

Bleek Street,
New York.

A BUILDING WHOSE STATUS
IS BEST DESCRIBED AS
"WHISPERED LEGEND."

LEGEND; THAT A SIMPLE GILT DISPLAY,
THAT COULD EASILY PASS FOR ANY
ROUTINE MERCHANT OR ADMINISTRATOR'S
SIGN MIGHT FORETELL OF *WONDERS*
HIDDEN IN THIS DRAB CONSTRUCTION.



LEGEND: THAT FOR SOME SELECT OTHERS,
THE BUILDING SILENTLY PASSES
JUDGMENT AND GRANTS ACCESS.



LEGEND: SURELY EXAGGERATION; THAT
MOBSTER AND *MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE*
ALIKE HAVE ASSAILED THIS ENTRANCE, AND
UTTERLY FAILED TO GAIN ENTRY.

YES, IT IS VIVID *LEGENDRY*:
THAT NOW APPEARS *PROVEN*:
IT IS THE CASE THAT SOME
WHO APPROACH THIS PLACE
APPEAR TO HAVE A PROPER
PURPOSE THAT *GUARANTEES*
THEM ENTRY.



AH,
THERE
YOU
ARE.

DIDN'T
REALIZE
YOU WERE
HERE...



BUT WHEN DEALING WITH APPEARANCES, AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF JUSTICE, INC. -- IT IS WISEST TO BE PREPARED TO BE PROVEN *WRONG*.

FOR THE BLEEK STREET ADDRESS IS THE FORTRESS-BASE OF THE CORPSE-SKINNED CHAMPION OF VIRTUE, RICHARD HENRY BENSON, THE DEAD-EYED MAN KNOWN AS *THE AVENGER*.

AND DEFYING APPEARANCES IS A HALLMARK OF HIS WAR AGAINST CRIME!

WHO ARE YOU?

A QUESTION I COULD ASK YOU.

WHAT IN JAYSUS SAINTED NAME?!

RICHARD!
RICHARD?





FELLOWS, WE HAVE AN INTRUDER! I'VE GOT THIS ONE! SORRY IF YOU'RE MY REAL BOSS, MISTER!

COLE! DAMN IT, HE'S RIGHT, SMITTY!

UFF!



I'VE GOT THE REAL ONE, CHUMS! RICHARD'S TRADEMARK SILLY-SKIN!

HOLY--!

MAYBE YOU DON'T, COLE! I THINK WE HAVE A SURPLUS PROBLEM.

COLE, HONEY, THAT IS A SERIOUS UNDERSTATEMENT!



I'M THE REAL BENSON! SMITTY, RELEASE ME!

OOF!

YE SAY, THAT, MON, BUT... JAYZIS!

WHUD

SMITTY, YOU HATE BEING CALLED ALGERNON HEATHCOTE SMITH, SO IT'S ME! THE REST OF YOU, STAND DOWN!



I'LL DEAL WITH THIS.

HE GOT IN A LUCKY ONE, NELLIE, I WAS DISTRACTED, OTHERWISE...

YOU'RE ALWAYS DISTRACTED.




ONLY ONE MAN COULD BOTH IMPERSONATE ME AND DEVISE A SIMULATION OF MY PLASTIC FLESH. PIERCE LONNE. IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, MY OLD FRIEND.

HELLO, RICHARD. SINCERE APOLOGIES FOR THE DISTURBING ENTRANCE--THIS IS WHAT YOU USUALLY DO TO OTHER FOLK!



BUT I COULDN'T LET ANYONE SEE ME COMING HERE. AND THE ARTIST IN ME COULDN'T RESIST SEEING FOR A MOMENT IF YOUR TEAM COULD TELL US APART.

FIELD TESTING MY NEW PRODUCTS--JUST LIKE THE OLD DAYS!



"THE OLD DAYS". THEY BEGAN WHEN RICHARD BENSON, NEWLY CAST BY ACCIDENT INTO THE AVENGER, SOUGHT OUT THE FAMOUS PIERCE LONNE, THE GREATEST MAKE-UP MAN AND ACTOR IN THE HOLLYWOOD THRILLER GENRE.


THE INITIAL MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS WERE ONES LONNE WOULD NEVER FORGET; THE COMINGLED AMAZEMENT AND HORROR OF UNDERSTANDING THE POTENTIAL OF A MAN WITH PLASTIC FEATURES. BENSON WAS A MAKE-UP AUTEUR'S FANTASY COME TO WARPED LIFE.

THE TWO MEN'S GENIUS FOR PRACTICAL INVENTION AND GADGETRY ALSO EMERGED AS A POWERFUL CONNECTIVE TISSUE BETWEEN THEM. THE CLIMBING-GLOVES LONNE LATER USED IN *TERROR OF THE SPIDER* WERE ONE OF SEVERAL SHARED CREATIVE CHILDREN.


THE COLLABORATION WAS INTENSE. RICHARD BENSON, THE POLYMATH OF MULTIPLE SKILLS, WAS TRAINED QUICKLY AND WELL; CASTIGATED AND CORRECTED BY A MAN WHO WAS THE WORLD'S GREATEST EXPONENT OF ARTS THAT BENSON KNEW NOTHING OF. THE EXPERIENCE TRULY TESTED BOTH OF THEM.




THE LESSONS IN ACTING AND MIMICRY BEGAN. THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF HOURS OF TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE, PROFESSIONALLY DISTILLED BY LONNE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE RAZOR-SHARP MIND AND MEMORY OF BENSON.




BUT THE RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPED OTHER FACETS. PIERCE'S WIFE, MARGERY, AND ENTHUSIASTIC SON, GENE, GOT TO KNOW RICHARD BENSON IN A SETTING AND ROLE NONE HAD WITNESSED FOR MANY YEARS, THAT OF *STUDENT*. IT WAS AN ENVIRONMENT THAT GENERATED RARE, RELAXED SUPPORT FOR BENSON.




BUT SUCH STRESSES COULD NOT EVEN COME CLOSE TO THREATENING THE POWERFUL, TERRIBLE BOND OF *SAD UNDERSTANDING* THAT JOINED THE TWO: LONNE SAW A MAN DRAPED IN A TRAGEDY HE WOULD *NEVER* THROW OFF.



BENSON FINALLY CONQUERED THE ARTS IN WHICH PIERCE LONNE TUTORED HIM. BENSON COULD REPLICATE THE DOMINANT VOCAL, LINGUISTIC AND PHYSICAL TRAITS OF A TARGET FROM THE BRIEFEST OF ENCOUNTERS. HE WAS READY.



A TRAGEDY THAT LONNE COULD HIMSELF TOO *EASILY* IMAGINE; THE LOSS OF THE MOST DEAR THINGS IN THE WORLD TO A HUSBAND AND FATHER.



AS MUCH AS HE HAD COME TO ENJOY SPENDING TIME WITH HIS TEACHER, HIS FRIEND, PIERCE LONNE, IT WAS TIME TO MOVE BACK TO THE WAR AGAINST CRIMINALITY.



ALICE & ALICIA
BENSON
MEMORIAL
HOSPITAL WING