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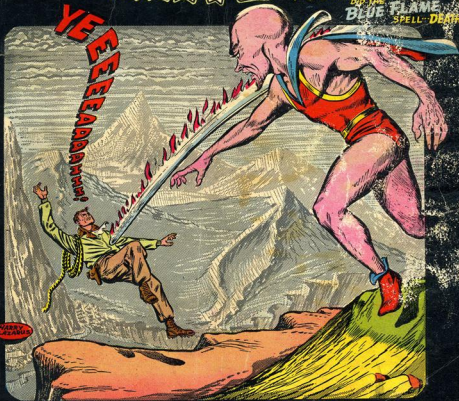
ADVENTURES INTO THE



UNKNOWN!

DID THE
BLUE FLAME
SPELL DEATH?

YE
EE
EAAAHHH!



HARRY
LIZARDUS

WHO CAN SAY WHERE IMAGINATION STOPS--AND REALITY STARTS? DID A KILLER'S
WARPED FANCY CONJURE UP AN AWFUL IMAGE--OR WAS IT SOME GRIM SUPERNATURAL
BEING BENT ON VENGEANCE? SEE THE AWFUL ANSWER COME ALIVE IN--

DEATH DIVE



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ABOARD A TREASURE-HUNTING SHIP--



IT HAD BEEN A LONG PULL-- BUT AT LAST, IT WAS PAYING OFF!



YES-- THE LAST THING MURPHY SAW WAS STEVE'S FACE, GROTESQUE AS HE GASPED HOPELESSLY FOR BREATH-- AND UP ABOVE --



LATER --

THEY EVEN BELIEVED ME WHEN I SAID THERE WASN'T ANY GOLD! I'LL COME BACK IN A FEW MONTHS AN' IT'LL BE *MINE!*



DAYS LATER, DRAWN BY A PECULIAR RESTLESSNESS, MURPH PACED THE SHORE --

SOMETHIN'S MOVIN' IN THE WATER! WHO EVER HEARD O' BIG FISH GETTIN' IN *THIS* CLOSE?



OH, NO--NO! IT CAN'T BE-- STEVE! YOU'RE *D-DEAD*-- I KILLED YOU!



I-I WON'T LET IT GET ME--GOTTA GET AWAY-- *HELP!*



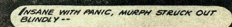
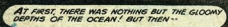
PACKING FRANTICALLY, MURPH BOARDED A PLANE FOR KEY WEST

!! !! MUSTA BEEN MY IMAGINATION DEAD MEN DON'T COME BACK! SURE I WAS JUST NERVOUS



OH, GOOD HEAVENS, IT'S *SEAWEED!* NO--HE CAN'T BE *HERE*--





MURPH'S NERVE WAS COMPLETELY GONE NOW! HE TURNED TO DRINK...

BUT WAS IT IMAGINATION THAT NIGHT... THE CREAKING OF HIS DOOR...



BUT MURPH'S LUCK HADN'T RUN OUT YET! HIS INJURIES WERE MINOR...

WHEN HE EMERGED FROM THE HOSPITAL...



BUT STILL HE DRANK TO DROWN OUT HIS FEAR--AND AS THE MONTHS PASSED--



FINALLY, HE FOUND A MAN WHO'D TAKE A CHANCE--



SENSES NUMBED BY DRINK, MURPH SANK INTO THE MURKY DEPTHS--





WHEN MURPH WAS FINALLY HAULED UP..



