ARE YOU A RED DUPE?

IN THE TOWN OF GAZOLOSKY IN THE HEART OF SOVIET RUSSIA, YOUNG MELVIN BUZUNKEN-SKOVITSCHKY PUBLISHED A COMIC MAGAZINE...

...SO THEY CAME AND SMASHED HIS FOUR COLOR PRESS...

...AND HUNG POOR MELVIN THE NEXT MORNING!

HERE IN AMERICA, WE CAN STILL PUBLISH COMIC MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS, SUCKS, BOOKS AND THE BIBLE. WE DON'T HAVE TO SEND THEM TO A CENSOR FIRST, NOT YET...

BUT THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE IN AMERICA WHO WOULD LIKE TO CENSOR...WHO WOULD LIKE TO SUPPRESS COMICS. IT ISN'T THAT THEY DON'T LIKE COMICS FOR THEM! THEY DON'T LIKE THEM FOR YOU!

THESE PEOPLE SAY THAT COMIC BOOKS AREN'T AS GOOD FOR CHILDREN AS NO COMIC BOOKS. OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. SOME OF THESE PEOPLE ARE NO-GOODS. SOME ARE DO-GOODERS. SOME ARE WELL-MEANING. AND SOME ARE JUST PLAIN MEAN.

BUT WE ARE CONCERNED WITH AN AMAZING REVELATION. AFTER MUCH SEARCHING OF NEWSPAPER FILES, WE'VE MADE AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY:

THE GROUP MOST ANXIOUS TO DESTROY COMICS ARE THE COMMUNISTS!

WE'RE SERIOUS! NO KIDDIN'! HERE! READ THIS:

THE "COMMunist"
"DAILY WORKER" OF JULY 13, 1953
BITTERLY ATTACKED THE ROLE OF:

"...SO-CALLED 'COMICS' IN BRUTALIZING AMERICAN YOUTH, THE BETTER TO PREPARE THEM FOR MILITARY SERVICE IN IMPLEMENTING OUR GOVERNMENT'S AIMS OF WORLD DOMINATION, AND TO ACCEPT THE ATROCITIES NOW BEING PERPETRATED BY AMERICAN SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN IN KOREA UNDER THE FLAG OF THE UNITED NATIONS."

THESE LETTERS...

"THE CHILD'S NATURAL CHARACTER...MUST BE DISTORTED TO FIT CIVILIZATION...FANTASY VIOLENCE WILL PARALYZE HIS RESISTANCE, DIVERT HIS AGGRESSION TO UNREAL ENEMIES AND FRUSTRATIONS, AND IN THIS WAY PREVENT HIM FROM REBELLING AGAINST PARENTS AND TEACHERS...THIS WILL SIPHON OFF HIS RESISTANCE AGAINST SOCIETY, AND PREVENT REVOLUTION."


VAULT OF HORROR, Aug.-Sept., 1954.—Volume 1, Number 28. Published Bi-Monthly by L. L. Publishing Co., Inc., at 225 Lafayette Street, New York 13, N. Y. William M. Gaines, Managing Editor, Johnny Craig, Editor. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at New York; N. Y. Subscription $1.00 for $1.00 in the U. S., elsewhere $1.25. Entire contents copyrighted 1954 by L. L. Publishing Co., Inc. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped return envelope. No similarity between any of the characters, names or places appearing in this magazine with any of those living or dead is intended and any similarity is purely coincidental. Printed in U. S. A.
HEH, HEH! PILE ABOARD THE GOOD SHIP SARCOPHAGUS, ME HORRIBLE HEARTIES! THE MORGUE THE MERRIER, I ALWAYS SAY! YOU REMEMBER MY DEAR COMPANION, DON'T YOU? IN CASE SOME OF YOU ARE STRANGERS... THIS IS DRUSILLA, HOSTESS OF THE VAULT! YOU'LL BE SEEING A LOT OF HER! RIGHT NOW, THOUGH, YOUR SALTY OLD VAULT-KEEPER IS ABOUT TO SET TALE ON A TEMPEST-TOSSED FRIGHT-SEEING CRUISE BY WAY OF A GANGRENOUS-YELLOW GAZETTE I DUG UP HERE IN THE SLIMY DEPTHS OF THE VAULT! I VOW THIS BARNACLED BIT OF BILGE WILL SHIVER YOUR TIMBERS, MATEYS, SO HITCH UP YOUR MIZZENMASTS WHILE I UNRAVEL THE CREEPY CHRONICLE I CALL... ANY SPORT in a STORM
Oh, but the sea was angry that night! She was a seething shrew! Crashing, foaming and hissing, she beat against the rock-bound island shore. Then she would slink back and curl up into herself, only to come roaring at the immovable, silent rocks again...

Squatting on a bleak, windswept hummock, rats-mouth Inn stood like an ominous, grey, weathered hulk. But the rugged giant, Lon Shannon, fixed his steely eyes on the inviting warmth of the lights glowing through the windows...

Then the sea, in her rage, hurled herself upon the shore, thundered against the chalky cliffs, digging at their battered sides! And she reached with long, cold, clawing fingers into the caves she'd made into the smugglers' caves, where she toyed with their skiffs and launches...

The storm invaded the Inn for a moment as Shannon entered, then he closed it out, cast off his brine-drenched coat, and stood warming his hands before the fire...

"'Twas on just such a night my father was caught at sea that she got him!"

Shannon glared darkly as he recognized Timothy D'Rourke's piping brogue...

"Ay! The sea hag reached up with her eight slimy arms and plucked him, screamin', right off'n the deck! We never seen him again...never!"

Shannon blasphemed in a booming voice, growled his order to the innkeeper, and his men, aware of his presence at last, fell into apprehensive silence...

"Grog, Dodson! And mull it so it'll boil my innards, or I'll drown you in your own swill!"
There was a sneer on the big man's face, with the strength of his hard grey eyes alone he brought the red-headed lass to his feet...

So the Sea Hag got your old man, did she, O'Rourke? Aye! That she did, sir! You have me word on it!

And I suppose you heard from your father's ghost what happened to him...

No, sir. We heard it from his best friend, who's dead now, rest his soul!

Pfah! Nary a witness, you lyin' little sneak! Only the dead!

Then with a brutality that made even his hard-bitten smuggler crew gasp, Shannon grove his huge fist against Tim O'Rourke's mouth.

'Twill be a long time till your rotten tongue can spew out such lies again!

Are you all goin' to be taken in by a liar's superstitious babbling while a schooner waits a mile off shore with thirty thousand pounds in spices, perfumes and gems for us?

