

DID SOMEONE KNOCK? AH, YOU AGAIN, YOU RASCALS! WELL, CRAWL INTO THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY, PULL UP A CASKET AND LIE DOWN, WHILE YOUR CARETAKER, CAIN, BREWS YOU A TERRIFYING TALE OF WITCHCRAFT, A LOVELY LADY AND A GALLANT GENT WHO VOWED THAT HE WAS WILLING...

TO DIE FOR MAGDA!

KEEP AWAY! I'LL HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH A DEVIL!

A WITCH AFRAID OF THE DEVIL? I REFUSE TO BELIEVE IT!

ART: ALEX NIÑO SCRIPT: CARL WESSLER

IT WAS 1903. TRANSYLVANIA, IN THE MAGYAR KINGDOM OF HUNGARY, A LAND OF MYSTERY WHERE PEOPLE SPOKE IN WHISPERS OF VAMPIRES AND WITCHCRAFT.

I'VE NEVER KISSED A WITCH BEFORE!

NOR I THE DEVIL-- AND I'VE NO INTENTION OF EVER DOING SO!

WILL YOU LET ME SEE YOU AGAIN? MAY I SEE YOU HOME LATER?

I HAVE AN ESCORT!

OF COURSE, I'M SORRY TO HAVE TROUBLED YOU!

HOW DISAPPOINTING. YOU ARE SO EASILY TURNED AWAY. YOU DON'T EVEN ASK MY NAME!

STEFAN STOPPED AND TURNED, SENSING NO DANGER IN THE CHILL NIGHT AIR, NO MENACE IN MAGDA'S BELL-LIKE VOICE...

I'M MAGDA KOSSU-- AND YOU'RE STEFAN TIZA. YOU SEE, I ASKED SOMEONE WHO YOU WERE!

IF YOU'D INSISTED ON SEEING ME HOME, I'D HAVE TOLD YOU MY BROTHER BROUGHT ME HERE!

RIDING IN THE KOSSU COACH, HE HEARD NO WARNING IN THE WIND'S SOFT MOAN -- ONLY THE COMFORTING CLIP-CLOP, CLIP-CLOP OF IRONCLAD HOVES. HE GLOWED AT THE FEEL OF MAGDA'S HAND IN HIS...

WHEN MAY I SEE YOU AGAIN, MAGDA?

TOMORROW, IF YOU LIKE!

LOOK AT MY POOR BROTHER JANOS. TOO MANY PARTIES ARE WEARING HIM OUT!



STEFAN AND MAGDA WERE TOGETHER OFTEN DURING THE NEXT FORTNIGHT, IF HE WAS AWARE THAT SHE WAS LEADING HIM ON, HE HAD NO OBJECTION...

YOU WILL MARRY ME, DARLING?

OH, I WANT TO, STEFAN... BUT YOU MUST ASK MY FATHER. HE'S VERY OLD-FASHIONED. FORMAL.

TONIGHT... I WANT TO ASK HIM TONIGHT, MAGDA!

CAB!

SOON...

YOUNG MAN-- EXACTLY HOW MUCH DO YOU LOVE MY DAUGHTER?

ENOUGH FOR TWO LIFETIMES-- MR. KOSSU!

I PUT MUCH STOCK IN GALLANTRY. THE KIND OF GALLANTRY TWO OF MY UNCLAS HAD WHEN THEY GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THE WOMEN THEY LOVED.

AND... YOU'RE ASKING ME IF I'D DO THE SAME FOR MAGDA?

PRECISELY. STEFAN TIZA, WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO DIE FOR MAGDA?

YES, SIR... THO' I HOPE IT WON'T BE NECESSARY!

NECESSARY?.. PERHAPS IT WILL BE!

I WISH SOMEBODY'D EXPLAIN WHAT'S GOING ON HERE!




MAGDA HAS REFUSED TO MARRY THE HEAD OF THE SECRET POLICE. SHORTLY AFTERWARD, THEY ACCUSED HER OF BEING... A WITCH! THE HEAD OF A COVEN!



MAGDA... GUILTY OF WITCHCRAFT? RIDICULOUS!



YES, RIDICULOUS! BUT THE SECRET POLICE MIGHT MANUFACTURE PROOF OF HER GUILT...!



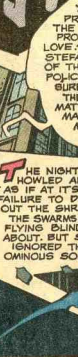
THE SCOUNDREL WOULD USE THAT "PROOF" TO FORCE MAGDA TO ACCEPT HIM? DASTARDLY! ... BUT WHERE DO I COME IN?