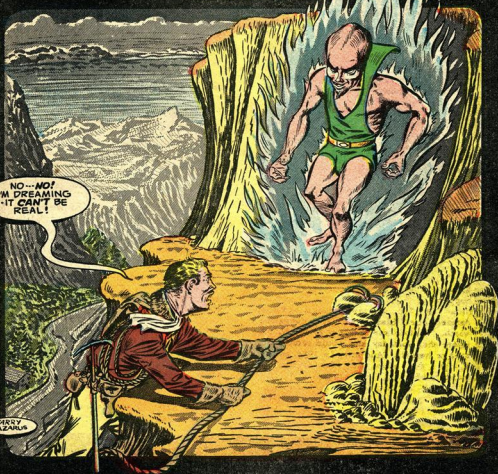
WAS IT THE SKELETON OF THE MAN MURPH HAD KILLED? AND HAD IT HAUNTED THE SLAYER--LURING HIM FINALLY TO AN AWFUL DEATH? FACT OR IMAGINATION--WHICH?

IT WAS A MIRACLE THAT BROUGHT HIM INTO THIS STRANGE AND TERRIFYING LAND
... WITH ITS PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE! BUT HE DIDN'T KNOW THAT THE MIRACLE
COULD BACKFIRE... NOR OF THE DEADLY MENACE THAT LURKED WITHIN

THE BLUE FLAME

NO...NO!
I'M DREAMING
...IT CAN'T BE
REAL!

MERRY
LAZARUS



ON THE SHEER SIDE OF AN UNEXPLORED
HIMALAYA PEAK...

WAIT, CARTER!
COME BACK--YOU'LL
NEVER MAKE IT
ALONE!

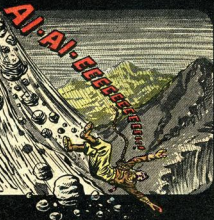


YOU'RE NOT
HOLDING ME
BACK! I'LL MAKE
IT...AND I'LL BE
THE FIRST TO
DO IT!



ON AND ON CARTER PUSHED
... ALONE ... UNTIL ...

AVAILANCHE!
HELP!



IT WAS HOURS LATER THAT HE AWOKE
... TO PAIN-WRACKED CONSCIOUSNESS...

HURT...HAVEN'T
GOT A CHANCE...WAIT!
THOSE FOOTSTEPS...



OUT OF THE WHIRLING SNOW--A STRANGE,
NIGHTMARE FIGURE...

FEAR NOT, MORTAL!
I HAVE COME FROM THE VALLEY
OF THE BLUE FLAME...TO
SAVE YOU!

IS...IS THIS
DELIRIUM...OR...
WHAT SORT OF
CREATURE ARE
YOU?





UPWARD, UPWARD THROUGH THE RAGING
STORM...UNTIL...



SAY RATHER, WEL-
COMING US...TO A
HAVEN SUCH AS
MORTAL MAN
HAS NEVER
SEEN!



IT...IT DOESN'T
SEEM TO HARM
YOU! MAYBE I'LL
CHANCE IT...

FEARFULLY, CARTER STEPPED INTO THE ROARING
FLAME... ONLY TO FIND...

THROUGH THE FIERY WALL! AND
JUST BEYOND IT...



BEFORE THEM A STRANGE AND BEAUTIFUL CITY... A WEIRD AND WELCOMING POPULACE...



HE IS AN **EARTHLING**, BRETHREN
--SAVED FROM THE BRINK OF DEATH!
FIRST I SHALL CARE FOR HIM... THEN
MAKE HIM ONE OF US FOREVER!



THIS CUP-- IT'S SET
WITH **DIAMONDS!** AND
THE DISHES **SOLID
GOLD!** TELL ME--
WHAT SORT OF PLACE
IS THIS?

ITS HISTORY
GOES BACK
MILLIONS OF
YEARS! KNOW
THAT ONCE OUR
RACE POPULATED
THE EARTH,
MORTAL!

WITH THE COMING OF MAN, WE
RETIREATED TO THIS VALLEY--WHERE
LIFE IS **ETERNAL!** AND OUR MAGIC CREAT-
ED THE **BLUE FLAME**, WHICH PROTECTS US!



AS FOR THE GOLD
AND JEWELS YOU SEE
EVERYWHERE, THEY'RE
A PART OF OUR RE-
LIGION!

HE DOESN'T KNOW
IT--BUT I'M GOING
TO MAKE IT PART
OF MINE!

