

PEACE, PEOPLE!
I'M SAL BUSCEMA...
BEHIND THE DRAWING
BOARD AS WELL AS
THE EIGHT-
BALL!

STOP AND THINK FOR A SECOND...OF
WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO BE IMMORTAL!
TO BESTRIDE THE EARTH LIKE A GOD, IMMUNE
TO PAIN AND THE RAVAGES OF TIME! THAT
WAS NATHANIEL BLACKSTOKE'S PLAN--TO
INSURE HIMSELF AND HIS WARPED GENIUS AN
ETERNAL EXISTENCE!

AND ALL IT REQUIRED
WAS--

A CHANGE OF MIND!

THE NIGHT WAS CLEAR AND STARRY-EYED!
THRUOUT THE LAND, THE SKY WAS SOFT AND SILENT...
SAVE FOR THE SKY ROUND-ABOUT A CERTAIN OLD,
DARK HOUSE! THERE, THE AIR WAS ALIVE WITH THE
CRACKLE OF ELECTRICITY... MAN-MADE ELECTRICITY!



ANOTHER MARVEL MYSTERY
MASTERWORK TOLD BY:

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THE PALE MOON CAST ITS GLOW OVER THE EARTH BELOW--AND SHUDDERED AT WHAT IT SAW--!

MORE POWER, YOU WITLESS WORM!

I MUST HAVE MORE POWER!!

BUT, MASTER-- THE MACHINERY-- IT MIGHT NOT BEAR THE STRAIN!



DRIVEL! OF COURSE IT WILL! I BUILT IT, DIDN'T I?

AND THERE ARE FEW THINGS THAT NATHANIEL BLACKSTOKE CAN'T DO BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE!



WHO BESIDES ME WOULD HAVE THE ABILITY--NAY, THE GENIUS--TO TURN AWAY--

--THE UGLY FACE OF DEATH ITSELF??



NOW, GIVE ME THAT VOLTAGE, YOU WHIMPERING INSECT!

WE SHALL PROCEED AS PLANNED...

TONIGHT!

TONIGHT, MASTER??



YES, YOU SPINELESS SLUG... TONIGHT!

TONIGHT, THE MOMENT I'VE PLANNED FOR ALL MY LIFE WILL COME TO PASS!

TONIGHT, ALL MY WORK... MY SCHEMES... WILL REACH FRUITION!

...TONIGHT, YOU MISERABLE MAGGOT...

I BECOME IMMORTAL!!

I SHALL TRANSFER MY BOUNDLESS BRAIN FROM THIS DISEASED FORM TO A VESSEL FAR MORE WORTHY!

--THE BODY OF THIS INDESTRUCTIBLE ROBOT!



JUST THINK, HUGO--IMMORTALITY! TO STAND UPON THE EARTH AND WATCH THE PASSING OF *KINGS*--THE CRUMBLING OF *CULTURES*--THE DECLINE AND FALL OF *CIVILIZATIONS*! TO BE A PART OF *HISTORY*--!

NO! TO BE HISTORY ITSELF! FOR, A MAN WHO CANNOT DIE--WHO CANNOT BE DESTROYED--CAN RULE THE WORLD!

THINK OF THE POWER I SHALL WIELD!

BUT, MASTER--SUCH POWER! IS IT SAFE? IS IT WISE?

WHAT? YOU NAUSEATING NIGHT-CRAWLER... YOU DARE QUESTION ME?

ME--THE GREATEST INTELLECT OF ALL TIME?



UGGHHH!!

SPATT!

BUT, MASTER--I WAS CONCERNED ONLY FOR YOU! THERE ARE SOME THINGS BEST LEFT ALONE!

YOU SLOBBERING SYCOPHANT --YOU'RE NO BETTER THAN THE REST!

"YES--THE REST! I SEE THEM EVEN NOW--THE IGNORANT, SHORT-SIGHTED TOWNSPEOPLE --SPEAKING MY NAME IN WHISPERS, FEARING MY GENIUS AND THE THINGS IT MIGHT ATTEMPT--!"

"--UNTIL, IN THEIR BLIND, UNREASONING TERROR, THEY CLIMBED MY MOUNTAIN AND DESTROYED MY EARLY WORK-- AND CAUSED THE EXPLOSION WHICH MANGLED MY ARM!"



THAT ARM HAD TO BE REMOVED, HUGO!

BUT BY THEN, IT WAS TOO LATE! FOR, THE INFECTION HAD SET IN!

INFECTION WHICH, EVEN NOW, COURSES LIKE WILDFIRE THRU MY BODY, CHEWING IT AWAY!

SOON THIS STRICKEN FORM WILL FALTER AND DIE--BUT, BY THE STARS, I SHALL NOT DIE WITH IT!

MASTER, PLEASE-- SPARE ME-- FORGIVE ME! I MEAN NO HARM--!

FOR, AT LONG LAST, IMMORTALITY IS WITHIN MY GRASP--AND I WON'T PART WITH IT NOW!!





