

"A SURPRISING, DARK AND REWARDING HORROR TALE" - TRIPWIRE

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ISSUE
4 OF 8

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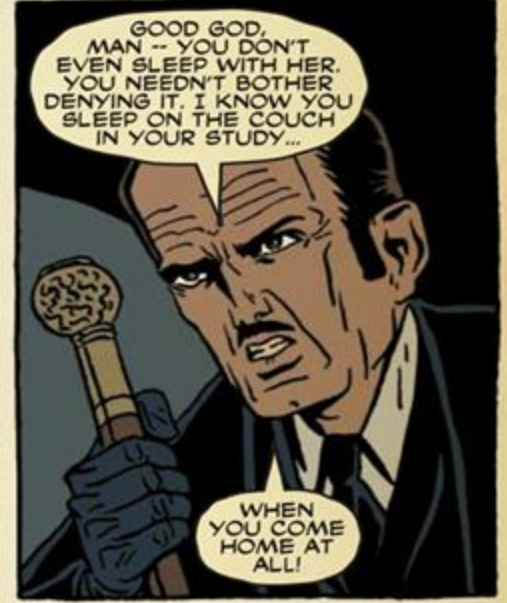
STRANGE EMBRACE™

DAVID HINE WITH
ROB STEEN & COMICRAFT

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From the day of their return, Anthony abandoned his wife. His days and nights were spent away from the house. Edward watched Sarah with concern as the life seemed to fade from her.











It was some months before they spoke again.



I HAVE HERE THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE CANAL STREET SHOP. I SEE YOU HAVE SOLD VIRTUALLY ALL THE CONTENTS OF THE SHOP FOR A FRACTION OF THEIR WORTH IN ORDER TO FINANCE YOUR PURCHASE OF "ANTIQUITIES" FROM A STRING OF DUBIOUS ADVENTURERS.

YOU NO LONGER MAKE ANY PRETENCE OF OPENING THE SHOP FOR BUSINESS.

WHAT AM I TO DO WITH YOU?



I BELIEVE THE COLLECTION I AM MAKING IS OF GREAT VALUE.



YOUR AFRICA OBSESSION. HOW MANY TIMES MUST I TELL YOU WE ARE NOT A MUSEUM?



WE MADE AN AGREEMENT. A MONTHLY ALLOWANCE TO SPEND AS I SEE FIT AND COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE MANAGING THE SHOP, WHETHER I MAKE A PROFIT OR NOT.











It was another six weeks before Sarah and Edward returned from the Continent. They had both changed. Sarah seemed cold and distant. There was a new hardness in her expression. His father seemed older, stooping under an unseen burden.

Anthony was relieved to find that neither his wife nor his father made any more attempts to alter his way of life.

In the following weeks there was little to disturb his routine. Nothing to warn him of the horror to come.

Mrs. WINDSOR...

YOU...
YOU POOR
FOOL.

Winter settled over the city.





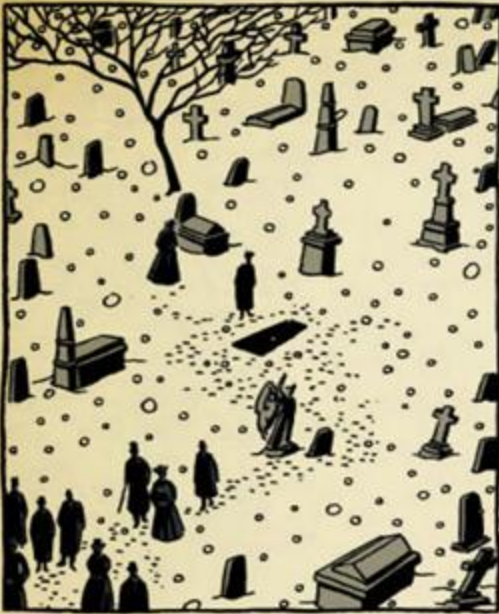
YOU MEAN I MAY DIE?

















TO BE CONTINUED

N E X T I S S U E

WHY DOES THE DISCOVERY OF HIS WIFE'S MUTILATED BODY SEEM TO BRING COMFORT TO ANTHONY CORBEAU? WHAT IS IT THAT PREVENTS ALEX FROM DISCOVERING THE DARK SECRETS BEHIND THEIR DOOMED ROMANCE?



#5 OF 8 • SEPTEMBER 2007 • IMAGE COMICS

AND NOW, A SPECIAL BONUS STORY, "UP ON THE ROOF" BY DAVID HINE...

UP ON THE ROOF

IT WAS NEW YEAR'S
EVE WHEN I MET
THE ROOFTOP MAN.

I HAD SLIPPED
OUT TO THE
BALCONY TO
ESCAPE THE
OBLIGATORY
MIDNIGHT
RITUALS -
ANOTHER
BLOODY YEAR
OVER, KISS
AND HUG AND
THROW UP IN
A CORNER.



I BECAME AWARE OF A FIGURE
CROUCHED IN THE SHADOWS.

GET TOO
MUCH FOR YOU
IN THERE,
DID IT?

TOO MUCH...?
YES... I SUPPOSE
IT DID

WANT A
BEER?

