"The great energy war solved the energy problem. Now we has got plenty of oil....just ain't got no more people..."
GRANDPA, TELL ME AGAIN, HOW IT HAPPENED. PLEASE.

SON!!
YOU KNOW HOW...

NOW, NOW, I SHALL TELL THE LAD ALL I CAN AND KNOW ABOUT...

THEY BROUGHT IT BACK FROM OUTER SPACE. THEY SAID IT WAS HARMLESS.

DOOMSDAY

A RACE THAT WANTED THE EARTH!

BUT IT WASN'T!

WHAT THEY DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT THIS ANIMAL WAS AN ALIEN TELEPATH IN CONTACT WITH AN ALIEN RACE.

AND WE WERE PROVIDING THEM WITH ALL THE INFORMATION THEY WANTED!

A RACE THAT WANTED THE EARTH!
Soon they had all the information they needed to formulate an attack plan. And they did! So well that they won the war without touching us!

They manufactured little accidents and other quite disturbing incidents.

It wasn't long before a malignant suspicion was growing between Earth's nations.

Nobody knows who did it and it wasn't supposed to happen... Someone dropped... the bomb!

And it wasn't long before the big nations had their warbirds in the air.

It didn't take long for the other nations to retaliate.

And soon... nothing was left.
YES, THEY HAD PLANNED WELL...

AFTER THE BRIEF HELL THEY CAME OUT OF THE SKY...

AND PROCESSED TO PICK UP THE PIECES OF A NOW SCARRED AND BROKEN EARTH.

AND NOW, WITH NO CASUALTIES OF THEIR OWN... THEY NOW HAVE...
Johnathon, come see! come see! We can play inside this cave.
You can be the shining knight, and I, the lady to save.

We can search for forgotten treasures, left behind in days of yore.
Or maybe find a hidden passage lined with golden ore.

Johnathon, Johnathon, hurry, hurry, see what I have found.
A hidden chasm, yawning wide, buried deep within the ground.

Melissa dear, I heard your shout from way above the hill.
And now I see what you found, and it causes me to chill.

Come from there, over to me, take slow and deliberate steps,
For you have found the Forever Cave where forgotten ills are kept.

Inside it is a wondrous knight who went in there years ago,
To battle the hideous Alacron, all mankind's deadly foe.

It is said that he battles still, that grand and glorious man,
And he will stay there forever more, to keep Alacron from our land.

On moonlit nights one can hear the clanging of sword on beastly hide,
Hurry Melissa, come here to me, don't try to go inside.

Melissa? Melissa? Are you still there? Speak and calm my fear!
Say that is not your scream or echo that I hear.

Johnathon, Johnathon, come see, come see, a knight, a knight.
And they, and they, see me, see me, they fight, they fight.

Johnathon, Johnathon, help me, help me, I'm caught, I'm caught.
This is not, this is not, the wondrous cave I thought......
Times were, when victims had been plentiful—fruit ripe for the killing. Now lean years were upon the land, and the victims' numbers had dwindled lower and lower until only a scant handful remained.

Hark scanned the horizon, inspecting the crumbling ruins of Chicago and all of the other fallen citadels, had been empty... void of any living creature. Now he must search elsewhere—scratch out new trails in the jungles of rotting vegetation. Somewhere out there, hidden in the recesses of that green hell, victims sheltered... plotted... awaited to taste the kiss of his guns!

A TIME OF TIGERS

Gene Day

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Bloodlust had overtaken him earlier. Hark had spotted a twirling, majestic eagle overhead. He had slain it with but one shot of his rifle, then feasted heartily upon its still warm flesh. But edible wildlife were few. Most carried the rot within their tortured shells... and never did they quench his thirst for the real kill.

Somewhere victims were waiting... waiting for the kill!

The sun beat mercilessly down upon the stalker's gleaming helmet... burning, ever burning, until it threatened to fry the brains within his skull.

Yet Hark dared not remove any of his flexible armour...

10 x MAG RG 7 x 100 YD TR 14 GO

For not always does a hunter retain his sacred role as the foraging tiger in search of prey.

Sometimes hunter becomes...

...Hunted!

KRAK!

SPRANG!

PAIN, searing and hot, knifed the hunter's thick chest.

