

READY FOR SOME ACID ART APPRECIATION, DUNGEON DWELLERS? HAND ME MY HORROR HAMMER AND CHILL CHISEL, AND YOUR FAVORITE UNCLE WILL KNOCK OUT A LITTLE MONSTERPIECE ALL ABOUT A MASTER SCULPTOR WHO MANAGES TO CAPTURE...



EUGENE COLAN

HIS FACE A TWISTED MASK OF RAGE, FREDERICK HOLBERT TIGHTLY GRIPPED THE SMOOTH WOOD OF THE SLEDGE-HAMMER HANDLE AND SENT THE HEAVY MALLET HEAD SWINGING IN A WIDE DESTRUCTIVE ARC, WITH ALL THE POWER OF HIS SCULPTOR'S MUSCLES, WITH ALL THE ANGER OF YEARS OF FRUSTRATION AND FAILURE...

GREAT SCOTT, HOLBERT!
YOUR STATUE...

WHAT DO YOU CARE, TYNAN? YOU HATE
IT, DON'T YOU? YOU AND ALL
THE OTHER CRITICS!!



NO ONE'S EVER LIKED MY WORK! YOU ALL WANT CLASSIC, GRACEFUL STATUES... THINGS TO INSPIRE BEAUTY! I CARVE **MONSTERS**... TO INSPIRE **FEAR**! YOU CAN'T ACCEPT THAT, CAN YOU, TYNAN?

CRITICS DON'T JUDGE YOUR PURPOSE, HOLBERT, ONLY HOW WELL YOU ACHIEVE IT... AND YOUR STATUES FAIL MISERABLY!

ONLY ONE SCULPTOR HAS CAPTURED TRUE FEAR... **STAVROS DIMITRIOS!** A TRUE GENIUS! HE WASTES NO TIME WITH GROTESQUE, UNBELIEVABLE MONSTERS, HE DOES **PEOPLE**... CAUGHT IN THE MOMENT OF EXTREME **HORROR!** MAGNIFICENT!

IF YOU EVER HOPE FOR SUCCESS, DIMITRIOS IS THE MAN YOU MUST EQUAL!



ANGRILY, FREDERICK HOLBERT, USHERED THE CRITIC FROM HIS STUDIO, CURSING HIM. FOR A WEEK HE SULKED AND BROODED AMID THE DEBRIS AND CLUTTER OF HIS SELF-DESTROYED WORK, BUT IN THE END, AS HE KNEW HE WOULD FROM THE MOMENT TYNAN MENTIONED THE NAME, HOLBERT WENT TO VIEW THE ART OF **STAVROS DIMITRIOS**...

I-IT'S EVERYTHING THAT FOOL TYNAN SAID! EVERYTHING MY WORK SHOULD BE AND ISN'T! **BLAST!** HOW DOES HE DO IT? SO LIFE-LIKE? NO SCULPTOR EVER HAD A TOUCH LIKE THAT!



THE DETAILING'S INCREDIBLE, DOWN TO THE TEXTURE OF THE CLOTH! IT MUST BE THE TYPE STONE... OR A SPECIAL TECHNIQUE... WHAT'S HIS SECRET?

REMOVE YOUR HANDS! SUCH ART ISN'T TO BE PAWED!



WHAT'S IT TO YOU, OLD MAN?

YOU THINK BY GRASPING AND FEELING THE STONE, THE SKILL WILL RUB OFF ONTO YOU... YOU THINK YOU CAN TOUCH THE SECRET OF SUCH A STATUE! BAH! ONLY ONE MAN HAS THE POWER TO CREATE LIKE THIS... ME! DIMITRIOS!



MR. DIMITRIOS! I'M SORRY... I DIDN'T KNOW... PLEASE! I'M A SCULPTOR MYSELF

... IF YOU COULD TELL ME HOW YOU DO IT...

MR. DIMITRIOS... PLEASE!

TELL? I AM A GREEK! THE ANCIENT SKILLS THAT PRODUCED THE GREAT STATUES OF THE GOLDEN AGE ARE MY HERITAGE... MY METHODS ARE MY OWN! I HAVE NOTHING TO TELL YOU, OR ANYONE!

