

THE SHADOW FROM THE STEEPLE!

THIS CRUMBLING OLD CHURCH IS WHERE ALL THE TROUBLE BEGAN. IT'S IN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, AND IT'S THE KIND OF PLACE THAT CAN HAUNT YOU...

... AS IT HAUNTED POOR ROBERT BLAKE... AND HIS FRIEND, EDMUND FISK. PERHAPS IT HAS HAUNTED YOU SINCE YOU FIRST READ OF IT LAST ISSUE.



ON THIS PARTICULAR NIGHT, TWO PANTHERS HAVE BROKEN LOOSE...

CIRCUS

REMEMBER THEM...



AND ELSEWHERE ON THIS SAME NIGHT, EDMUND FISK HURRIES THROUGH THE DARK STREETS, FILLED WITH ANGER...

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*IN "THE HAUNTER OF THE DARK" BY H.P. LOVECRAFT - R.T.

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IT BEGAN SIX YEARS AGO...

"MY FRIEND, ROBERT BLAKE, A WRITER, WAS INTERESTED IN THE OCCULT. HE'D COME TO PROVIDENCE TO WORK AND STUDY.

"HE FELT DRAWN TO A CRUMBLING CHURCH ON FEDERAL HILL..."

"...WHERE HE MADE CERTAIN UNNERVING DISCOVERIES.

STOP, SIR! DON'T GO NEAR THAT CHURCH, ...IT'S EVIL!

JUST THE KIND OF THING I'M INTERESTED IN.

BUT YOU MUSTN'T... A DEVIL CULT USED IT IN YEARS PAST! THEIR HORRIBLE EVIL STILL LINGERS!

EXCELLENT, THEN!

I SHOULD GET A STORY OUT OF THIS THEN FOR SURE!

DUST! NO ONE'S EVEN BEEN UP HERE IN YEARS...

"THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE STARRY WISDOM CULT AND WORSHIPPED SOMETHING KNOWN AS THE HAUNTER OF THE DARK!

LOOK AT THIS! RECORDS OF THAT CULT... LET'S SEE...

"A DEMON SPIRIT WHICH INHABITED A STRANGE JEWEL AND COULD BE SUMMONED ONLY BY BLOOD SACRIFICE!



"A JEWEL THAT WAS OLDER THAN TIME ITSELF."

"...IT HAD BEEN FOUND IN AN EGYPTIAN TOMB..."



AND THIS MUST BE IT. FASCINATING... AND YET..."

NO! NO!



"BLAKE SLAMMED THE CHEST SHUT AND RAN HYSTERICALLY FROM THE EBON ROOM..."



"FROM THEN ON HIS DREAMS WERE HAUNTED BY SINISTER SHADOW SHAPES AND GIANT DEMON-BEASTS!"



"FRIGHTENED, HE WENT TO DEXTER, THEN A LOCAL GP, FOR HELP..."

"THE THING THRIVES ON DARKNESS. I SHOULDN'T HAVE CLOSED THE BOX. IT KEEPS GETTING STRONGER... LARGER..."

I CAN HELP YOU SLEEP, BUT..."



"THAT NIGHT THERE WAS A FIERCE STORM..."

"...AND A BLURRED SHADOW SEEMED TO LEAP FROM THE STEEPLE'S SPIRE..."



"NEXT MORNING, BLAKE WAS DEAD..."

POOR GUY! HIT BY LIGHTNING..."

I WONDER...



"ALTHOUGH DEXTER WAS NOT CONVINCED, HE STILL KEPT HIS SILENCE..."

SO YOU SEE, GORES, THAT'S ONE REASON WHY I MUST TALK TO DR. DEXTER.





THE COPS WERE PROBABLY RIGHT, BUDDY BOY.



LIGHTNING MAKES MORE SENSE THAN SPOOKS, SO WHY NOT!!!



WAIT A MINUTE, GORES. THERE'S MORE!



HUH... MORE YET?

A FRIEND OF OURS, HOWARD PHILLIPS, BEGAN TO INVESTIGATE!



"HE CALLED ON DR. DEXTER. DEXTER ADMITTED HE BELIEVED THE JEWEL HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH BLAKE'S DEATH..."



"DEXTER BROKE INTO THE CHURCH AND STOLE THE CHEST WHICH HELD THAT EVIL JEWEL."



"ROWING TO THE DEEPEST CHANNEL OF NARRAGANSETT BAY, HE HEAVED THE CHEST OVERBOARD, WATCHING IT SINK INTO THE MURKY WATERS..."



"PHILLIPS DIDN'T STOP THERE. HE DUG INTO OLD BOOKS AND RECORDS, SEEKING THE FULL STORY OF THE SHADOW DEMON..."



... BUT, THREE DAYS LATER, PHILLIPS WAS FOUND DEAD!

NO... I'M NOT CRAZY, GORES!

SICK, HUH? I WONDER IF...

I WAS IN THE SERVICE WHEN ALL THIS BEGAN, AND THOUGH I WANTED TO, I COULDN'T LEAVE! THEN I WAS SICK FOR A VERY LONG WHILE.

THIS DEXTER IS AN IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT SCIENTIST NOW, BUDDY BOY.

THAT'S WHY I CAME HERE AND HIRED YOU TO FIND HIM! HE'D DROPPED OUT OF SIGHT UNTIL RECENTLY!