Solution to the problem...

The Neutra-armor has protected him from a grisly death — for this time anyway. The next shot could pierce his shell, and then...

BRAT! BRAT!

...there will be no next shot!
This is Hunter's supreme moment. The instant of the kill! The joy that passes through his bosom is like the ecstasy of mating...

For the tiger is triumphant!

The assailant is dead. His carcass is barely human in its appearance. It is time to look elsewhere...

A sound at his feet interrupts Hunter's thoughts...

And he is forced to become fully aware that even dead tigers...

Snap!

For victims!

Booby-trap! Set in advance by his dead foe...

SET...

And sprung!

Hunter knows the end is near. His eyes dim and blood oozes from collapsing lungs...

Soft sounds weave their way from the dense foliage of the forest...

And cold blazing eyes peer from dark shadows... hungrily...

Victims!

Hunter knows his words have been foolish... His visions idiotic! It had never been an era of hunters... a time of tigers...

And as the soft padding of bare feet reach his ringing ears from across the glade -- hunter...

...it was always a time of scavengers!!
"Tagg, the last of his village... tracking the surviving 'forester'. They had attacked at dawn. The surprise attack had left this half of the planet with only two..."
“Tagg has tracked relentlessly for hours. The ‘forester’ grows weak.”

“Tagg has found the ‘forester’. Weak and hungry, he has little chance against the likes of Tagg!”

“Yes, he is making mistakes and leaving signs of his trail.”
"TAGG...IS ALONE, FOREVER!"

The final war had destroyed virtually everything. I knew others must have survived so I went on searching.

But I was repeatedly frustrated until I entered the city. I found her in an old department store, knelt over and despondent.

I called to her and she looked up and smiled. To me, she was everything beautiful in a woman.

Every young man carries an image in his mind of an ideal girl and here I was face-to-face with mine. How was I to know I would soon be witnessing her...
EVERYTHING SEEMED TO VANISH AS I LOOKED AT HER.
AS I STARED, HER LIPS CURVED INTO A DEEPER, MORE WELCOMING SMILE.

I PULLED HER CLOSE FEELING THE WARMTH OF HER BODY. KNOWING MYSELF LOST AND DROWNED IN HER.

THEN......
I LOOKED INTO......
HER EYES

IN THEIR MECHANICAL INHUMANITY, I COULD SEE ONLY HORROR. I PUSHED HER AWAY AND RAN.... BUT......LORD HELP ME, SHE GOT UP AND FOLLOWED.

MONTHS LATER I HAD STILL FOUND NO OTHER HUMAN LIFE, AND I GREW TO ACCEPT HER COMPANY.

I SAW A BLANKNESS, AN UNCARING OBJECTIVITY, THEIR UNAWARENESS OF SELF. THOSE EYES NEVER BELONGED TO A..... HUMAN BEING.

SHE WAS A SUCCUBUS, A NEW MODEL OF ANDROID FOR THE ELITE RICH, BUILT TO BE THE PERFECT WOMAN FOR ANY MAN. SHE IS DEAD NOW. FOR EVEN A RICH MAN'S TOY'S BATTERIES RUN DOWN AND THANK GOD I FINALLY STOPPED REPLACING THEM.
A NOTE FROM, The Crystal Press!

- The Crystal Press is looking for artists and writers to help with future issues of Epitaph, and other projects that we have in the works! We pay contributors! So, if you are one of those interested in contributing to The Crystal Press, send some samples of your work; pencils, inks, lettering, or writing, or all these! Please include S.A.S.E. if you want your samples returned!
- Also, this page is for your letters of comment. Feel free to write and let us know what you thought of the first issue of Epitaph. Pro or con, we can take it, I think!?
- Sorry, we are not yet in position to take subscriptions!
- AND, we would like to voice our support for Tim Corrigan Superhero Comics. That's magazine is just what random needed, a bi-monthly 'zine for amateurs. A really fine production too! So, give Tim Corrigan Superhero Comics a try. His address: T.C.S.C., 94 MacArthur Rd., Rochester, New York, 14615. Issues #1, #2, and #3 (60¢ each!)

next issue:
Jim Starlin, and
"Brother Bardox"

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