Ye can say what ye like, Lon Shannon! But the Sea Hag abounds tonight... and ye'll not make us set foot in a boat! Not tonight!

Reluctantly, the other men agreed to help Shannon launch a boat, and a few minutes later, muttering darkly, they left the comfort of the inn.

There'll be no cut for you, heathen cowards this trip! Scollay and I'll be gettin' your shares!

Go back to ye homes, ye snivelin' pack o' women! I'll go it alone, then, and there's a fifty pound bonus for any man what'll stand up an' join me!!

Fifty, chief? Aye, sir. I'll go wi' ye!
With difficulty, the smugglers helped Shannon and Scollay put to sea in a launch! The enraged sea seethed her defiance! She heaved and rolled, tried in a dozen different ways to engulf them! She called upon the wind and lightning, crashed herself against the rocks in renewed bursts of temper... but somehow the launch outwitted her.

Then the storm broke in all its fury! Mountains of waves tried to swallow the small craft! The wind tore, lightning menaced, thunder threatened, but the giant Shannon only laughed!

Try your thousand tricks, you bilious, ugly old harry! Show me your sea hag an' I'll spit in her eye!

With one powerful hand he lifted the cowering Scollay from the cabin. His laughter dared above the wind. Scollay laughed too... but only with his mouth, for the rest of him was all terror...

Well?! Where is your sea hag with her eight, slimy, barnacled arms, eh?! Tell her lon Shannon is waiting?!

For two hours the launch would vanish in trough after trough, and the sea would close about them, only to have the craft leap tantalizingly out of her grasp! Then she'd foam, and hiss, and froth in frustration...

We're lost, Shannon! It's the sea hag! She's led us off course! She takes a hundred forms... she's a dolphin one moment, a crag jutting out of the sea, a tern, a gull...

Or maybe she's this boat, you blasted little fool!

For two hours the launch would vanish in trough after trough, and the sea would close about them, only to have the craft leap tantalizingly out of her grasp! Then she'd foam, and hiss, and froth in frustration...

A great swell lifted the boat high, carried it swiftly forward, and suddenly looming out of the blackness, a huge, grey, mountainous mass of boulders confronted them...

There! There she is! I told ya, Shannon!
The swell sank swiftly, spending itself on a short, pebbly beach that sloped up to the boulders. The two men were thrown roughly to the beach where they clung while the receding water sought to drag them back. The launch settled quietly on the pebbles, smugly satisfied at having delivered them to safety.

In answer to Shannon's booming fist, the door creaked open on its salt-caked hinges... me name's Shannon, Cap'n! This here's me friend Scollay! The sea tossed us up here! Could we dry out for a bit? Gladly, sir! Come in! My name is Daniels!

'Tis a risky business putting out t' sea this night, Mr. Shannon! That you survived at all in a launch was a great bit of luck! Aye, Cap'n Daniels! Great luck, in deed!
When Shannon reached the kitchen he was pleased to find Heather alone. The Captain and his wife had retired. For a while they talked, until...

'Tis getting late, lass! 'Tis things I wish to speak of! Surely, a bonnie thing like you must get lonely for a man's company!

Stay, lass! There's things I must be off to bed...

Ye k'new it an' yet ye stayed here late 'cause ye knew I'd come down again! Ye can't answer me 'nay'. Ye was waitin' for me! Ye want me just as much as I want you, Heather!

Don't stop me, Heather! I'll give ye all ye want in the world! I'll take ye back with me...t' the mainland! I'll make ye my wife! I'll get ye pretty things...clothes, jewels! I want to wed ye.

When they dined, and as Shannon was about to go downstairs, Scollay gripped his arm, leering.

Now, lookie, Shannon! Ye ain't goin' t' hog the pretty wench all 'erself, are ye? You'd best be stayin' up here, Scollay...you need rest!

His strong arms slipped tightly about her, held her close to him, his face snuggled close to hers. As she leaned back trying vainly to push him away and she gasped breathlessly...

No...please! Ye mustn't do this!

The storm outside is but a weetthing compared t' the storm inside me! Aye! Ever since I laid eyes on ye, I knew I wanted ye! Ye knew it, too!

When they dressed, and as Shannon was about to go downstairs, Scollay gripped his arm, leering.

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No...please! Ye mustn't do this!

The storm outside is but a weetthing compared t' the storm inside me! Aye! Ever since I laid eyes on ye, I knew I wanted ye! Ye knew it, too!
TEN? THERE'S SOMETHIN' OOO
ABOUT THAT! HOW IS IT WE
NEVER EVEN
SEEN THIS
LIGHTHOUSE
AFORE
T'NIGHT?
I CAN'T BE THINKIN'
ABOUT IT NOW!
WE MADE IT HERE
AND WE'LL MAKE
IT BACK! IF I STAY
TILL MORVIN', TH' CAP'N WILL HAVE
ME WED TH' GIRL!
THERE'S MUCH DIFFICULTY; THEY PUT
TO SEA AGAIN! AND FROM THE START,
SCOLLAY WHINE AND CRINGED LIKE
A FRIGHTENED SCHOOLGIRL...

IT WAS MUCH LATER WHEN LON
ENTERED THE ROOM WHERE SCOLLAY
WAITED...
'TIS ABOUT TIME YE
GOT BACK!
STOW IT! AN' GET YE
COAT! WE'RE HEADING
BACK T' RATSMOUTH...
TODAY! NOW! 'TIS
ONLY TEN MILES!

WE'LL NOT MAKE IT, SHANNON!
TURN BACK I SAY, OR WE'LL DROWN
LIKE RATS! MARK ME WORDS...THE
SEA HAG IS OUT T' GET US! AN' IT'S
ALL YOUR DOIN'...YOUR FAULT!

SHUT UP, I SAY, YE LOW,
SHIVELIN' COWARD.

IT'S ALL AGAINST US! WE GET
BEAT BY A STORM AND CHUNKED
UP AT A LIGHTHOUSE WHAT
DIDN'T BE THERE TILL T'NIGHT!
AN' NOW 'CAUSE D' THAT GIRL AN' 
YE LYIN' WORDS, YE MADE US
BAIT FOR THE SEA HAG!

I SHOULD NEVER HA' COME W' 
YE, YE BLASTED IDIOT! TURN
BACK! TURN BACK! BY HEAVEN,
I'LL DO IT MESELF! I'LL NOT
LET YE RUN ME T'ME DEATH!
GIVE ME THE HELM, OR BY
HEAVEN, I'LL...

AVAST! I'VE
HAD ENOUGH!
YE BLASTED
LITTLE PIP-
SQUEAK, I'LL
HAVE NO MORE
OF YE!