LEFT ALONE, CARTER WASTED NO TIME.



THIS STUFF IS WORTH
A **FORTUNE!** I'LL TAKE
AS MUCH AS I CAN CARRY
--BUT THAT'S ONLY
FOR NOW!



NOBODY'S SEEN ME YET! I'LL SNEAK OUT THROUGH THE FLAME... AND COME BACK WITH REINFORCEMENTS!



HOLD, TRAITOR! YOU CAN DEPART, BUT ONLY AS YOU CAME... EMPTY-HANDED!

STAND BACK, MARZA! I'M LEAVING...AND NOBODY'S STOPPING ME!



YOU HEARD ME...AND I DON'T CARE HOW MANY OF YOU THERE ARE! GET BACK, OR I'LL FILL YOU WITH BULLETS!

BUT TO STEAL OUR JEWELS IS GLASPHEMY! LEAVE THEM, AND I PROMISE THAT YOU WILL LEAVE OUR VALLEY WITH NO REMEMBRANCE OF EVER BEING HERE!



THINK I'M A FOOL? I WANT TO REMEMBER EVERYTHING ABOUT IT! I WOULDN'T WANT TO FORGET A SINGLE STEP OF THE WAY!

BUT AS CARTER STEPPED INTO THE FLAME, THE COLOR CHANGED...AND THE BLUE GAVE WAY TO A RED, CRACKLING FURY...



H-HELP! THE FLAME...IT'S BURNING ME! IT'S ARRGH!

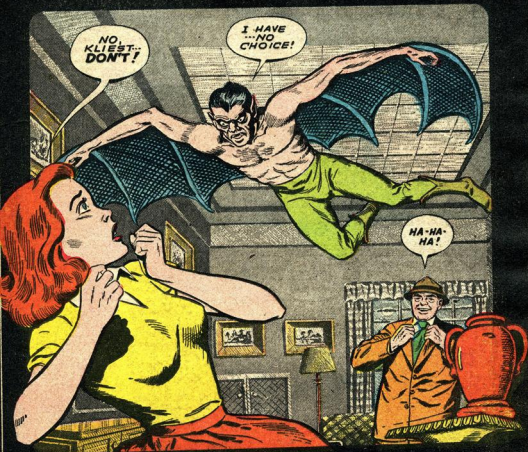
THE SCREAMS CONTINUED...THEN GAVE WAY TO A GURGling MOAN...AND SILENCE! AND NOW THE FLAME WAS BLUE ONCE MORE...REACHING UPWARDS TOWARDS THE HEAVENS IN A PLEDGE OF PEACE...AND PROTECTION!



END

MOST CRIMES ARE COMMITTED AT NIGHT...AND THE NIGHT SHELTERS THUGS, BANDITS,
COLD-BLOODED KILLERS! BUT THERE IS ANOTHER EVIL...MOST TERRIFYING OF ALL, WHOSE
AWFUL CAREER BEGINS...

WHEN NIGHT FALLS





BUT AS THE BULLETS PASSED HARMLESSLY THROUGH THE STRANGE VISITOR--





I AM CALLED...**KLIEST!** FATE ORDAINED MY GHASTLY DOOM! ALWAYS THERE WAS THE FRIGHTFUL HUNT FOR **SUSTENANCE**...ALWAYS THE PITIABLE SCREAMS OF MY VICTIMS! I HAD TO **KILL** TO SURVIVE...LIKE A JUNGLE BEAST!



BY NATURE I AM **NOT** EVIL...I HAVE ALWAYS HATED MYSELF! BUT NOW THAT **PLASMA** EXISTS...I NEED NOT **DESTROY** TO LIVE! PLEASE, YOU MUST **HELP** ME...

JUST WHAT ARE YOU DRIVING AT...**KLIEST?**



THESE ARE FOR YOU...IF YOU ASSIST ME! A VAMPIRE CAN PICK UP MUCH ON HIS PROWL...