AS HE MOVED INTO THE LIGHT,
I REALISED THERE WAS NO WAY THAT
CARYNNE HAD INVITED
HIM TO HER PARTY.

THANKS.

YOU HAVEN'T
COME FROM THE
PARTY, HAVE YOU?

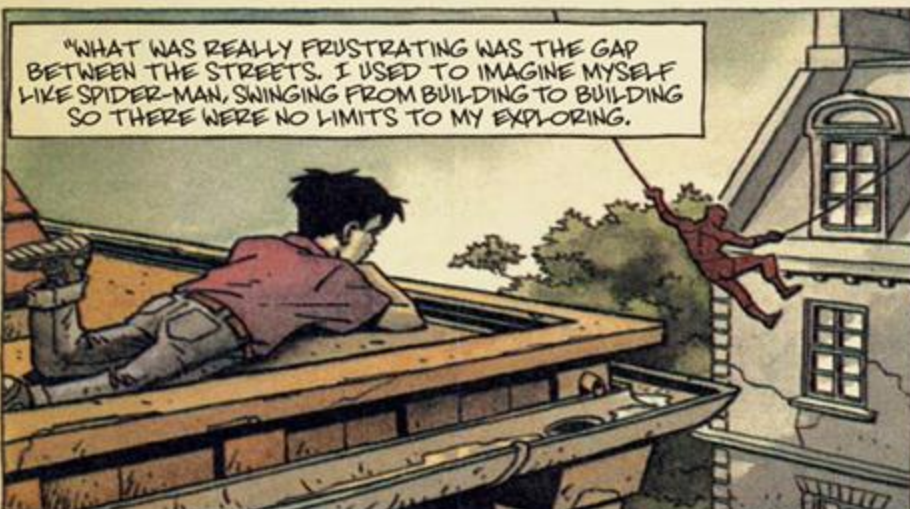
PARTY?

I'VE COME
FROM THE
ROOF.

THAT'S
WHERE I
LIVE.

YOU
LIVE ON
THE
ROOF?

NOT JUST
THIS ONE - ALL THE
ROOFTOPS.



"I COULDN'T HELP FEELING THE ROOFTOPS WERE AS SAFE AS EVER, BUT I DIDN'T MENTION IT.



"SO WE MOVED TO THE COUNTRY. AT FIRST I MISSED SITTING HIGH ABOVE THE STREETS, WATCHING THE SUN GO DOWN OVER THE TOWERBLOCKS...



"BUT AS TIME PASSED, I GRADUALLY FORGOT, AND A COUNTRY LANE BEGAN TO SEEM AS NATURAL AS A ROOFTOP.



"THEN ONE NIGHT, WE WENT BACK TO THE CITY TO SPEND THE WEEKEND WITH FRIENDS.



"ON THE SATURDAY EVENING, WE ATE AT A RESTAURANT.



"AS THE EVENING WORE ON, THE CONVERSATION SEEMED TO DRIFT AWAY FROM ME...



"I FELT AS IF I WAS FADING AWAY.



"WHEN I EXCUSED MYSELF TO GO TO THE LAVATORY, NO ONE NOTICED THAT I HAD SPOKEN.



"THE TOILET WAS AT THE TOP OF A LONG, NARROW FLIGHT OF STAIRS, AND WAS IN A SURPRISINGLY DILAPIDATED CONDITION FOR SUCH AN EXCLUSIVE RESTAURANT."



"I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I SAT IN THERE, BUT THERE DIDN'T SEEM ANY GREAT URGENCY TO GO BACK."



"I BECAME AWARE OF A HUMMING FROM OUTSIDE THE WINDOW."



"I LOOKED OUTSIDE AND DISCOVERED..."



"... A TRULY CLASSIC ROOFTOP."



"I REMEMBER THINKING, 'JUST FIVE MINUTES,' AS I CLIMBED OUT."



"I'D NEVER SEEN SUCH A LABYRINTH OF PIPES AND LADDERS."



"I HAD TO CRAWL ON MY STOMACH TO GET 'ROUND THE CORNER."





"I WANDERED ON, SCALING LADDERS AND FIRE ESCAPES..."



"...LEAPING THE GAPS BETWEEN BUILDINGS LIKE MY COMIC BOOK HEROES."



"WHEN I FINALLY STOPPED, I REALISED I'D BEEN GONE FOR AGES."



"I WASN'T SURE I COULD FIND MY WAY BACK, AND IF I DID, I'D HAVE TROUBLE EXPLAINING WHERE I'D BEEN. IT SEEMED EASIER TO JUST SIT BACK, CLOSE MY EYES AND SLEEP."



"I WOKE TO FIND THE CITY BATHED IN MOONLIGHT. I MADE MY WAY TO THE HIGHEST POINT I COULD FIND AND LOOKED AROUND... ALL THOSE ROOFTOPS... AS FAR AS THE EYE COULD SEE..."



"IT WOULD TAKE YEARS TO EXPLORE THEM ALL.. A LIFETIME."

BUT HOW DO YOU LIVE? WHERE DO YOU SLEEP IN WINTER?



I STEAL FOOD FROM HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS, AND THERE'S ALWAYS SHELTER FROM THE RAIN - LOTS OF WARM PLACES.

YOU'D BE AMAZED HOW MUCH WARMTH THERE IS IN THE CITY IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.



