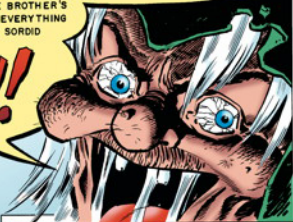


# THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! HELLO, AGAIN! THIS IS YOUR FRIENDLY STORYTELLER, THE **VAULT-KEEPER**, INVITING YOU TO JOIN ANOTHER SESSION OF **GRUESOME GRUMBLINGS** THAT EMANATE FROM MY **VILE** AND **VICIOUS VAULT**! SO PLOP YOURSELF DOWN ON THAT SATIN-COVERED COFFIN AND GET COMFY! DON'T MIND THE MOLD AND WORM-HOLES! IT'S **SECOND-HAND**, YOU KNOW! YOU, THERE! PUT DOWN THAT GUN! KILL YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW LATER! AND YOU, WOMAN... **STOP!** YOUR SLEEPING HUSBAND DIDN'T WANT **THAT** CLOSE A SHAVE! AND YOU, YOU FIEND! LET THOSE **MATCHES** ALONE! YOUR LITTLE BROTHER'S **TOES** CAN WAIT! IN OTHER WORDS, DROP (**DEAD**, THAT IS!) EVERYTHING YOU'RE DOING, AND LISTEN... LISTEN WHILE I RECOUNT THE SORDID TALE ENTITLED...

## SPLIT PERSONALITY!



THE CLICKING OF THE TELEPHONE DIAL STUTTERED SIBILANTLY IN THE SPARSELY-FURNISHED ROOM. ED KING GROUND HIS CIGARETTE IN THE ALREADY OVERFLOWING ASH-TRAY AND SOFTLY BLEW SMOKE RINGS UNTIL HIS PARTY ANSWERED. THEN, GLIB, HONEY-COATED WORDS DRIPPED FROM HIS LIPS, EXTOLLING THE VIRTUES OF THE FAKE CHARITY HE SUPPOSEDLY REPRESENTED. HE LISTENED A MOMENT, A SMILE CURLING HIS FACE... AND THEN SPOKE AGAIN. MORE WORDS... HONEY-COATED...

WHY, YOU'RE **MORE** THAN GENEROUS, MRS. GALVESTON! THE LITTLE KIDDIES NEED OUR AID SO BADLY! YES... JUST MAIL YOUR DONATION TO P.O. BOX 749, CHURCH ST. STATION! YES! THE CHILDREN BLESS YOU!



YEP, ED KING WAS A CHARITY RACKETEER... A CON MAN... OUT TO MILK THE GULLIBLE! BUT HE DIDN'T RELY ON PHONE CALLS ALONE... HE WENT FROM DOOR TO DOOR ALSO, ON THE THEORY THAT A BUCK IN THE POCKET IS WORTH A DOZEN PROMISES OVER THE PHONE...



HANG IT ALL! NO ANSWER! HATE TO PASS UP A PRIVATE HOUSE, BUT I CAN'T STAY HERE ALL DAY!

AN UNANSWERED DOOR WAS A DONATION LOST, TO ED KING'S WAY OF THINKING. DISGRUNTLED, HE TURNED AND STARTED DOWN THE STEPS! THE PASSING POSTMAN STOPPED, GRINNED...

YOU'VE NO CHANCE OF GETTING INTO *THAT* HOUSE, MISTER! THE BLAIR SISTERS *NEVER* OPEN THE DOOR TO ANYONE EXCEPT REVEREND MACADIE!



OH? WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THEM? THEY GOT THE PLAGUE OR SOMETHING?

OH, NO! JUST *EGGENTRIC*! THEY *NEVER* COME *OUT*, AND THEY WON'T LET ANYONE *IN*! SUCH A SHAME! TWO YOUNG GIRLS, WITH A FEW ZILLION BUCKS... AND THEY'RE A COUPLE OF *HERMITS*! IT'S A SHAME!



IT SURE IS!