YOU MEAN YOU'LL PAY LIKE THIS...FOR A STEADY SUPPLY OF **PLASMA?** FRIEND, I THINK WE CAN DO **BUSINESS!**

THE HOURS TILL NIGHTFALL PASSED SWIFTLY! AND AS THE FIRST MOONBEAMS FELL THROUGH THE WINDOW...



CHIEF, LOOK! HE'S CHANGING!

IT COMES... MY UNBEARABLE TORMENT! AAGH!

WHEN THE TRANSFORMATION WAS COMPLETE...



LET THIS BE OUR SECRET! NOW I MUST GO--THE AWFUL CRAVING COMES UPON ME! BUT I WILL BE BACK TOMORROW...FOR YOUR **ANSWER!**



I-I THINK THIS IS TOO BIG FOR ME TO HANDLE! I'D BETTER TELL THE COM-
MISSIONER!

NO...WAIT! I GOT AN IDEA WORTH MILLIONS! WE DON'T HAVE TO TAKE PETTY GRAFT FOR LAYING OFF HOODE ANYMORE CHIEF!

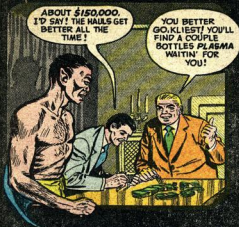


NEXT DAY...



MONTHS LATER...





FREED FROM THE HORRIBLE NIGHTLY DESTINY OF VAMPIRES, KLIEST WAS ABLE TO DISCOVER THE WORLD OF BOOKS AND MUSIC! TIME PASSED PLEASANTLY...



MONTHS PASSED...JOCKO AND THE CHIEF GROWING EVER RICHER! THEN...





IN THE FOLLOWING DAYS, THE CHIEF NOTICED KLIEST'S INCREASING UNHAPPINESS! THINKING TO CHEER HIM--



FOR A LONG TIME KLIEST WATCHED ANNIE CLOSELY! WHEN HE WAS SURE SHE **DID** CARE FOR HIM--





HOURS LATER...



AS THE LAST FLICKER OF LIGHT FELL OVER THE HORIZON...



KLIEST PROVED CORRECT! WHEN THE TRANSFORMED ANNIE REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS...



ANNIE WAITED TILL ALL WAS DARK AND QUIET IN THE HOUSE! THEN...



DELIBERATELY, ANNIE PROCEEDED TO HER REMAINING WORK---

IT WAS THE BEAT OF HUGE WINGS WHICH WOKE THE RESTLESS CHIEF---



SHE FOUND HIM STILL ASLEEP---



MOMENTS LATER, A LONE FIGURE STOOD ALOFT THE HOUSE---



---AND THEN, PLUNGED TO DESTRUCTION!



The SECRET

HOW ABOUT IT, POP,
WANT A LIFT?

I WAS **HOPING**
SOMEONE WOULD
PASS THIS WAY!
YOU'RE VERY KIND!

THE LONELY
HIGHWAY WAS NO
PLACE TO STOP
FOR A HITCHHIKER!
JIM PHELPS LEARNED
THAT THE **HARD**
WAY WHEN THE
SUPERNATURAL
CAME ALIVE--AND
THE HORROR OF AN
AWFUL REALIZATION
CAME **TOO LATE!**

WHAT'S IN THAT BAG YOU'RE HOLDING,
POP? THE WAY YOU'RE
LATCHED ON TO IT, YOU'D
THINK IT WAS A
MILLION BUCKS
OR SOMETHIN'!

OH, IT'S NOTHING
LIKE THAT! IT'S
JUST ONE OF
MY DOLLS!

DOLLS! HA, HA! I KNEW YOU
WERE GOOD FOR A LAUGH.
THE SECOND I SPOTTED
YOU!

PLEASE--NOT
SO LOUD! HE
MIGHT HEAR
YOU LAUGHING!