HE'S OLD... ARTHRITIC... THOSE TWISTED HANDS COULD NEVER SHAPE THE DETAILING I'VE SEEN... NOT WITHOUT SOME SPECIAL METHOD!



HOLBERT RETREATED FROM THE OLD MAN'S BALEFUL STARE, AND BEGAN TO AIMLESSLY STALK THE STREETS IN A DARK MOOD OF DISAPPOINTMENT AND DISGUST... WALKING FOR HOURS UNTIL HIS FOOTSTEPS LED HIM TO THE AREA OF THE CITY FOR ALL WHO HAD GIVEN UP CARE... OR HOPE...

DIMITRIOS! WHAT'S HE DOING DOWN HERE... WANDERING AMONG BUMS AND WINOS? SEEMS ALMOST TO BE STUDYING THEM...



STEALTHILY, CURIOUSLY, HOLBERT BEGAN TO FOLLOW STAVROS DIMITRIOS AS THE UGLY BENT FIGURE WENT ABOUT STRANGE BUSINESS FOR A MASTER SCULPTOR...

KEEPS FEEDING DRINKS TO THAT BUM... GETTING HIM DRUNK...

THE GUY'S SO JUICED, HE'LL GO ALONG WITH ANYTHING DIMITRIOS WANTS! WHERE THEY OFF TO NOW...?

MUST BE HIS STUDIO... THIS FACTORY AREA'S DESERTED BY NIGHT, GIVES DIMITRIOS PLENTY OF PRIVACY FOR... FOR WHAT?!

USING THE FIRE ESCAPE OF A NEIGHBORING BUILDING, HOLBERT MADE HIS WAY TO THE ROOF OF THE OLD GREEK'S STUDIO, PAINSTAKINGLY EASING HIS WAY TOWARD THE SKYLIGHT, STRAINING IN FEAR THAT THE SOUND OF THE GRAVEL UNDER-FOOT MIGHT GIVE HIM AWAY, WHEN...

WHAT TH-- THE LIGHTS JUST WENT OUT!

HARDLY DARING TO BREATHE, HOLBERT EDGED FORWARD TO THE GLASS OF THE SKYLIGHT, HIS EYES STRAINING TO CATCH WHAT THE MOONLIGHT REVEALED OF THE STUDIO'S DARKENED INTERIOR. A FAINT CHUCKLING FILTERED OUT TO HIM FROM THE HUNCHED FORM OF DIMITRIOS. THE SCULPTOR'S DRINKING COMPANION WAS NOT TO BE SEEN...

THE OLD BIRD ACTS LIKE HE'S GOT THE CROWN JEWELS IN THAT BOX! IF HE'S GOT A SECRET, IT MUST BE LOCKED UP IN THERE... BUT HOW DOES HE USE IT? WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BUM...?



THE ANSWER CAME SOMETIME LATER, WHEN A NEW ADDITION WAS MADE TO THE EXHIBIT OF STAVROS DIMITRIOS'S WORK...

IT'S HIM... SAME ONE THE OLD MAN PICKED UP ON SKID ROW! JUST LIKE DIMITRIOS SET HIM ON A PEDESTAL...



...OF COURSE! THAT'S THE ANSWER! DIMITRIOS DOESN'T CARVE STATUES, HE USES LIVING PEOPLE! HE'S FOUND SOME KIND OF SOLUTION YOU CAN POUR OVER THEM THAT HARDENS INTO STONE!

THAT'S WHAT HE KEEPS LOCKED UP IN THE IRON BOX! SOMETHING I'VE ALWAYS NEEDED...



HE ALWAYS USES DERELICTS SO NEITHER POLICE NOR FAMILIES MISS THEM AND CAUSE TROUBLE! NO WONDER HIS STATUES ALWAYS LOOK HORRIFIED!

WHY HIS STATUES? AFTER TONIGHT, MY STATUES!



ANTICIPATION GNAWED AT HOLBERT, PLUCKING AT HIS NERVES UNTIL AT LONG LAST IT WAS NIGHT...

AT LAST! THE OLD FOOL'S FINALLY LEAVING... OFF TO FIND ANOTHER MODEL...