HMPF! JUST MY LUCK! TEN FEET AWAY FROM A FORTUNE AND I CAN'T...



EEEEEEK! WHAT'S THAT?

A SHRIEK OF DISMAY! ED LOOKED UP! A YOUNG, PRETTY GIRL LEANED FROM THE TOP FLOOR WINDOW, ANXIOUSLY TRYING TO COAX A TREED CAT TO SAFETY...



LOOKS LIKE THE CAT IS AFRAID TO MOVE! SAY! IF *THAT'S* ONE OF THE BLAIR SISTERS... MAYBE THIS IS THE BREAK I NEED!

WITH A THEATRICAL FLOURISH, ED KING STRIPPED OFF HIS JACKET AND DRAMATICALLY FLUNG IT TO THE GROUND! HE ROLLED UP HIS SHIRTSLEEVES, REVEALING HIS TANNED, MUSCULAR FOREARMS, AND WITH A BOLD, DETERMINED EXPRESSION, BRAVELY SHOUTED...



FEAR NOT, FAIR LADY! I SHALL SAVE YOUR KITTEN!

DAUNTLESSLY, HE BEGAN CLIMBING THE TREE. TREES NEVER *USED* TO BE SO DIFFICULT TO CLIMB WHEN HE WAS A BOY! SEEMS THEY GREW TALLER NOW. HIS KNEES WERE SKINNED AND HE WAS CERTAIN BLISTERS WERE RAPIDLY GROWING ON HIS HANDS, BUT IF HIS PLAN WORKED, ANYTHING WAS WORTH IT...



HERE, KITTY, KITTY! NICE KITTY! NICE KITTY, KITTY!

C'MERE, YOU MANDY @W@F@X! CAT, OR I'LL WRING YOUR NECK!

FOR TWENTY MINUTES, ED STRUGGLED MIGHTILY WITH THE SNARLING, CLAWING CAT, BUT FINALLY, HIS FACE AND HANDS SCRATCHED AND BLEEDING, HE MAJESTICALLY DELIVERED THE VICIOUS LITTLE BEAST TO ITS GREATLY RELIEVED OWNERS! THE GIRLS DEBATED...



I. I THINK JUST THIS ONCE, AMY, IT WOULD BE PROPER IF WE ALLOWED THIS MAN TO ENTER! AFTER ALL...

WELL...PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT, SUSAN! HE *DID* RESCUE OUR CAT...AND HE SEEMS IN NEED OF SOME FIRST-AID, SO...

NATURALLY, ED SLYLY MOVED THE CONVERSATION AROUND UNTIL...



YES, SUSAN AND I HAVE EQUAL SAY OVER OUR WEALTH! HALF AND HALF!

SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE, YOU KNOW! HA! HA! HA!

HE REMAINED FOR SEVERAL HOURS, EXCITING THEM WITH MYTHICAL TALES OF HIS HEROIC DEEDS, AND COMPLEMENTING THEM ABUNDANTLY!



EDWIN, AMY AND I THINK THAT... WELL, IF YOU SHOULD CARE TO RETURN...

YOU HONOR ME, MY DEAR! I ACCEPT!

HE RETURNED MANY TIMES. AND HE SAT THERE, SIPPING TEA, RELATING STORIES, BESTOWING COMPLIMENTS. THE TWIN SISTERS SAT IN OPEN-MOUTHED WONDER AND ADMIRATION!



OH, AMY! HE'S SO **GALLANT!** SO GENTLEMANLY! AND SO... SO **STRONG!** HE'S SUCH A 'MAN OF THE WORLD!' AND SO **RESPECTABLE!**



SUSAN, TO HEAR YOU TALK, ONE WOULD THINK YOU WERE FALLING IN LOVE WITH HIM!

WHY, **AMY!** I... I... DIDN'T MEAN... THAT IS, PLEASE DON'T...ER... I... I... MEAN...



