsley to pass through... Sorry, Old Boy, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

Beardsley moves or down the jungle track as the natives close in on Clark Hagen...

Why you dirty double-crossing! I'll get you for this, Beardsley! I'LL GET YOU!

One of the natives steps forward! In his hands he holds a huge machete! He raises it above his head and...

EEEEE EEEE EEEE EEEE....
Several months later... back in his penthouse apartment... Vincent Beardsley admires his collection of uncut diamonds...

Heh, heh! Four priceless gems! And now... I wait for Franklin Barker... my fifth...

Suddenly, there is a knock at the door! Beardsley opens it.

Why... there's no one here!

Then Vincent looks down on the floor before the door is a crudely wrapped package...

What's this? A package... addressed to me!

Vincent picks up the package and carries it inside.

Strange! I wonder who left it! I wonder what's in it!

Beardsley unwraps the package...

Oh, my God! It... it's a shrunken head! Haven't I read...

Terrified by the repulsive contents of the package, Beardsley drops it from his grasp and backs away...

What... what kind of a morbid joke is this? Who... who'd send this...

Suddenly, as Vincent retreats from the loathsome head lying grotesquely on the plush carpet, he gasps...

The eyes! The eyes are opening! It... it's staring at me!
Rooted to the spot by paralyzing fear, Vincent watches horrified as the wide-eyed shrunk head begins to roll toward him.

Vincent turns to run! The shrunk head springs at him, sinking its razor sharp teeth into his ankle. He does sprawled.

YAAAAAAAAAHH!

Outside Vincent Beardsley's penthouse apartment, the elevator door opens... and as Franklin Barker steps out...

YEEEEEAAAAAAACH

Good lord! What was that? It came from Mr. Beardsley's apartment, sir!

Look, sir! Look at this!

In the box on the table is a shrunk head. As it had just been unwrapped.

Are you sure, sir? Look at the mouth! There's blood all over it. Fresh blood!

Nee, hee! Yes! There was blood on the mouth of the Jivaro shrunk head. Beardsley's blood! How could a shrunk head, long dead, attack and kill a man? You ask? Well, why not take a trip up the Pista River in Eastern Equador to the Jivaro head-hunters? Ask them. I'm sure they'll have an explanation. You'll lose your head over and now, if you feel up to it, go on to the Crypt-keeper! He's waiting!
NOW THAT MY FELLOW GHOULURATICS HAVE FINISHED THEIR INANE NARRATIONS, IT'S TIME FOR ME, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, TO WIND UP THE OLD WITCH'S MAGAZINE WITH A GOOD TERROR-TALE! AH, LET ME SEE! YES! I KNOW ONE, FROM MY VAST COLLECTION HERE IN THE CRYPT, THAT I'M SURE WILL MAKE THE BLOOD FREEZE IN YOUR VEINS! IT'S A HORROR STORY THAT WILL MELT YOUR COLD HEARTS! I CALL IT THE IRONY OF DEATH!

JEFFREY SLAS STOOD ON THE TOP PLATFORM OF THE BLAST FURNACE IN THE KREEBAR IRON AND STEEL WORKS AND LIFTED HIS VOICE ABOVE THE ROARING DIN SHOUTING ORDERS...

ALL RIGHT, MEN! SHE'S CHARGED! THE HEARTH'S ABOUT FULL! OPEN THE TAP-OFF-HOLE! OPEN 'EN UP!
As Jeff Slag the Plant Superintendent signaled the go-ahead, a door at the base of the huge blast furnace was opened, and molten white metal ran out down the clay-lined trough. Here she comes!

The gushing stream of liquid iron rushed on down the trough and spilled over into a waiting ladle-car. Okay! She’s almost filled; close up the tap-hole now.

As the last of the molten iron slid into the ladle-car, now filled to the brim, take ‘er down to the ingot-molds and have ‘em poured, Joe! Okay, Mr. Slag!

Jeff Slag watched as the ladle-car with its white-hot liquid cargo moved slowly up the tracks toward the crane that would lift it into the waiting molds.

Hey, Slag! Mr. Kreegor wants you in his office. Right away! Okay, Tim! Take over for me, huh?

Mr. Kreegor, the owner of the Kreegor Iron and Steel Works, lighted a cigar and leaned back in his plush chair. All right, Slag! I’m a business man! What’s your price?