I'VE GOT A NEW ONE OVER HERE IN MY WORKSHOP! LIKE TO SEE?

HE MUST HAVE SOME GIMMICK THAT MAKES THESE DOLLS SO LIFE-LIKE! I'LL FIND OUT WHAT MAKES 'EM TICK OR BUST!



I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THIS ONE FOR TWO MONTHS! ALMOST HAD HIM GOING LIKE THE OTHERS, BUT THE MECHANISM BROKE DOWN!

THIS--ER--MECHANISM POP! GUESS IT'S KIND OF A SECRET, EH?



I WOULDN'T SAY THAT! I GUESS IT'S JUST THE WAY I PUT IT TO WORK THAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE!

THE MECHANISM THAT BROKE DOWN-- YOU DON'T HAPPEN TO HAVE IT AROUND, DO YOU?



WHY, SURE! I CHUCKED IT OVER IN THAT TUB! YOU CAN LOOK AT IT IF YOU WANT TO!

YEAH... I SURE DO!



I SURE... NO! IT'S A HEART... A HUMAN HEART!



SO THAT'S HOW YOUR DOLLS WORK! YOU USE HUMAN HEARTS! W-WHERE DO YOU GET THEM?

IT'S EASY...



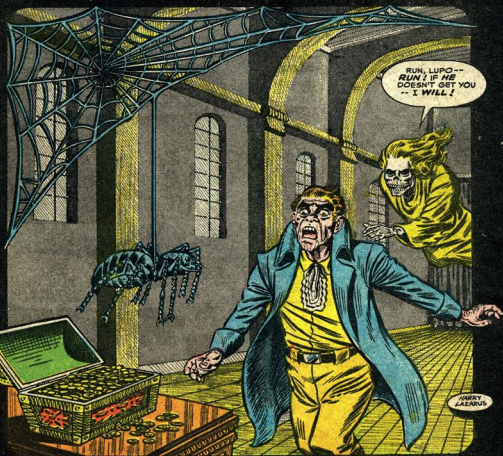
--ALL I DO IS STAND ON THE HIGHWAY AND WAIT FOR SOME FOOL TO GIVE ME A LIFT!



THE END

LIKE A VULTURE SEEKING ITS PREY, OLD LUPO STALKED THE STREETS OF ANCIENT LOMBARDY--AND MEN TREMBLED AT HIS APPROACH! DEATH STALKED IN HIS SHADOW--UNTIL FATE REACHED OUT FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE TO WRITE THE GHASTLY FINISH TO THE STORY OF--

THE WITCH HUNTER



THIS WAS A TYPICAL DAY IN THE LIFE OF LUPO VOLPE - THE WITCH HUNTER!

IT IS DONE, SIGNOR VOLPE! THE ACCUSED WOMAN IS TIED IN THE SACK!

GOOD--THROW HER IN THE RIVER! IF SHE FLOATS, SHE IS SO EVIL A WITCH THAT EVEN THE RIVER REJECTS HER!

--BUT IF SHE SINKS, SHE IS INNOCENT! MY METHOD IS INFALLIBLE!

AIEEE!

AS USUAL--IT ENDED WITH THE INNOCENT VICTIM AT THE RIVER BOTTOM!

YES, FOR YEARS OLD LUPO HAD PREYED ON SUPERSTITION TO ROB AND TERRORIZE THE POPULACE--

AH, WELL--AT LEAST SHE DIED INNOCENT! ER--OF COURSE, HER PROPERTY WILL GO TO PAY MY FEE AS OFFICIAL WITCH HUNTER!

OF COURSE, SIGNOR VOLPE!

IT'S LUPO! HIDE-- OR WE MAY BE THE NEXT VICTIMS TO SWELL THE OLD DEVIL'S FORTUNE!

IT WAS BITTER IRONY THAT TURNED THE OLD MAN'S EYES TOWARDS LOVELY, YOUTHFUL ANGELA MORI--

YOUR DAUGHTER IS BEAUTIFUL--AND I AM LONELY! I MAY DO HER THE HONOR OF MAKING HER MY WIFE, PIETRO!