OH, STOP GETTING FLUSTERED! IT'S ALL RIGHT! I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT HIM! I FEEL THE SAME WAY! HE... HE IS WONDERFUL, ISN'T HE?!

MEANWHILE, IN HIS HOTEL ROOM, THE KIND, GENTLE HONEST, STRONG, BRAVE, NOBLE, RESPECTABLE MAN OF THE WORLD PACED THE SMALL FLOOR NERVOUSLY!

EVERYTHING'S GOING ALONG FINE! I'M SURE I CAN MARRY EITHER ONE OF THEM... ALL I HAVE TO DO IS POP THE QUESTION! AND YET... THAT WILL ONLY GIVE ME *HALF* THEIR MONEY! THERE MUST BE *SOME* WAY FOR ME TO GET IT *ALL*!

HANG IT! TOO BAD THERE ISN'T TWO OF ME!

TWO OF ME?!

OF COURSE! TWINS!

ON HIS NEXT VISIT, EDWIN EXPLODED THE NEWS OF HIS "TWIN BROTHER"!

A TWIN BROTHER? HOW GRAND! BUT WHY HAVEN'T WE MET HIM?

HE'S BEEN AWAY! BUT HE'S DUE TO RETURN SOON! IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME TO MENTION IT BEFORE!

YOU SEE, MY TWIN BROTHER AND I OWN SOME VERY IMPORTANT HOLDINGS IN *SOUTH AFRICA*! THE NATURE OF THE WORK DEMANDS THAT *ONE OF US BE THERE AT ALL TIMES*! HE STAYS THERE FOR ONE MONTH, AND I REPLACE HIM UNTIL THE FOLLOWING MONTH, AND SO ON...

I MUST LEAVE FOR SOUTH AFRICA TOMORROW! IN A FEW DAYS, MY BROTHER WILL RETURN HERE. IF I'M NOT BEING TOO FORWARD, I'D LIKE VERY MUCH FOR HIM TO MEET YOU LOVELY GIRLS!

WHY... WHY, THAT WOULD BE FINE!

I'VE WRITTEN HIM SO *MUCH* ABOUT YOU TWO! HE FEELS HE KNOWS YOU AS WELL AS I! YOU'LL HAVE NO DIFFICULTY RECOGNIZING HIM, BUT STILL, I'LL GIVE HIM A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION!

WHATEVER YOU SAY, EDWIN!

YES! WHATEVER YOU SAY!

FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS, EDWIN REMAINED IN HIS HOTEL ROOM. AMY AND SUSAN THOUGHT HE WAS ON HIS WAY TO SOUTH AFRICA, BUT ACTUALLY HE WAS PREPARING FOR HIS "TWIN BROTHER'S" APPEARANCE!

LET'S SEE! NEW LUGGAGE, NEW CLOTHES! BETTER TAKE A SUN-LAMP TREATMENT TO RENEW MY TAN! SUPPOSED TO BE HOT IN SOUTH AFRICA!



ED LOUNGED ABOUT HIS ROOM FOR A FEW MORE DAYS, AND MADE CERTAIN TIME, AND AGAIN THAT ALL WAS IN READINESS! AT LAST, POSING AS HIS NON-EXISTANT BROTHER, HE PRESENTED HIMSELF...

I HOPE I'M NOT OVERSTEPPING MY BOUNDS. I AM ALPHONSO KING. MY BROTHER EDWIN GAVE ME THIS LETTER OF INTRODUCTION...

OF COURSE, ALPHONSO! WE RECOGNIZED YOU IMMEDIATELY! DO COME IN!



ONCE AGAIN THE TWO NAIVE BLAIR SISTERS SAT IN ADMIRATION AS OLD GLIB-LIPS TURNED ON THE CHARM...

I FEEL I *MUST* SAY THAT YOU ARE BOTH, INDEED, EVERYTHING EDWIN SAID YOU WERE! I FEEL AS IF I'VE KNOWN YOU FOR YEARS!

OH, ALPHONSO! THAT'S *JUST* WHAT EDWIN SAID! HOW NICE!