What’s your price to keep away from my daughter? I know what you’re after; it’s her money you’re interested in. Nothing else! Now I’m willing to make it worth your while to lay off.

You’re right, Mr. Kreegor. But you’re too late! Your daughter and I are married already!
WHAT? WHY... I’LL HAVE IT ANNULED! NO, MR. KREEGOR! I’LL BLACKLIST YOU IN EVERY STEEL PLANT IN THE COUNTRY! YOU WON’T DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT... BECAUSE I’M NOT GOING TO LET YOU!

I WORKED HARD TO MAKE YOUR DAUGHTER SANDRA FALL FOR ME! WHEN YOU DIE... THIS PLANT GOES TO HER... AND ME!

NEVER! NEVER! I’LL DISOWN HER! CUT HER OFF WITHOUT A CENT! I KNOW YOUR KIND! I KEEP AWAY... KEEP AWAY...

The shriek of the noon whistle drowned out old Mr. Kreegor’s cry as Jeff slag struck him...

After a few moments, Jeff opened the office door and glanced out! The steel mill was deserted! All of the workers had gone outside for lunch! Jeff picked up Mr. Kreegor and carried him across the plant and up the steps leading to the ingot-mould platform... Too bad, Mr. Kreegor... but I can’t afford to give you a chance to do the things you threatened! You’ll have to die.

When Jeff reached the platform, he covered the unconscious form of Mr. Kreegor with a tarpaulin and waited. Twenty thirty forty-five minutes! Finally...

Jeff glanced down at the ladle-car below him filled to the rim with molten white-hot iron... just as soon as enough men come in, I’ll toss him over...

Suddenly the steel mill was filled with a blood-curdling scream... someone... falling!

There now they’ll be coming back from lunch!
The molten metal hissed and sputtered into the ladle. It was old man Kreegor's vise. I saw his face. I don't feel so good.

Jeff, taking advantage of the concern of the men over Mr. Kreegor's death, slipped down from the platform and asked, What happened? Mr. Kreegor must have been up on the ingot-mould platform! He fell off.

Yeh! Right into the ladle-car! Oh, no! No! Are you sure? I see his face! It was him, all right.

...and I...I didn't get a chance to tell him about Sandra and me. You...you and Kreegor's daughter married. Jeff? That makes you boss.

Look, fellows! I better get on home and sneak the news to Sandra! Keep everything going while I'm gone, eh?

What about this ladle-car, Jeff? Should we ride-tack it?

You heard me! I said keep everything going! That means everything.

You, you mean pour 'em into ingots.

That's exactly what I mean. No use wasting good pig iron when the ingots cool. Put 'em aside. I'll want 'em. For my own use.

Yeah, Jeff! We gotcha, Jeff!
But not for long! Jeff had one of them processed into a rugged safe... to hold his 'Inherited Fortune'...

Heh, heh! A fitting monument to your memory... Mr. Kreegor!

Ah! This is the life! Thanks to you, Mr. Kreegor!

A third ingot was fashioned into countless ashtrays, which Jeff placed about his luxurious mansion. Grinding cigarettes out in them...

Degraded, isn't it, Mr. Kreegor? The tables are turned now, aren't they?

And poor Sandra... Poor, disillusioned Sandra... became more and more unhappy as the months passed.

Jeff, what's happened to us, Jeff? You act as though you don't love me anymore!

Jeff! What's happened to us, Jeff? I've got what I want now, Sandra... the will... the money! That's the only reason I married you!

Oh, Jeff... jeff! And I believed you... loved me!

Oh, stop your whimpering! If you don't like it, divorce me! Get my price will be high... very high! I'll want the will... the whole works...

So Sandra left Jeff.

Goodbye, Jeff! I'm leaving you... leaving you with everything! I'll get along...

Yeah! Sure! Go long! Good riddance!
There were other things Jeff did with the ingots of iron from the ladle that Mr. Kreebor had fallen into! Jeff had garden tools fashioned...

...other degrading forms.

That's what I think of you... Mr. Kreebor.

Well, find them! There were two ingots left...

Yes, Mr. Slag!

These were two moors left.

Other things Jeff did with the ingots of iron from the ladle that Mr. Kreebor had fallen into! Jeff had garden tools fashioned...