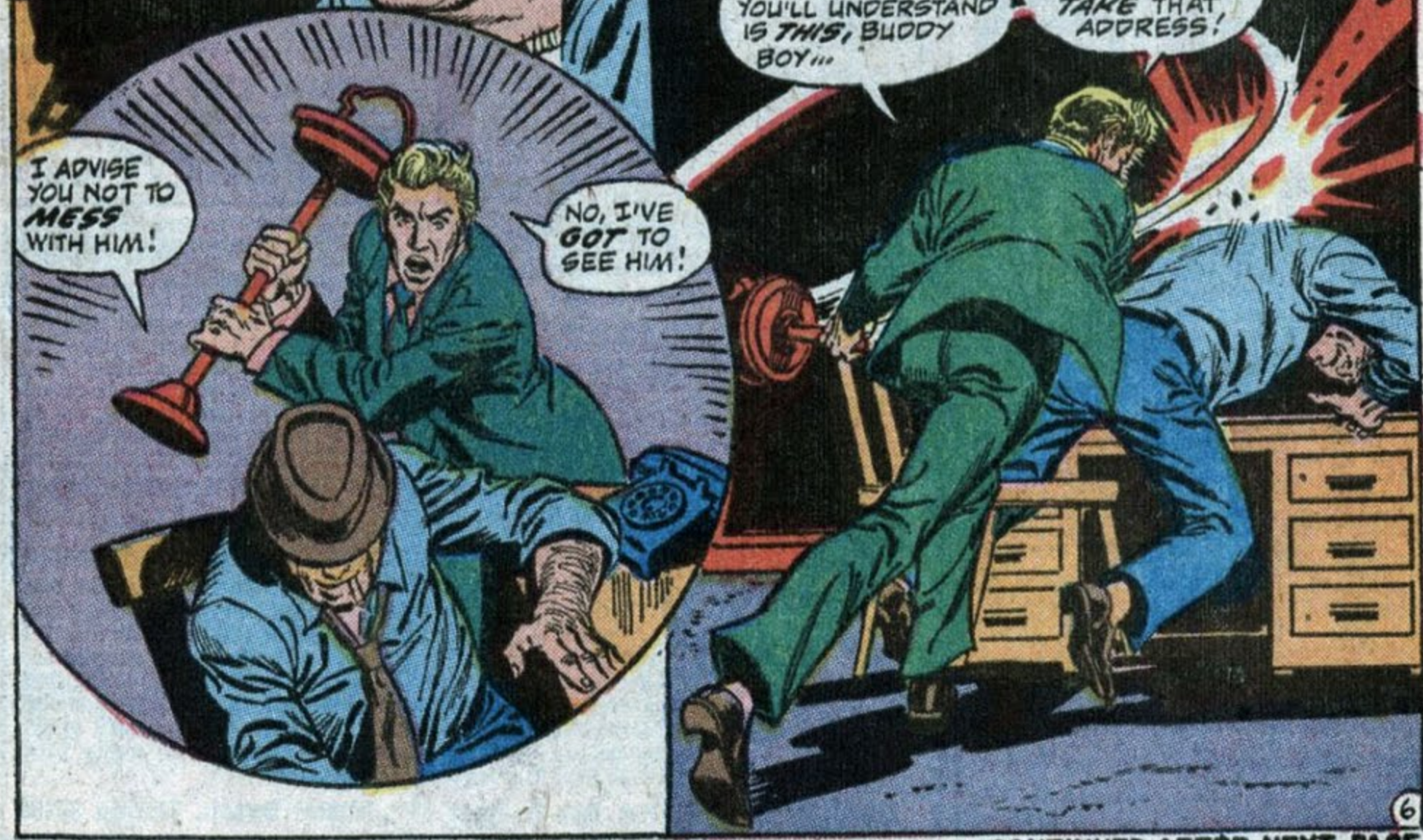


BUT MAYBE ALL YOU'LL UNDERSTAND IS THIS, BUDDY BOY...

NOW, I'LL JUST TAKE THAT ADDRESS!

I ADVISE YOU NOT TO MESS WITH HIM!

NO, I'VE GOT TO SEE HIM!







HE CAN RAISE STORMS, CONTROL THE LIGHTNING...

... WILD BEASTS ARE HIS TO COMMAND. THEY FOLLOW HIM LIKE PETS.

CONTROL YOURSELF, FISKE. WHAT YOU SAY IS ABSURD!



ABSURD, IS IT? YOU ARE NOW A TOP GOVERNMENT SCIENTIST! YOU WORK ON WEAPONS...



... WEAPONS WHICH CAN DESTROY ALL MANKIND!

YOU WORK FOR DESTRUCTION! AS HE WOULD!



PUT DOWN THAT GUN! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

YOU'RE NOT DEXTER ANYMORE!

THE SHADOW DEMON ESCAPED THAT NIGHT ON THE BAY. HE NOW INHABITS YOUR BODY!



YOU ARE NYARLATHOTEP!

BUT WHILE YOU'RE IN A HUMAN BODY YOU CAN BE KILLED!



NO, DON'T TRY TO TOUCH ME!



RELAX, FISKE, YOU'RE NOT WELL!

NO-- DON'T TOUCH ME... I KNOW NYARLATHOTEP'S TOUCH IS... UHHH...



END