THERE'! YE'LL MAKE A TASTY TIDBIT FOR YOUR
SEA HAG!, IF SHE DON'T CARE WHAT SHE
EATS!

SO, WITH MUCH DIFFICULTY, THEY PUT
TO SEA AGAIN! AND FROM THE START,
SCOLLAY WHINE AND CRINGED LIKE
A FRIGHTENED SCHOOLGIRL...

TURN BACK, CHIEF!
THE SEA'S TOO
ROUGH! WE'LL BE
SWAMPED!

STOW IT, YE
BILGE-HOUND,
OR I'LL
THROTTLE YE,
SO HELP ME
I WILL!

LEGGO ME
ARM! GET
AWAY FROM
TH' WHEEL,
I SAY!

GIVE ME THE
HELMI OR
BY
HEAVEN, I'LL...
The fuming sea swallowed the little man in an instant! And then, even above the shrieking fury of the storm, Shannon heard the voice...  

LON...  

EH?

Heather! Ye Little Fool! What are ye doin' here?  

I feared ye'd leave without me, Lon! I didn't go to my room... I came here! I hid in the cabin!

Leave me be! Did ye really think I wanted ye with me, even when I left without ye?  

But I'm here, Lon! Ye said ye'd take me to the mainland! Ye said ye'd marry me!

Ye blasted, trustin' fool! Ye ought t' know better than t' take th' word of an excited man! Marriage, is it? Pah! No, lass! Not for Lon Shannon! Ye go no further!

I want ye, Lon! I'll never let ye get away from me!

Angrily, he struggled to throw her into the sea! Suddenly, her arms gripped him with a strength he never knew! He blinked the rain from his face to see more clearly, felt other arms grip him... frightful, powerful arms, slithering about him...

Ye'll never get away from me, Lon!

He felt himself being pulled toward the angry, spuming sea, and he fought helplessly to free himself! Desperately, his scream sounded loud above the storm... as the sea had slid easily into the water with her prize!

Heh, heh! Well, not only was Shannon a good seaman, he was a good lubber, too... as Heather will testify! And Scollay... such a square! But, actually, everyone in the story was foolish! Weren't they all wet? Heh! Ah, me! I guess that's enough! The Crypt-keeper is patiently trying to be patient! He follows next, so till we meet later on, I'll be seeing you!

The end
HEH, HEH! GHASTLY GREETINGS, YOU OLD GHOULISH GLUTONS! OOPS! NO OFFENSE INTENDED... REMEMBER, THERE'S NO GHOUL LIKE AN OLD GHOUL! NOW SLITHER RIGHT INTO MY CREEPY CRYPT OF TERROR AND LET YOUR CORPSE-COLLECTING CRYPT-KEEPER HORRIFY YOU WITH A HORRENDOUS HISTORY RIGHT OUT OF MY PRIVATE SHOCK! IT'S ABOUT TWO MONEY-MAD MOPES WHO WERE STRICTLY FROM HUNGARY! THEY'D HAVE DONE ANYTHING FOR A FAST FORINT! (FORINT? THAT'S DOUGH, SCHMOE?) I'VE NAMED THIS MAGGOTY MORSEL OF GRAVEDIGGER'S DELIGHT...

COFFIN SPELL!
FROM THE MOMENT THEY HAD PRIED OPEN THE COFFIN-LID, AND THE DEATHLY-SWEET STENCH OF ROTTED FLESH FILLED THEIR NOSTRILS, THEY KNEW THEIR LABORS HAD BEEN WASTED. NADYI LIFTED THE PUTRESCENT REMAINS TO A SITTING POSITION, AND JANOS RAKOCZY GRUNTED WITH DISGUST... THERE WOULD BE NO PAY THIS NIGHT... Nevertheless, nadyi huna and janos RAKOCZY CAREFULLY WRAPPED THE FRAGILE REMAINS AND PLACED THEM IN THEIR CART. THEY BEGAN THE JOURNEY BACK TO THE CITY OF BUDAPEST...

PFHAH! THREE HOURS OF BACK-BREAKING WORK... AND WHAT WILL DR. KAROLYI PAY US FOR THIS WORM-EATEN SPECIMEN? NOT ONE FORINT!

DOGS! FILTHY GRAVE ROBBERs! I PAY YOU GLADLY ONE HUNDRED FORINTS FOR EACH CADAVER YOU BRING IN GOOD CONDITION! AND IF YOU TWO CANNOT SUPPLY ME, THERE ARE OTHERS WHO CAN!

I'M TEMPTED TO MAKE MY OWN DEAD BODIES A CART FROM GRAVEYARD TO CEMETERY, WITH NO SUCCESS... WHAT RECENT BODIES HAD BEEN BURIED IN THEM, THEY HAD DUG UP AND SOLD DURING THE PAST FORTNIGHT...

LOOK, JANOS! A FRESH GRAVE! TOMORROW NIGHT THERE WILL...

YES! TOMORROW! BUT WHAT ABOUT TONIGHT? WE LOSE A FORTUNE IF DR. KAROLYI BUYS FROM OTHER GRAVE ROBBERs!

PFHAH! WHAT CAN HE BUY FROM THEM? THERE ARE JUST NO CADAVERS TO BE HAD, JANOS!

I KNOW! NADYI, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I'M TEMPTED TO MAKE MY OWN DEAD BODIES!

NEVERTHELESS, NADYI HUNA AND JANOS RAKOCZY CAREFULLY WRAPPED THE FRAGILE REMAINS AND PLACED THEM IN THEIR CART. THEY BEGAN THE JOURNEY BACK TO THE CITY OF BUDAPEST...
Their spavined mare wheezed and gasped, but finally brought her load up the hill to the gates of a castle... Look, Nadyi! Those people! They're wearing black! Mourning black!

As soon as the solemn sextet had entered the yawning mouth of the castle, Janos and Nadyi leaped from their cart and rushed to the gates... The gates are locked!

See, Janos! Over there! That mausoleum! If there has been a death recently, the body would be in it!

It was just after sundown the next evening when they returned to the gates of the castle...

Look, Nadyi! We're in luck! The gates have been left open!

Stealthily, the grave robbers crossed the grassy space to the brooding mausoleum, Nadyi tried the door... It glided back noiselessly at his touch!

It's unlocked! I can see candles burning! There's nobody inside! Come on!
They tip-toed into the big mausoleum and beheld eight shiny new coffins, the light of eight great candles shimmering on their varnished surfaces...

Eight fresh bodies, Janos! I wonder how so many of one family died at one time? A plague, perhaps? Who cares? Eight hundred forints, that's what matters!

For all that money, we could do anything! But I'll have to get a bigger wagon!