ISN'T IT GRAND? ALPHONSO AND EDWIN ARE SO IDENTICAL!

THAT... THAT MAKES... ONE FOR EACH OF US, DOESN'T IT, SUSAN?



A MONTH LATER, EDWIN CAME BACK, AND THE TIME WAS RIPE...

AMY... THERE COMES A TIME IN EVERY MAN'S LIFE WHEN HE FEELS THE NEED OF FEMALE... ER... COMPANIONSHIP!

OH, EDWIN!



AND SO THEY WERE MARRIED. THE MINISTER FROM THE LITTLE CHURCH AROUND THE CORNER PERFORMED THE SIMPLE, QUIET CEREMONY...

EDWIN AND AMY... I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE!

SOB!



IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, AMY LEARNED THE MEANING OF 'MARITAL BLISS' AND SHE CONFIDED IN SUSAN, WHO WAS BECOMING IMPATIENT...

OH, AMY, DO YOU THINK ALPHONSO... I MEAN... OH, YOU KNOW WHAT I WANT TO SAY!

YES, SUSAN, I KNOW! MY EDWIN SAYS HE'S SURE ALPHONSO WILL ASK FOR YOUR HAND AS SOON AS HE RETURNS!



AGAIN EDWIN LEFT FOR SOUTH AFRICA! HE LOLLERED ABOUT HIS HOTEL ROOM, RELAXING AND ENJOYING HIMSELF...

HA HA! WHAT A SET-UP! I CAN PULL THE WOOL OVER THEIR EYES FOREVER!



AND ABOUT A WEEK LATER, ALPHONSO RETURNED...

SUSAN, THERE COMES A TIME IN EVERY MAN'S LIFE WHEN HE FEELS THE NEED OF FEMALE...ER...COMPANIONSHIP!

OH, ALPHONSO!



AND SO, THEY WERE MARRIED! THE MINISTER FROM THE LITTLE CHURCH AROUND THE CORNER PERFORMED THE SIMPLE, QUIET CEREMONY...

ALPHONSO AND SUSAN, I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE!

!SOB!



AND IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, SUSAN LEARNED THE MEANING OF 'MARITAL BLISS!' AND THEN DID THE TWO SISTERS CONFIDE IN ONE ANOTHER...

OH, AMY, I'M SO HAPPY! ALPHONSO IS SO KIND... AND GENTLE!

IT'S A SHAME BOTH OUR HUSBANDS CAN NEVER BE WITH US AT THE SAME TIME, BUT...



HEH, HEH, HEH! NOW HASN'T OLD ED KING WORKED INTO A TERRIFIC DEAL? TWO NAMBY-MAMBY INNOCENTS FOR WIVES, A TRAIN LOAD OF MONEY, AND A WEEK'S VACATION FROM THE LITTLE WOMEN EVERY MONTH, NO QUESTIONS ASKED! WOW!



MONTHS PASSED AND THE GRAND HOAX CONTINUED SUCCESSFULLY! BUT ED WAS LOSING HIS SUN-TAN...

BUT, EDWIN! WHY BUY A SUN-LAMP?

SO I CAN KEEP THE TAN I HAVE! I DON'T WANT TO GET A BAD BURN WHEN I RETURN TO SOUTH AFRICA!



EDWIN STRETCHED OUT ON HIS BATH-ROBE AND PROMPTLY FELL ASLEEP. UNKNOWN TO HIM, A SUDDEN GUST OF WIND LIFTED HIS BATHROBE SASH AND VERY GENTLY, ACCIDENTALLY, DRAPED IT ACROSS HIS BACK...



...SO THAT ON AWAKENING, A WIDE STRIP OF WHITE WAS EMBLAZONED THERE. HE NEVER GUESSED...

BUT, EDWIN! YOUR BACK...

YES, A LITTLE TOO RED! OVER-SLEPT A LITTLE! FEELS FINE, THOUGH!