BUT YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO BE HER GRANDFATHER! NO, SIGNOR VOLPE-- I REFUSE!

YOU'LL PAY A BITTER PRICE FOR YOUR REFUSAL, PIETRO! JUST WAIT AND SEE!

NO MATTER WHAT YOUR THREATS--YOU CAN'T HAVE MY DAUGHTER!

BUT THEY FEARED LUPO VOLPE'S POWER--
SO THAT NIGHT--



GOODBYE--
MOTHER--

YOU MUST
ESCAPE HIS CLUTCHES,
ANGELA! GO--THIS
ROAD WILL TAKE YOU
TO NAPLES--TO THE
HOME OF
YOUR
UNCLE--

AND SO ANGELA VANISHED INTO THE STORM!
BUT A FEW MILES AWAY--



THE BRIDGE--IT'S TOSS-
ING IN THE WIND! BUT I--
I'VE GOT TO CROSS! I'VE
GOT TO--**GET AWAY--**

OH--HHH! I'M--
LOSING MY FOOTING!
I'M GOING
OVER!



THEY DIDN'T FIND ANGELA'S BODY, AND NONE
KNEW OF HER FATE! BUT WITHIN WEEKS--LUPO
HAD HIS REVENGE!



--AND FOR CONTRIV-
ING THE DISAPPEARANCE
OF THEIR DAUGHTER
ANGELA THROUGH
SATANIC POWERS, I
DECLARE PIETRO MORI
AND HIS WIFE TO BE
**WITCHES!--LIGHT
THE FIRES!**

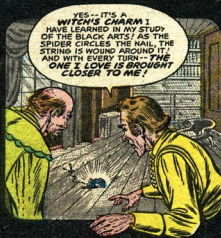
SIGNOR LUPO, YOU
CAN BE FRANK WITH ME,
YOUR OLD SERVANT! IS
IT NOT POSSIBLE THAT
ANGELA MORI IS STILL
ALIVE--HIDING
SOMEWHERE?

OF **COURSE**
SHE IS! BUT I COULDN'T
LET THOSE STUPID
PEASANTS **DEFY ME--**
I HAD TO TEACH
THEM A **LESSON!**





FOR MONTHS, OLD LUPO'S MEN SEARCHED THE PROVINCE--BUT IN VAIN! THEN, FINALLY--ONE DAY--





YOU LIE--THE
WITCH'S CHARM CAN
NOT FAIL! I TELL YOU
THAT BEFORE I DIE--
I SHALL HOLD MY
BEAUTIFUL ANGELA
IN MY ARMS!

THE DOOR OPENED--TO AN UNSPEAK-
ABLE HORROR FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE!



WHATEVER I AM?
DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE
--ANGELA MORI?

OH, NO--NO!
WHATEVER YOU
ARE--GET
BACK!

AROUND, AROUND--AND EVEN AS THE CIRCLING
SPIDER ENDED HIS WEIRD TASK, ANGELA TOUCHED
OLD LUPO--TOUCHED HIM WITH DEATH'S HAND--



AARRGH!

SUDDENLY--A HOLLOW KNOCKING!



THERE--YOU SEE?
IT'S ANGELA--
SHE HAD TO COME!
--COME, MY
DARLING!
ENTER!



YOUR MAGIC CALLED
ME, LUPO! I HAD TO COME
--EVEN FROM THE CLUTCH
OF DEATH!

DON'T--
DON'T COME
N-NEAR--



L-LOOK! IT--IT
HAPPENED JUST AS HE
SWORE IT WOULD! SHE
CAME BACK TO HIM--AND
HE HELD ANGELA MORI
IN HIS ARMS--BEFORE
HE DIED!

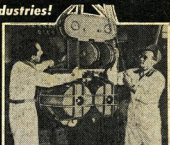
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