Twilight fled in the face of the oncoming night as Janos snapped the reins on the bony back of the aged mare. Startled out of a peaceful slumber, she lurched forward and the cart groaned after her down the road...

Several hours had crept by before Janos returned to the castle with the larger wagon. A quarter moon had climbed high in the heavens and the grave robber moved in stealth toward the mausoleum...

On the journey to the city, Janos Rakoczy had time for many thoughts... evil, greedy thoughts... Selling the coffins is a good idea! But Nadyi does not deserve to share in the profit! I will have to arrange it, so that I will pay him only for helping me carry them!
He entered the burial chamber. A draft made the eight candles dance drunkenly, and Janos' long shadows leaped about the walls in a mad frenzy as he cupped his hands and whispered...

**NADYI! NADYI! WHERE ARE YOU?**

**From behind the farthest coffin, Nadyi rose so noiselessly that Janos heard him only when he spoke. Janos whirled, his heart thumping...**

**...EH? OH, IT'S YOU, JANOS! FOOL! YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO SLEEP! YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN CAUGHT!**

**NADYI! NADYI! WHERE ARE YOU?**

**He entered the burial chamber, a draft made the eight candles dance drunkenly, and Janos' long shadows leaped about the walls in a mad frenzy as he cupped his hands and whispered...**

**Janos was surprised... and disturbed... by Nadyi's quiet acceptance of his plan! He had expected an argument... perhaps a fight... but this action so foreign to Nadyi's nature frightened him...**

**HA! I WAS ONLY JOKING! YOU'LL GET YOUR FAIR SHARE... FIFTY-FIFTY! HA!**

**HURRIEOLY, JANOS FASTENED THE EIGHT COFFIN-LIDS IN PLACE...**

**I GOT THE WAGON, NADYI! LET'S WASTE NO TIME... TAKE HOLD OF THIS COFFIN!**

**TOGETHER THEY MADE THEIR WAY PAST THE DARKENED CASTLE TO THE GATES. THERE WAS NO SOUND SAVE THE HIGH-PITCHED SQUEAL OF BATS SOARING OVERHEAD...**

**THEY WORKED QUICKLY, SILENTLY... STILL, AN HOUR PASSED BEFORE THE LAST COFFIN WAS STACKED...**

**ACH! TOMORROW OUR BONES WILL ache, MY FRIEND! LET US GET AWAY FROM THIS PLACE!**

**IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN EASIER FOR THE MARE GOING DOWNHILL, BUT BECAUSE OF HER HEAVY LOAD SHE HAD TO BRACE HERSELF LEST THE WAGON SEND HER SKIT-TERING OUT OF CONTROL? JANOS SPOKE...**

**NADYI... I... I AM GOING TO PAY YOU ONLY FOR HELPING ME CARRY THE COFFINS? YOU DO NOT WISH TO ARGUE, EH?**

**WHATEVER YOU SAY, JANOS!**

**JANOS WAS SURPRISED... AND DISTURBED... BY NADYI'S QUIET ACCEPTANCE OF HIS PLAN! HE HAD EXPECTED AN ARGUMENT... PERHAPS A FIGHT... BUT THIS ACTION SO FOREIGN TO NADYI'S NATURE FRIGHTENED HIM...**

**HA! I WAS ONLY JOKING! YOU'LL GET YOUR FAIR SHARE... FIFTY-FIFTY! HA!**

**ANYTHING YOU SAY, JANOS!**
They rumbled over the bumpy road in silence... until they came to a fork. Then Janos sat up...

Hey! You're taking the wrong road! This is not the way to the university!

We'll leave the coffins at our place!

You're right! Then we'll put the bodies in our cart and go to visit Dr. Kardoly!

They reached their dilapidated hut and unloaded the wagon...

Imagine the look on his face when he sees them! Eight new bodies! And eight hundred forints for us, eh, Nadyi?

One by one the coffins were brought into the hovel and placed on the floor. Janos was in high spirits because of their successful venture!

Ah! This is the last one! Dr. Kardoly! Won't hire other grave robbers after this, eh?

With a heavy sigh, Janos sat down on a rough wooden chair, tilted it back against the wall and, with an air of luxury, lighted his old, foul-smelling pipe. Nadyi sat nearby, his head nodding...

I'm very tired... There is no hurry. We've earned a rest!

It was not a noise, but rather some instinct that drew Janos' eyes to the coffins. What he saw there robbed him of his voice! His pipe dropped from his gaping, diVering lips...

Suddenly, fear overcame shock! He jumped up, grabbed Nadyi by the arm, and pointed a trembling finger...

Nadyi! The coffins! Look at the coffins!

Hey!' You're taking the wrong road! This is not the way to the university!

We can't drive through Budapest with a wagonload of coffins, Janos! A policeman might see us!
Eight pairs of cold, clammy hands lifted eight coffin-lids! Eight bodies, swathed in black, rose from eight coffins, eight deathly pale vampires, thirsting for warm, human blood, turned beady, glittering eyes on Janos who stood transfixed! It was Nadyi who broke the spell...

Janos! Quick! This way!

Vampires! Do you know about vampires, Nadyi? They drain your blood... and their bite turns a man into a vampire, too!

I know, Janos! I found that out before... when you went to get the wagon!

I... I found out about the blood-draining and the bites, Janos... in the mausoleum! They caught me!

What do you mean? Eh? Wha...?

Yes, Janos! I'm a vampire now! And soon you will be too!

Wha? Nadyi! You mean you... AAAAGGH!

Heh, heh! There you have it, little kiddies! No wonder Nadyi boy lost interest in money... all he had to do was put the bite on Janos! Heh! And with that thought I give you into the clammy hands of V.K. for safekeeping! (?) Until next we meet in O.W.'s mag, the haunt of fear!
From the stern of the little lobster boat, Borley watched Captain Pritchard through narrowed eyes. While the boat churned in the rough water, like a chip of wood caught in a whirlpool, Borley went over his plan for the last time. That fool Pritchard had left him no choice: by catching Borley in the act of riffling his wallet, then swearing he'd bring him back so that harbor police could pinch Borley for robbery, Pritchard had sealed his own death warrant. For how could the porbellied skipper know that his one-man crew was a three-time loser? That one more arrest meant the rest of his life behind granite walls, for Borley?

Even as he stepped forward cat-quick, the spike gripped in his hamlike hand, Borley thought elatedly of the holdful of lobsters down below. Even as he slashed out the heavy steel rod, Borley was estimating how much the lobster catch would bring when he docked.

The spike fell with shattering force. It was the work of a minute to lug the blood-splattered corpse to the rail and hurl it over the side.