OH, GET OUT OF MY SIGHT, YOU SPINELESS WORM!

THE VERY THOUGHT OF YOU TURNS MY STOMACH!

GET BACK TO WORK--FOR TIME GROWS SHORT!

THERE ARE THINGS THAT MUST BE DONE BEFORE I CAN TAKE THE FINAL STEP!

YES, MASTER --I'M GOING, MASTER!

THERE ARE--THINGS TO BE DONE!



MINUTES LATER, IN HIS MUSTY STUDY, BLACKSTOKE SITS BROODING OVER A HUGE, HAND-WORN VOLUME...

I'VE CHECKED THESE NOTES A THOUSAND TIMES...AND THAT IS STILL NOT ENOUGH!

EVERY ITEM MUST BE PERFECT! I MUST NOT FAIL...

FOR, I MAY NOT LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO GET A SECOND CHANCE!

THE MINUTES SPIN BY, AND SILENCE HANGS HEAVY OVER THE SLOWLY CRUMBLING CASTLE... SILENCE BROKEN ONLY BY THE FAINT HUM AND CLATTER OF THE MASSIVE MACHINERY STANDING STARK WITHIN THE CAVERNOUS LABORATORY, UNTIL...



AT LAST! ALL IS IN READINESS!

DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME, YOU SNIVELING INSECT?

LISTEN CLOSELY! YOU WILL STRAP ME TO THAT TABLE AND PLACE THE PLEXIGLASS DOME SHIELD AROUND MY HEAD!

THEN, AT MY COMMAND, YOU WILL THROW THE SWITCH--POWERING THE TRANSFER OF MY MIND TO THE ROBOT'S BODY!

YES, MASTER!

THEN, BLACKSTOKE TAKES HIS PLACE UPON THE PLASTIC PLATFORM... AND HUGO HESITATINGLY BEGINS THE FINAL PROCEDURES...!



HAVE A CARE WITH THAT DOME, YOU FOOL!

YOU'LL NOT SURVIVE TO MAKE A SECOND MISTAKE IF YOU--

DON'T WORRY, MASTER! I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING!

NEXT, THE DOME IN PLACE, HUGO STEPS TO THE CONTROL PANEL--!



WELL, YOU SIMPERING SANDWORM? WHAT'S TAKING YOU SO LONG?

THROW THE SWITCH!!



YES, MASTER --IF YOU INSIST!

KLIK!



OH--MY HEAD--MY HEAD!

IT'S--GOING TO WORK! I CAN TELL IT!

IT'S GOING TO WORK!



ENDLESS, NAMELESS COLORS FLASH BEFORE BLACKSTOKE'S EYES--AND SWIFTLY FADE AWAY, TO BE REPLACED BY AN EBONY MAELSTROM--DARK, ALL-CONSUMING--

--A BOTTOMLESS BLACK PIT REACHING, SUCKING, DRAWING HIM DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO ITS LIGHTLESS FOLDS--!

--UNTIL, AT LAST, THE MYRIAD THOUGHTS AND MEMORY PATTERNS WHICH ARE THE MIND AND ESSENCE OF NATHANIEL BLACKSTOKE CONGEAL ONCE AGAIN--RISING FROM THE VELVET VORTEX...!



IT IS OVER, MASTER!

YOUR GREAT EXPERIMENT IS AN UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS!

YOUR REMARKABLE MIND NO LONGER INHABITS THAT BROKEN BODY BENEATH THE DOME SHIELD!

DO YOU HEAR ME, MASTER? DO YOU HEAR YOUR HUGO??

IT WORKED, HUGO!

IMMORTALITY IS FINALLY MINE!

ONCE I BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO THIS MONSTROUS, METALLIC BODY, I'LL--

WAIT! SOMETHING-- IS WRONG!

THE ROBOT'S PHOTO-ELECTRIC EYE CELLS ALL CHECKED OUT PERFECTLY!

THEN-- WHY CAN'T I SEE??

AND--THE ROBOT'S ARMS--ITS MASSIVE LEGS--!

WHY DON'T THEY RESPOND TO MY MENTAL COMMANDS?

IS MY MIND TRULY INSIDE THE ROBOT AFTER ALL, OR--

SOMETHING'S WRONG-- SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG!

HELP ME, HUGO! HELP ME!

I HOPE YOU LIKE THE NEW BODY I ARRANGED FOR YOU TO INHABIT, MASTER!

AFTER ALL, I COULDN'T LET YOU LIVE INSIDE A CHILLY OLD ROBOT, COULD I?

NO ANSWER, EH? WELL, I'M LEAVING... FOR NOW!

BUT DON'T FRET... I'LL BE BACK!

AFTER ALL... WE WORMS HAVE TO STICK TOGETHER!

WELL, THAT'S THAT! BUT DON'T WORRY ABOUT BLACKSTOKE!

I HEAR THAT HUGO TAKES GREAT CARE OF HIM!



WHY, JUST THE OTHER DAY-- HE EVEN TOOK HIS MASTER FISHING!

END