Scurvain, Mr. Kreebor! Scurvain in the fifth and mud-like I had to do... for years...

The last of the ingots containing Mr. Kreebor's remains had disappeared from the store room! Jeff was furious... I suspect... that they were shipped out to Detroit along with another order!

And then... one day...

At a board meeting several weeks later...

...then that's the plan, Mr. Slag! An exhibit of the history of the uses of iron through the centuries! It will be very impressive!

...and that's the plan, Mr. Slag! An exhibit of the history of the uses of iron through the centuries! It will be very impressive!

Meanwhile, the shipments of iron ingots were being checked...

I'm sure of it! The Detroit order has been checked carefully!

On, dear! Mr. Slag will be very angry. Very.

Weeks passed! One day...

How do you like the exhibit so far, Mr. Slag?

Very nice! What's this?

The last of the ingots containing Mr. Kreebor's remains had disappeared from the store room! Jeff was furious... I suspect... that they were shipped out to Detroit along with another order!
ON, THESE ARE EXAMPLES OF SOME OF THE MORE INFAMOUS USES OF IRON THROUGH THE AGES! WE CONSTRUCTED EXACT REPLICAS OF MANY OF THE TORTURE DEVICES USED IN THE MIDDLE AGES EMPLOYING IRON...

HMMM! VERY INTERESTING! WHAT'S THIS ONE CALLED?

THIS IS A COPY OF THE NOTORIOUS IRON-MAIDEN DEVICE...

I SEE! THEY'D PUT A PERSON INSIDE LIKE SO?

PLEASE, SIR! BE CAREFUL! THOSE SPIKES ARE RAZOR SHARP!

FIT'S PERFECTLY!

SLOWLY STEADILY, THE SPIKED DOOR CLOSED ON THE FRENZIED SCREAMING STEEL-WORKS OWNER...

I'M NOT... JOKING! THE SPIKES... THEY'RE...

QUICKLY! OPEN IT!

I CAN'T! IT'S STUCK!

Suddently the spiked door of the iron maiden closed slightly... pinning Jeff Slab inside...

STOP IT! STOP IT! IT'S CLOSING...

PLEASE, MR. SLAB! I DON'T SEE ANY HUMOR IN YOUR ANTAGS...

HOW HORRIBLE! I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT! IT JUST SEEMED TO CLOSE BY ITS OWN ACCORD!

UNABLE TO OPEN THE SPIKED DOOR, THE BOARD MEMBERS WATCHED HORRIFIED AS THE IRON-MAIDEN CLOSED... WATCHED THE BLOOD TRICKLE OUT OF THE BOTTOM AND FORM A POOL ON THE FLOOR... LISTENED AS JEFF'S SHRIEKING FINALLY DIED AWAY...

MEANWHILE... IN THE SHIPPING ROOM... WAIT A MINUTE! HERE'S SOMETHING! YES! THIS IS IT! THE TWO MISSING IRGOTS WERE USED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN IRON-MAIDEN... FOR THE EXHIBIT...

HEH, HEH! AND THAT'S MY STORY, DEAR FRIENDS! I HOPE YOU GOT THE POINT! JEFF DIDN'T OF COURSE... IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN AN ACCIDENT. THE IRON-MAIDEN CLOSING... BUT THEN AGAIN... HAVING BEEN MADE OF THE IRGOTS CONTAINING MR. KREGGOR'S REMAINS... IT MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN! EH? DON'T FORGET TO READ THE OLD WITCH'S NICHRE FOR INFORMATION ON GETTING BACK ISSUES! BYE NOW! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG-TALES FROM THE CRYPT!
YOU SAY IT'S A 45-MINUTE BUS TRIP WITH A TRANSFER TO THE COMIC BOOK SHOP? YOU SAY IT'S A HARRIOWING 30-MINUTE DRIVE ON THE EXPRESSWAY TO THE MALL, AND THEN A 30-MINUTE MERRY-GO-ROUND RIDE TO FIND A PARKING PLACE? YOU SAY YOUR TOWN DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A COMIC BOOK SHOP OR BOOKSTORE? IS THAT WHAT'S TROUBLING YOU, BUNKY? WELL, THEN, YOU SHOULD.

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