"So long, Cap Pritchard," Borley howled. "Now the boat's mine and the lobsters downstairs belong to ME! And you . . . you fat little pig . . . you're nothing but food for the fish!"

Borley swagged from the half-empty bottle beside the wheel, his face creased in a joyous grimace. I'll dock the boat, sell the lobsters and skedaddle, he thought. And if anyone's nosy about the Cap, I'll tell 'em I left off Pritchard on Corcas Island, the far side of the lobster grounds. Belly-ache, I'll tell 'em; Pritchard wanted me to bring in the catch, then come back for 'im later!

Intriguing sums of money began to swirl through Borley's brain . . . exactly how much, in dollars and cents, would he get for those razor-clawed devils down in the hold? He began to twitch and sweat in a panic of anxiety; for long minutes he held out but, finally, he could stand the suspense no longer. Lashing the wheel dead-ahead, he pulled back the hatch cover and peered down into the darkness of the hold. Must be a thousand of them dirty green monsters down there, he gloated, swarming over one another like a bunch of ants! Borley bent lower to see better in the eerie half-light, and his foot slid on the slick wood. With a roar, he plunged forward. And downward.

Landing amidst the wet, writhing mass, he felt it yield as he sank into the hideous muck of smashed lobsters. His brain screamed for him to squirm free, but there was nothing to grip . . . nothing he could use to pull himself out of this stinking inferno.

They were on him now, scuttling across his body in seething slithery hordes. Their beady little eyes swiveled and glared at him, their wand-like antennae twitched like radar bombsights zeroing in for the kill. Borley shrieked and thrashed frantically, but it was too late. A hundred slimy green claws were probing his body, crunching his flesh between pincers strong and deadly as steel. Borley was aware of his skin being ripped by those relentless claws, of blood gushing from severed arteries in his wrists, legs and throat, and his last thought, before unconsciousness engulfed him in a spasm of redhot agony, was something he'd heard someone say . . . sometime . . . somewhere . . .

Vaguely, as the life was crushed out of his tortured body, the echo of distant words clicked through Borley's brain: . . . fat little pig . . . nothing . . . but . . . food for the fish . . .
NOW...IF YOU JOIN...YOU GET THE BULLETIN...FREE!

ER...YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS WAS LISTED IN THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB BULLETIN. YOU...YOU GOT BACK ISSUES?!

YES, FANS...YOU, TOO, CAN BE LUCKY LIKE MELVIN, HERE! YOU, TOO, CAN COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION OF E.C.'S! YOU, TOO, CAN JOIN THE

E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB

AND RECEIVE YOUR MEMBERSHIP KIT (WHICH INCLUDES A FULL-COLOR 7½ X 10½ ILLUMINATED CERTIFICATE, A STURDY WALLET IDENTIFICATION CARD, A SNAZZY EMBROIDERED SHOULDER PATCH, AND A STUNNING ANTIQUE BRONZE-FINISH BAS-RELIEF PIN)... PLUS A FREE SUBSCRIPTION TO THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB BULLETIN!

* * * * * * *

FOR AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP, WHICH INCLUDES KIT AND FREE SUBSCRIPTION, FILL OUT THE COUPON AND SEND IT IN, TOGETHER WITH 50¢. IF FIVE OR MORE OF YOU WANT TO JOIN AS AN AUTHORIZED CHAPTER, ENCLOSE EACH MEMBER'S NAME AND ADDRESS ALONG WITH 50¢ FOR EACH NAME AND INDICATE THE NAME OF THE ELECTED CHAPTER PRESIDENT. WE WILL NOTIFY EACH PRESIDENT OF HIS CHAPTER NUMBER. EACH MEMBER, CHAPTER OR INDIVIDUAL, WILL RECEIVE HIS KIT DIRECTLY... PLUS EACH ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN AS IT COMES OFF THE PRESS.

* (SO WHO'S GONNA FOOT THE BILL FOR THE BULLETINS, US!!!)

THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
ROOM 706
225 LAFAYETTE STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y.

So here's my 50¢! So I could've joined for half the price a couple of months back. So now I get a bulletin subscription. So who says I want it. So I'm a sucker. So put me down and send me the stuff what the kid's wearing and the bulletin I don't want but I'm paying for...

NAME ____________________________
ADDRESS ____________________________
CITY ____________________________
STATE ____________________________ ZONE NO. ____

* (NO 25¢ MEMBERSHIP WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER JUNE 1, 1954)
THE VAULT-KEEPER’S CORNER

Heh, heh! Let’s get right into this one... lots of mail and stuff...

Dear Vault-Keeper,
I think your so-called “comics” are terrible! They put the wrong things in the minds of children. If you ask me, they ought to be banned! Especially E.C.’s!

Michael Vecchio
Southwick, Mass.

P.S. I really think E.C.’s are real gone, but to say you don’t like ‘em is the best way to get your letter printed!

Worked, didn’t it, ya little monster?—V.K.

... As a high-school kid in Honolulu, we used to sing this song about our English teacher named Miss Ger-

Miss German has tuberculosis
Miss German has only one lung
Miss German spits blood by the buckets
And dries it and chews it like gum (yum, yum!)

Rhoda Phillips
Honolulu, Hawaii

Kids are much the same Stateside, Rhoda ... only worse!—V.K.

... Every time I read one of your mags I get sick. I

think I’m about one of the sickest boys in California!

Ron Montana
Mt. View, Calif.

... Little Willie was no bore

He nailed his sister to the door
His mother cried out kind of faint
“Willie ... don’t you scratch the paint!”

Ronald Merlo
W. New York, N.Y.

This kid doesn’t even know what state he lives in!

—V.K.

... My little brain has come up with a sizzling idea. Take snapshots of the artists and editors at E.C., have them sign the pictures like you and the other Ghou-

Lunatics once did, and then you can sell them. Just imagine, autographed snapshots of all the gang at E.C.—or perhaps a group picture suitable for framing. What do you think?

Jim Hannah
Bradley, Ill.

What do I think? I think it stinks ... but as soon as my idiot editors read your letter, they started figuring how much money they could make, so I gotta ask you readers what YOU think! Write in and let me know if you’d be interested! (Say “No,”!)—V.K.

... I ran into a ghoul one day

His flesh was white as snow.
And everywhere a dead man was
This ghoul was sure to go
For he forced to hunt and prow;
Else he cannot survive
He always brings his meat back dead
And never back alive!

Fan-Addict Donna Bowers
Fernandina, Fla.