IF YOU WILL WRITE AND SIGN A NOTE CONFESSING THAT YOU ARE HEAD OF THE COVEN, THAT YOU PRESIDE OVER ITS BLACK MASSES, THEN I'LL APPROVE OF HER MARRIAGE TO YOU!




WHY, THAT WOULD BE LIKE SIGNING MY OWN DEATH WARRANT!




YOU'D BE PROTECTING THE WOMAN YOU PROFESS TO LOVE? BESIDES, STEFAN, THE HEAD OF THE SECRET POLICE WOULD SURELY DROP THE WHOLE MATTER ONCE MAGDA IS MARRIED!



WE'D DESTROY THE NOTE AFTER AWHILE!



VERY WELL, MR. KOSSU, I'LL WRITE THE CONFESSION-- BUT ONLY AFTER MAGDA AND I ARE MARRIED!



THE NIGHT WIND HOWLED ANGRILY AS IF AT ITS OWN FAILURE TO DROWN OUT THE SHRIEK OF THE SWARMS OF BATS FLYING BLINDLY ABOUT. BUT STEFAN IGNORED THOSE OMINOUS SOUNDS.



I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT CONFESSION, STEFAN. FATHER HAS SOME VERY STRANGE IDEAS!



I'LL BE GLAD TO SIGN IT, MY DEAR, TO PROVE HOW MUCH I WANT YOU!



THE POOR FOOL IS GONE! OH, HOW HE SWALLOWED THAT RUBBISH ABOUT THE SECRET POLICE AND ME!

STEFAN HASN'T SIGNED THE CONFESSION YET. IF HE SHOULD FIND OUT THAT *I'M* THE ONE THEY WANT FOR SORCERY... THAT *I'M* THE HIGH PRIEST OF THE COVEN...!


HE WON'T FIND THAT OUT ANY MORE THAN HE'LL LEARN THAT YOU'RE NOT MY BROTHER, BUT MY FIANCEE!

MAGDA, ALL THAT CAN SAVE ME FROM HANGING FOR PRACTICING THE BLACK ARTS WILL BE STEFAN'S WRITTEN CONFESSION... AND HIS DEATH!



IT WAS YOUR IDEA, JANOS -- BRILLIANT, AND IT'S GOING TO WORK!

YES, YES! COUNT JANOS, DISCIPLE OF THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS, MAKES NO MISTAKES!



THE WEDDING MUST BE SOON, THOUGH. I CAN'T HIDE HERE FOREVER. THE SECRET POLICE ARE SLOWLY CLOSING IN. I'VE BEEN WARNED...

THE BEAUTIFUL MAGDA KOSSU HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN LEADING EAGER STEFAN TO THE ALTAR WITHIN A VERY FEW DAYS...


... AND DO YOU, STEFAN, TAKE THIS WOMAN...

SATAN HIMSELF WILL PRESIDE AT *MY* WEDDING!

AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CEREMONY...

SHALL I DICTATE YOUR CONFESSION, STEFAN...?

YOU'RE NOT WASTING ANY TIME, MR. KOSSU... BUT A BARGAIN IS A BARGAIN. NO, I'LL COMPOSE IT MYSELF!




IT'S GETTING LATE, MR. KOSSU. MAGDA AND I HAD BETTER LEAVE BEFORE DARK!

YOU CAN'T SKIP YOUR OWN RECEPTION, STEFAN. BUT DON'T WORRY. MY COACHMAN KNOWS EVERY HIGHWAY IN THE CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS!



WE'LL CHANGE OUR CLOTHES AND STAY JUST A LITTLE WHILE, STEFAN!

IT'S ALL RIGHT, MAGDA. WE HAVE A LIFETIME AHEAD OF US!



I THINK IT'S TIME FOR A LITTLE SPEECH BY THE GROOM!


CONFOUND IT, JANOS -- YOU'RE DRUNK! WHERE'S MAGDA? IT'S TIME WE GOT OUT OF HERE!



THE CHANDELIER... IT'S MOVING! LOOK OUT!



**CRA
SA
SH!**




THAT WAS FOOLISH, JANOS. THE LAST THING WE WANT IS TO ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF THE POLICE!




THE SERVANTS BUNGLED, OR STEFAN WOULD BE DEAD NOW!



YOU BRIBED THE SERVANTS TO UNBOLT THE CHANDELIER? THEY MIGHT TALK!



YOU WON'T BE SAFE UNTIL HE'S DEAD... BUT WHY NOT BY WITCHCRAFT, JANOS?



STEFAN! THEY SAY YOU WERE UNDER THAT CHANDELIER. I CAN'T TELL HOW TERRIBLE I FEEL... THIS AWFUL, OLD HOUSE!