JUST AS I THOUGHT ... NO TOOLS, NO EQUIPMENT! JUST A FEW PEDESTALS...

ONCE AGAIN, HE TOOK TO THE ROOF, FORCING OPEN THE SKYLIGHT...

... FAT LOT OF GOOD IT'LL DO HIM WHEN I'VE MADE OFF WITH HIS 'SCULPTING' MATERIAL!



... BUT WITH THIS, WHAT ELSE DOES HE NEED?

TOOLS I BROUGHT'LL HAVE THAT LOCK OFF IN A MINUTE!

SO! MY LITTLE RUSE WORKED...

DIMITRIOS!



I TOLD YOU, HOLBERT. THE STRAIN OF ANCIENT GREECE RUNS IN ME... WE'RE NOT EASILY FOOLED! DON'T YOU THINK I *KNEW* WHEN YOU FOLLOWED ME? DIDN'T YOU THINK I'D BE PREPARED...?



DON'T GIVE ME ANY TROUBLE, OLD MAN... I'M CRACKING OPEN THIS BOX! IT'S TIME YOU SHARED YOUR PRECIOUS SECRET!



EXACTLY MY INTENTION! BUT WHY RUIN THE BOX WHEN YOU CAN USE MY KEY...

YOU'RE GOING TO COOPERATE WITH ME?

CERTAINLY. I WAS FORTUNATE TO FIND THIS PROCESS, IT HAD BEEN LOST FOR CENTURIES... SINCE YOU'VE LEARNED SO MUCH ALREADY, I MIGHT AS WELL SHARE IT WITH YOU!



AT LAST THE LOCK CAME OPEN. HOLBERT'S HEART POUNDED AS HIS TREMBLING HAND BEGAN TO SWING OPEN THE LID. STILL THE OLD MAN TALKED ON...

FEVERISH EXCITEMENT SWEEPED HOLBERT AS HIS MOIST FINGERS CLUTCHED THE KEY, FUMBLING IT INTO THE LOCK WHICH WAS ANCIENT AND STIFF AS THE OLD MAN WHO BABBLER ON HALF-HEARD BEHIND HIM...

PERHAPS YOU'VE HEARD OF *MEDUSA*? A LADY OF GREEK MYTHOLOGY...

YES, YES... I THINK SO... SOME DAME WITH SNAKES ON HER HEAD INSTEAD OF HAIR..OR SOMETHING...

THAT'S RIGHT, ONE OF THE *GORGONS*. HER HEAD WAS HEWN OFF BY PERSEUS AND CARRIED AWAY. STILL, SHE WAS QUITE REMARKABLE...



... AS YOU
CAN SEE!



EVEN AS THE SCREAM BEGAN, DIMITRIOS,
EYES TIGHTLY SHUT, FLICKED OFF THE
LIGHT, AND IN THE ROOM'S BLACKNESS,
PUSHED SHUT THE LID OF THE METAL
BOX WITH HIS CANE. ONLY THEN, DID HE
CONTINUE SPEAKING...



YES, QUITE
REMARKABLE,
SINCE ALL WHO
VIEW MEDUSA'S
FACE ARE
TURNED TO
STONE!!

ALL THERE
WAS TO KNOW OF
MY ART... IN FACT,
I'VE TITLED THE
STATUE: *THE
SECRET
REVEALED!!*

FANTASTIC!
ONE OF YOUR BEST!
AND THE MODEL...
I KNOW HIM! FREDERICK
HOLBERT, I SUGGESTED
HE SHOULD STUDY
YOUR WORK... DID
HE LEARN ANYTHING
FROM YOU?

A SHORT TIME
LATER, CRITICS
AND CONNOISSEURS
WERE DELIGHTED
TO LEARN THAT
STAVROS DIMITRIOS
HAD CREATED
YET ANOTHER
MASTERPIECE...

AH, AT LONG
LAST HOLBERT
IS GETTING
CRITICAL RECOG-
NITION, EVEN
THOUGH IT IS
A BIT *ROCKY*
FOR HIM! NOW,
ALL OF YOU
WHO WEREN'T
TURNED TO STONE
LOOKING AT
MEDUSA'S PICTURE,
CAN TURN TO MY
STATUESQUE
STARTLER...