... I am an E.C. Fan-Addict Club member who has pen-pals in various parts of the world. Whenever I get the chance, I send them issues of “The Vault of Horror.” They are simply crazy about them and keep asking for new issues. I think this is a wonderful way of spreading Horror (E.C. style, that is) throughout the world.

Joseph Wagner, Jr.
Trenton, N.J.

... The other day, a friend gave me a magazine of yours which I enjoyed very much. I can truthfully say it was the best horror magazine I have ever read. I would very much like a boy and a girl! Pen Pal, age about 15 to 17 years. I am 15 years, 10 months myself.

Margaret Anne Conner
28 Pousley Road West
Glasgow, S.W. 1

... Slowly the jury files into the room

Very soon I shall know my doom

Before the foreman the verdict doth bray

He asks me what I have to say

“Have mercy,” I cry on bended knees

Though the mag I read was not E.C.’s

its art was sloppy and the plots made me sick

I was just testing being a non-Fan-Addict!

Now my head is pierced with an iron hook

And to the beaten path I’m took

And made to read imitations that smell

Until I rot and go ... the dogs!

S. Schwartzberg
E.C. Fan-Addict No. 4183

... I like your magazines very much. I think your

magazine writers put more effort and thinking into

each story. I think you are one of the world’s most

handsome men, although I have to admit you look a

little like women.

Judy Ford
Bowers Beach, Del.

No comment ... if I said what’s in my mind, we’d be banned!—V.K.

... Billy, in one of his nice new sashes,

fell into the grate and was burnt to ashes

Now, although the room grows chilly,

I haven’t the heart to poke up Billy.

John Stanley
Napa, Calif.

Before winding up, the commercials. Note (preceding

page) that the price of the E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB has
gone up! Used to be a quarter ... now half-a-buck!
Business recession, so my idiot editors raise the price
... but you do get the Bulletin free now! (Still not worth it!) But if you have 50c you’re not using, why not send it? I’m sure THEY can use it! And subscriptions ... eight issues for a buck ... only 20c more than news-
stand price! Well, the address for subs, fan-mail, etc. is:

The Vault-Keeper
Room 705, Dept. 38
225 Lafayette Street
N. Y. 12, N. Y.

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His flesh was white as snow.
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The Vault-Keeper
Room 705, Dept. 38
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N. Y. 12, N. Y.
HEH, HEH! YOU MORBID MEATBALLS WANT MORE, EH?
OKAY, THEN... HERE'S A SUBTERRANEAN SAGA I CALL...

The Catacombs

PIETRO MIUTA: ...GRABBED THE SACK WITH ITS LOAD OF SILVER...
...ANO, WITH GINO ALCARI FOLLOWING...
...BROKE FOR THE FRONT DOOR!


STOP, YOU THIEVES! STOP!
Gino and Pietro vanished into the night, down narrow streets and littered alleys till they reached a bleak little flat in the slums...

"We've made a rich haul this time, Gino!"

"Solid silver! Worth three, maybe four thousand lire!"

Gleefully, Gino reached into a cabinet for a bottle of wine...

"But it is more than silver! It is antique! Heaven, some rich American may pay as high as six thousand!"

"Hah! By silver! It is for a drink!"

They drank greedily of the cheap red wine then, suddenly, Pietro spat out a mouthful of the liquid.

"Not good enough for you? Next time I'll steal champagne for your majesty!"

"The police, Gino! The police!"

"Instantly, Gino whirled toward the door, knocking his chair to the floor in his haste! His face was contorted with a mixture of both fear and anger...

"Police? Where?"

"No, you idiot! Not yet! But when the robbery is reported, who do you think they will suspect? Us, of course! They've hao us locked up for this kind of thing before, you know!"

"Police? Where?"

"What... what can we do? We just can't throw it away... not after the chances we took getting it, Pietro!"

"I don't know, we'll have to hide it, I guess! But where?"

"Gino paleo. His hands clenched and unclenched nervously as he righted his chair...

"What... what can we do? We just can't throw it away... not after the chances we took getting it, Pietro!"

"But where?"

Together, their brows knitted in concentration, they sat mulling over this new problem.

"Think, Pietro! Think of someplace to hide the silver!"

"I am thinking! Ah! I have it, Gino! The catacombs!"

"The... catacombs? I... I don't like to go there! It's scary... and cold... and so dark."

"We won't have to stay... just hide the silver till it's forgotten about! We'll take a lantern, my friend, and wine to warm us... plenty of wine!"

"The police... gino! The police!"
The sun had not yet risen when the two thieves reached the catacombs entrance. Pietro carried the sack of silver and the lantern, while Gino, trembling in the damp morning air, clutched several bottles of red wine in his arms...

"I don't like this, Fool! Would you rather spend ten years behind bars?!"

They looked apprehensively into the black opening...

"I've heard a man could get lost in there. Would you know the way which to mark a trail...

I don't like this. I'm not sure if there was something with that...

They moved slowly, aimlessly, through the dark gloom of myriad passages...now to the right, then left, right, and down to another level...

Pietro suddenly grinned, snatched a bottle from Gino's arm and broke off its neck...

What are you doing? We'll leave a trail of red wine, Gino... something we can follow back!

Gingerly, they stepped into the dark, musty passage...

Make it a thin trail, so there'll be enough to last!

I'll be sure there's enough left to drink, Pietro!

They continued on, deeper and deeper into the maze of tunnels, as Gino dribbled the wine onto the gray dust until there was little left...

...stop now, Pietro! I want to drink the rest... I'm chilled to the marrow!

No... a little further! Just think... we'll sell the silver in a month or so, and you'll have all the wine you can drink!

At Pietro's urging, they went on until they came to a chamber larger than the rest. Gino followed the lantern beam, then grabbed his friend's arm, his startled cry echoing through the vast labyrinth...

"Look! There in the wall!"
As Gino looked about and shuddered, Pietro deliberately dumped the sack of silver on the stone floor...

"What harm can come from a man doing more than sixteen hundred years?"

"Let's hide the silver and get out of here, Pietro!"

"Come, Gino... It will be safer further on!"

"No! I used the last of the wine more than fifty feet back! I go no further!"

I creased having to come back to this place for our treasure!"

A man will do anything for enough money, Gino!"

The loud metallic clatter shattered the silence! Gino jumped and turned, his face ashen in fright...

"Madre! Can't you be more careful?!"

"I'm sorry, Gino! It was an accident! Come... help me pick it up!

Nervously, Gino bent to gather up the silver, and as he did, Pietro slipped a switchknife from his pocket. He flicked open a long, scalpels-sharp blade...

"Five or six thousand lire, Gino! Just think of it!"

"I am thinking of it, Gino!"