YOU HAVE STEFAN'S CONFESSION. THE POLICE WILL NOT QUESTION THE DEATH OF A SORCERER, A WARLOCK!

THEN THERE WOULD BE QUESTIONS ASKED KOSSU!

IT WASN'T QUITE THE KIND OF RECEPTION I'D EXPECTED!



HORRIBLE! HORRIBLE! OH, MY POOR DARLING!

COME, NOW, DON'T SPOIL YOUR APPETITE, MASDA!



YOU LOOK SO PALE, SO SHAKEN! HERE, PERHAPS SOME WINE...!



THANK YOU, MY DEAR... BUT THEN WE'D BETTER BE ON OUR WAY!



TERRIBLY SORRY, I'M SHAKIER THAN I THOUGHT!



WE'RE GOING TO LEAVE NOW, JANOS... BY THE SIDE DOOR! HAVE A CARRIAGE WAITING...



CYANIDE, YOU FOOL! I CAUGHT THE BITTER ALMOND SMELL IN THE SPILT WINE FROM HERE!



HE'S SUSPICIOUS, JANOS!



SUSPICIOUS! HE KNOWS! HE MAY GO TO THE POLICE, KOSSU. HE'S NOT GOING TO LEAVE HERE ALIVE...!

AFTER CHANGING INTO TRAVELING CLOTHES, THE NEWLYWEDS SLIPPED OUT OF A SIDE DOOR, INTO THE KOSSU'S VAST GARDENS...



NOW... NOW!

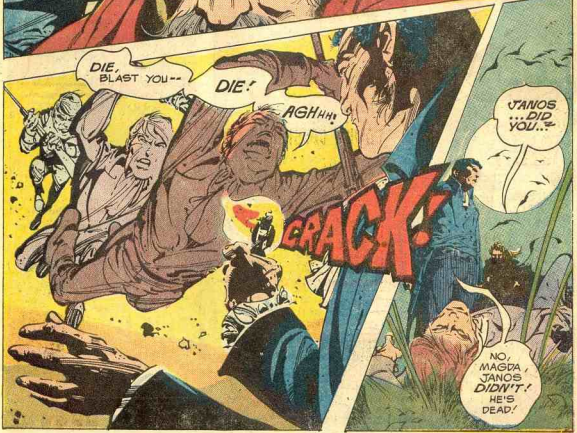


STEFAN...
WHAT ARE YOU
GOING TO DO? IT...
IT WAS ONLY A
POACHER. WE'VE
HAD TROUBLE
WITH POACHERS...

THEN IT'S
TIME TO MAKE
AN EXAMPLE
OF **ONE**
POACHER!

YOU SAW
WHERE THAT
SHOT CAME
FROM. **TAKE**
ME OVER
THERE!

Y-YES,
SIR...



DIE,
BLAST YOU--

DIE!

AGH!!!

JANOS
... DID
YOU...?

CRACK!

NO,
MAGDA,
JANOS
DIDN'T!
HE'S
DEAD!

ICY-VEINED MAGDA SHED NOT A TEAR OVER JANOS' DEATH...

I KNEW JANOS WASN'T YOUR BROTHER. WE OF THE SECRET POLICE KNEW HE WAS A **SORCERER**, **MAGDA -- HIGH PRIEST OF THE BLACK MASS!**

BUT WHAT WAS HE TO YOU?

WE NEED MONEY. JANOS WAS **RICH AND TITLED**. I'M SORRY THINGS DIDN'T WORK OUT, FATHER. I'D HAVE MARRIED HIM ...

AS SOON AS YOU'D GOTTEN RID OF ME?

NO, STEFAN... I DIDN'T WANT THAT. I DO CARE FOR YOU, WHAT WE TOLD YOU ABOUT THE CHIEF OF POLICE BEING OUT TO GET ME WAS TRUE! I FEARED FOR MY LIFE...!

MAGDA, YOU ARE A **SHE-DEVIL**, BUT NOT A WITCH! I AM STEFAN **KAROLS!** NOT TIZA -- **HEAD OF THE SECRET POLICE!**

SO YOUR LIES DECEIVED NO ONE BUT YOURSELF! HAAAAH! I THOUGHT YOU WERE A WITCH? YOU'RE A **FOOL**, MAGDA, BUT **NEVER A WITCH!**

A **FOOL** YOU CALL ME? I'M NOT A **WITCH** YOU SAY?

I'LL SHOW YOU... STEFAN **KAROLS!** YOU'RE A **MONSTER!** HEE, HEE, HEE!

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE ON OR ABOUT JUNE 20TH

THE END