NOW WHEN ALPHONSO RETURNED ON THE NEXT SHIFT, SUSAN WAS NATURALLY PLEASED! SHE WAS SO HAPPY TO SEE HIM SHE DIDN'T EVEN THINK TO MAKE A REMARK ABOUT THE NICE, WIDE STRIP OF WHITE ACROSS HIS BACK...



BUT THE FOLLOWING DAY, WHEN SHE AND AMY TALKED...

...IT WAS SO HUMOROUS, AMY! THERE WAS HIS BROAD BACK, TAN AND RIPPLING WITH MUSCLES... AND THAT WHITE STRIP!

TEE HEE! I KNOW JUST WHAT YOU MEAN! EDWIN HAD THE SAME UNTANNED STRIP ACROSS HIS BACK! IT IS QUITE COMICAL! HA/HA!



AMY! IT...IT CAN'T BE TRUE! IT...IT CAN'T BE!

BUT...BUT, SUSAN! IF IT IS...I MEAN...THAT WOULD MEAN...



WHAT A HORRID THOUGHT! OH, I'D BE SO ASHAMED! AMY, WE **MUST** FIND OUT!

YOU'RE RIGHT, SUSAN! NOW, I **THINK** I KNOW HOW... LISTEN!



THE NIGHT BEFORE ALPHONSO WAS TO LEAVE FOR SOUTH AFRICA, SUSAN REMAINED AWAKE UNTIL HIS DEEP BREATHING ASSURED HER HE WAS ASLEEP. THEN SILENTLY, SHE REACHED INTO HER NIGHT-TABLE AND BROUGHT FORTH A SMALL BOTTLE OF PEROXIDE! SHE DABBED A FEW DROPS ON THE BACK OF HIS HEAD, CAUSING THE HAIR TO BLEACH...

THERE! NOW WE'LL SEE!



AS USUAL, A WEEK PASSED BEFORE EDWIN CAME HOME! HE ENTERED HAPPILY, AND AS HE TURNED HIS BACK TO HANG UP HIS HAT, AMY AND SUSAN STARED IN HORROR AT A SMALL WHITE PATCH OF HAIR ON THE BACK OF HIS HEAD.



AMY! IT'S TRUE! EDWIN AND ALPHONSO ARE THE SAME MAN! WHAT HAS HE DONE TO US?

MERCIFUL HEAVENS! HE'S NOT A TWIN! WE'RE RUINED! HE'S SOILED US FOR LIFE!



THE SHAME! THE SHAME! IT'S SO... SO HORRIBLE! 3908!

HE'S MADE US... 'BIGAMISTS!' HE TOOK SUCH FOUL ADVANTAGE OF US! SUSAN... HE MUST PAY!

YES...YES... HE MUST PAY! HEE, HEE!

...AND HE WILL PAY! HEH... HEH, HEE, HEE!



HEH, HEH! SEEMS LIKE EVERYBODY IN THIS STORY MADE AT LEAST ONE BIGAMISTAKE! THAT SUN-LAMP REALLY STRIPPED OLD HONEY-WORDS OF HIS RACKET! TAN TO ONE HE WON'T DO IT AGAIN! HEH! WHY DO I GIVE SUCH ODDS? HEH, HEH! READ ON...YOU'LL SEE! SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE! REMEMBER?



THE BLOODY AXE STOOD IN THE HALLWAY, LEANING AGAINST THE WALL BETWEEN THE TWO BEDROOMS. AND IF YOU WERE TO PEEK INSIDE THE CLOSED BEDROOM DOORS, YOU WOULD SEE AMY IN HER BED, CARESSING HER SIDE OF EDWIN, AND SUSAN DOING LIKEWISE WITH HER SIDE OF HIM! FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME THE TWO SHY, INNOCENT TWINS WERE ABLE TO ENJOY THE COMPANY OF THEIR HUSBANDS AT THE SAME TIME! FOR, IN THEIR UNBALANCED STATE, THEY HAD SPLIT HIM IN TWO, RIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE!



THE END.