The 'click' of the blade being opened made Gino turn in time to see the cruel, greedy look on Pietro's face... in time to see the blade flash up...

"Pietro! Don't! Madre! Why?!"

"I told you, Gino! A man will do anything for money!"

Desperately, Gino tried to brush past Pietro... tried vainly to dodge the vicious blade which flashed down, plunged to the hilt in his back...
Screaming in bitter agony, Gino thrashed to his feet and blindly stumbled off into the passage-way...

"Go ahead! Run! You won't live one minute!"

As Gino's stumbling footsteps and strangled sobs faded into the black distance, the treacherous Pietro set about gathering the scattered silver...

Heh, heh! The richest haul I've ever made, and that stupid fool really thought I led him to this creepy hole just to hide it! Ha ha ha ha ha!

Chuckling, he slung the sack over his shoulder and left the chamber...

"By the time they find his body... if they ever do... there'll be no telling it from the other mummies!"

He walked on, sharply scanning the floor by the lantern glow...

"Hey! I've gone more than fifty feet! I should have found the trail of wine by now!"

He stopped, then returned to the chamber, and with his face revealing deep anxiety, he tried one passage, then another...

Again he was unable to pick up the trail, and he returned to the chamber once more to try still another passage! In the waning lantern light, he became almost frenzied... and then...

Skittishly, Pietro hurried through the endless maze of vaults and galleries, his breathing heavy now, his footsteps echoing all about him...

"Ah! The trail! From here on it will be easy!"

"How good it will be to breathe fresh air again... and see the sunlight!"
He followed the thin trail to its end... but it did not end as it should have! Pietro stopped dead in his tracks at the yawning mouth of the passage, gaped into a burial chamber and choked back a cry of horror...

"GINO!"

"HURRY, GINO... WE MUST FIND THE RIGHT TRAIL BEFORE THE LANTERN GOES OUT! HEH... HEH... I... THOUGHT YOUR BLOOD WAS THE TRAIL..."

"HEH... I THOUGHT IT WAS THE WINE TRAIL... IT WAS YOUR BLOOD! GINO... THE LIGHT IS FADING! FIND THE RIGHT TRAIL FOR US... HURRY, GINO! HURRY!"

"WHEN WE GET OUT, WE'LL BE FRIENDS AGAIN, EH? GINO, HURRY! EH... EH... HURRY! EH... THE LIGHT, GINO... YOU CAN FIND THE TRAIL, CAN'T YOU, GINO? EH... EH... GINO? GINO?"

...AND THEN...

"...AND THEN... THE LIGHT WENT OUT!"

...THE LIGHT WENT OUT!

"HEH, HEH! CRAZY, MIXED-UP KILLER? THAT'S WHAT HE DESERVES FOR STABBING HIS BEST FRIEND IN THE BACK... DOWN THERE! SUCH A NASTY THING TO DO! HEH... SHOULD'VE WAITED TILL THEY WERE OUTSIDE! HEH, HEH, HEH! WELL, THE CREEPY OLD WITCH IS WAITING FOR YOU, SO GOODBYE!"

THE END
HEE, HEE! WELL, HERE WE ARE AGAIN AT THE TALE END OF K.K.'S MAG, AND IF YOU GLOOMGRABBERS STILL DON'T HAVE YOUR GUTS FULL OF GRUESOME GORE, YOUR OLD WITCH HAS COOKED UP A CHARREO CHUNK OF CHILLING CHAFF THAT IS GUARANTEED TO GLUT EVEN THE GREEOIES OF GHOULS! SO HOBBLE ON INTO MY HORRIBLE HAUNT WHILE I YAMMER AWAY AT A CLAMMY LITTLE CONCOCTION CALLED...

OUT OF SIGHT...
Muttering ominous, the thunderstorm moved on, leaving the tent humid, heavy with the stinking sweat of the crowd and the nauseating aroma of kerosene lamps. For the thousandth time Clyde Evans listened to the Barker's crude, gravelly voice introduce his act, and he swung his ancient top hat in a swooping arc and bowed to the loudest audience.

... and now, for your pleasure, we present that mysterious mental marvel... the one, the only... the great brain!

The yokels didn't even smile. Clyde whipped out a kerchief and tied it over his eyes.

Don't be bashful, folks! Show Benny anything... a good-luck charm... a photograph... it's all free, folks!

Benny's tip-off words were a time-worn gimmick which the great brain hid with a quick response...

The object you are holding is... a key!

No murmur of approval from the audience... not a single clapping of hands. Benny shuffled on to another man...

I'm holdin' up... duh is somethin' belongin' to a gent!

That object, my friends, is a belt!

The sound of derisive snickers reached the ears of the great brain. From previous experiences he knew that their signals had gone askew! Furious, he whipped off his blindfold...

That ain't right, boss! Uh... it's uh...uh... a wallet!

What...?

But there was an answer for everything, and the great brain quickly composed himself, spoke in a voice that dripped heavily with stinging sarcasm...

Ladies and gentlemen, surely you can understand that it's impossible for me to read my helper's mind... he just doesn't have a mind! But now... if anyone has a personal problem, I shall be happy to help... for a small fee...

Then the great brain introduced his assistant with a well-worn quip...

Friends, this is my helper... bird brain Benny! He's strong as an ox... and almost as smart! Benny will pass among you. Show him an object... any object, and I'll try to identify it... blindfolded!
The great brain's audience slowly turned and silently straggled out of the tent, not one remained to let him earn his small fee. The enraged mental marvel stalked from the platform...

**BENNY! COME WITH ME!**

Don't call me that, Mr. Evans. I don't like you callin' me that!

Not one sucker stayed, because of you! Not one cent have I taken in! You stupid lout!

**CLYDE'S TEMPER EXPLODED WITH AN ENDLESS LINE OF FOUL OATHS! AGAIN AND AGAIN HIS HEAVY CANE HISSED DOWN ON BENNY'S TORTURED BACK! MORON! MORON! MORON! UNGH...**

When Clyde stopped, it was only from exhaustion. Slowly Benny rose to his feet, his ape-like arms dangling... and he spoke through swollen lips...

I'm gonna kill you, Mr. Evans... get out of here, Benny!

The usual authority was lacking from Clyde's voice. He raised his cane in offense only to have it snatched from his grasp! The bull-like Benny snapped the thick shaft as if it were a toy and hurled it aside...

I'm gonna kill you!

No, Benny... listen...

**DESPERATELY, THE GREAT BRAIN DODGED ASIDE AS BENNY LUNGED FOR HIM! THE SIMPLE BRUTE GRABBED CLUMSILY AT EMPTY AIR AND FELL FORWARD ONTO THE TABLE!**

Ooooff! Sure, Benny. Kill me! Then who will feed you? Who'll take you in and give you work? Kill me, Benny... then go back to your gutter and starve!
**Come on, Benny...**
You're strong! You can kill me! I didn't mean that, Mr. Evans. Honest. Mr. Evans... I... uh, I wouldn't do nothin' to hurt you!

**The thought had somehow found its way into Benny's dull mind...** The remembrance of hunger, of hopelessness, and the great brain was again master. Get out of here, Benny! Go without supper tonight! Maybe an empty belly will keep you from forgetting things! Get out! Get out!

Bruised, dazed, his great muscles throbbing, Benny stumbled out into the stifling night, along the crowded midway. Guided by the garish thumping of a tom-tom and an off-key guitar, his dragging, shuffling feet carried him to the only one who understood... the only one who really cared...

She shakes, she shimmies! and that's not all, folks! Hulda puts on a complete half-hour show starting in just ten minutes, folks, so step right up and buy your tickets! Twenty-five cents... only two bits...

Painfully, he moved past the main tent to a smaller dressing-room tent just behind it. He stepped inside, plumped his huge bulk down on a dilapidated chair, listening to the cat-calls and whistles that were greeting Hulda. He rested... and waited...

Yes, Hulda Larson cared. She could make Benny realize he'd been abused... could make him weep with self-pity. She returned when her act was over...

Ya big goof! How long ya gonna let Clyde Evans get away with pushin' ya all over the place? Aw... I get mad, Hulda... oh... but when I think how bad it was before he give me food... and a place to sleep...

But Clyde had expected this. He knew about Hulda and Benny... about the thoughts she put in his head...

He's not givin' ya any favor, Benny! He'd be paying twenty dollars a week for a regular assistant!
SO! SO YOU THINK BENNY OUGHT TO BE PAID FOR WHAT HE DOES? ALL RIGHT, LET HIM FIND WORK SOMEWHERE ELSE, YOU ROTTEN LITTLE TROUBLE-MAKING TRAMP!

Mr. Evans! Ya got no right calling me names! That's what you are... a little tramp! Anybody that'd let a thick-skulled ape like Benny...

You're lying, Mr. Evans! There's never been anything wrong between Benny and me!

Ouch... don't you hurt Hulda, Mr. Evans! She's no good for you, Benny! Now get back to my quarters at once, or don't ever come back at all!

Benny don't have to go back! I'll take care of him till he gets another job!

Maybe, you won't be here long yourself! Maybe I'll have a talk with Mr. Trumbull!

No! Uh... I'll stay with you, Mr. Evans!

Benny went back to security, back to the man who fed him in the stifling, smelly little tent they shared, and Clyde grinned mockingly at him...

You're in love with that cheap little dame! She's run around with every freak, every roustabout on the midway... and you're in love with her!

It was the first time Benny had heard the word 'love' in connection with himself. It was the first time Benny realized what his feelings for Hulda meant. The word felt good on his tongue, and he repeated it over and over...

Love... uh... I'm in love... get this through your thick head, Benny... keep away from her!

Things again were the same. Things again settled into the usual routine. The Great Brain thrashed his dull-witted helper, cursed him and threatened him time and again, just as before...

Stupid! Stupid! Why do I go on trying to run my act with a moron? I ought to throw you out!
And as before, Benny forgot Clyde's warning. He would go to Hulda for sympathy and let her bathe his swollen face...

He's got ya buffalized, Benny! Stand up to him! Duh... I can't do that, Hulda! Nobody else'd give me a job!

Mr. Evans tells you that so you'll be afraid to leave him! He's a liar, Benny! He's a rotten liar!

He says you love the freaks, Hulda!

That's a lie, Benny! I never did that! I told ya Clyde Evans is a liar!

Hulda... Duh... Hulda, I love you, Hulda!

There was suddenly a warm, intimate silence in the shabby tent. For a long moment they gazed at one another, Hulda's eyes swimming in misty tears that finally overflowed and trickled down her cheek...

Oh, Benny... I love you, tood, darling! I'm happy, Hulda... Duh... You always make Benny happy!

I don't care what she said! I want you to keep away from her! She's no good for you, understand!? Stay away from her!

...Hulda says me an' her should get married together...

Some hours later, Benny returned to the great brain's tent. As usual, Clyde was furious...

You were with Hulda again, weren't you? I told you to stay away from her! By heaven, if it weren't almost time for my act, I'd beat you to within an inch of your life!

Hulda... I didn't care... Duh... You lied, Mr. Evans! She... Duh... don't love the freaks!

The quietly spoken words had the impact of a bomb! The great brain stood stock still, trembling with fury... Then abruptly he turned and strode from the tent...

Where ya goin', Mr. Evans? Duh... You ain't mad at me, huh? Mr. Evans...?
THE GREAT BRAIN didn't answer. In a silent rage, he went directly to see Hulda Larson...

Hulda...Benny just told me! But it can't be true! He can't have you! Not when I've wanted you for so long...

Please, Mr. Evans, let me alone... I'm afraid of you!

I won't let that stupid oaf have you! It isn't right! Is it isn't fair! I want you, Hulda!

Don't, Mr. Evans! Please don't!

A few minutes later Benny came looking for Hulda! He brushed the tent flap aside and...

Shock gave way to cold, stark anger! Slowly, Benny moved toward Clyde Evans, his great shoulders hunched, his powerful hands tense and trembling.

Wait a minute, Benny... I told you how she was! I told you she's a tramp!

He made me do it, Benny! I swear... He made me!

The show went on that evening just as it did any other evening! Benny was there... and in a dull, moronic monotone, he made the introduction...

...duh... ladies 'n' gents...

Benny faltered... then, at a loss for words, he drew his hand from behind his back, and held its grizzly contents up for all to see...

...duh... here it is... the one, the only... uh... the great brain!

Hee, hee! Ha! Enough? Poor Benny! I wonder who's feeding him now. Of course, he can eat his heart out over Hulda! The graveside gossip has it that she ran off with that gay old dog, the sideshow Barker! But anyway... I've got to close this issue! I'll see you next in my mag, the Haunt of Fear!
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DARN IT! I'M TIRED OF BEING A SKINNY SCARECROW. CHARLES ATLAS SAYS HE CAN MAKE ME A NEW MAN! I'LL GAMBLE A STAMP AND GET HIS FREE BOOK LATER.

HERE'S A LOVE-TAP --- FROM THAT 'BAG OF BONES.' REMEMBER?

OH, JOE! YOU ARE A REAL HE-MAN, AFTER ALL.

WHAT A MAN
AND HE USED TO BE SO SKINNY!

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