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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 5 The Empty Hand** Martial Arts in the new World of Darkness
By Eloy Lasanta Art by Christopher Lee Simmons
- 15 Spotlight On: The NecroCyberz** A new online Guild for Wraith: The Oblivion
By J. Edward Tremlett Art by Joshua Gabriel Timbrook
- 17 Of Floating Spirits** Tips for playing Yulan-Jin in Kindred of the East
By Eloy Lasanta Art by Melissa Uran
- 20 Justification** Vampire: The Requiem fiction
By Tony Murlin
- 22 The Broken Mirror** A secret sect and a broken mirror. Fiction for Kindred of the East
By Daniel Acaba

COLUMNS & DEPARTMENTS

- 4 Letter from the Editor**
By Christopher Lee Simmons



A charcoal study of a vampire's victim, by Kat Burress.

JUSTIFICATION

By TONY MURLIN

“Most people who worry about morality ought to.”

– Richard Hugo

On the day of my rebirth, for one perfect moment, there was no line between the Beast inside me and myself. Through dulled senses and deadened skin I felt the rain drop in torrents over my body. There was once a time when the cold meant something, when I grasped for warmth as a matter of instinct. But now there exists only the purely physical knowledge that what I once was is no more, and what I am now is something more and something less, then what I used to be.

Feeling slowly cascaded over my prone form, my weight slowly dragging me into the mud. A silent scream passed from my lips and attempted freedom, but my jaw, clenched in a swirling discord of new emotions that were muted, yet at the same time exited to an insane degree, refused to grant it leave. As the world came steadily into focus, I knew more and more about hatred... and hunger... than I have ever felt before in my life. What was once a dull, low ache rapidly became a fire that burned at the very core of my being. Anger and hunger mixed and became one blinding, indescribable emotion. As I began to rise I felt that the tremors wracking my body were no longer from the icy coldness of the unforgiving rain, but from the hell that erupted behind my eyes.

A seething red haze came over my eyes, enveloping the entire world. Distinguishable patterns became blurring movement in an indecipherable environment. The sounds of rain gave way to a deafening silence as I lost control of my very being. There was a thing inside me that required satiation, and it would not rest until it received its due. My last vestiges of human thought lost its lingering hold on the precipice of my existence once I perceived more movement. After that, all became nothing.

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There is very little in life to assure one who walks its myriad of paths. The only assurances are those that the collective “you” know for absolute certain. You will, at some point in your life, get sick. You will, barring misadventure, eventually wither and die. At least most of you will. Of course, this does, for the most part, leave exception for us.

Who is “us”, you ask? I don’t think you’re ready to know yet. Give you and I some time to become acquainted, and then I might fill you in on my little secret. But you must indulge me, lest I feel

the urge to discontinue the conversation.

Ah... blessed silence. You learn quickly, a trait that I like very much... keep it up. In the days ahead it will almost certainly ensure the continuation of your existence. In the spirit of friendly conversation, let me ask you a question. Is it a sin for a being greater than a man to kill him? Be careful how you answer this question, because the answer you give will be loaded with assumptions you never meant to make. How do I know? Well, take the answer “yes”, for example. If it is, indeed, a sin for a greater being to kill a man, then what does that say of God? He is a greater being, is he not? But, how can he, who is the final arbiter of that which is “sin”, be sinful? Doesn’t his existence as a murderer make him bias, seeing as how his will has brought thousands, if not millions, to their deaths since the birth of the religions of the book? Even if you rule that only one death was God’s will, does that not make him a murderer? If not, maybe he is guilty of the sin of suicide. If we are taught our entire lives that “two wrongs do not make a right”, then how does a murder/sacrifice truly undo the sin of the world. We could always say, “because God is perfect and can do anything”, but that would be too easy.

If God were perfect in every way, shape, and form, then the blight that is this existence would not be as such. The idea that God created evil in order to test man shows that man is a flawed creation. If God is perfect, then how could he create a flawed creation? Either he is flawed (and thus not perfect), or mankind was flawed from the very beginning. Taking the latter into account, would it then serve that there are ways for mankind to transcend his flawed state and become something more... something greater? And if, on the path of this continued transcendence to a less flawed state, the greater being had to kill a more flawed lesser being, one could come to the conclusion that it is not a sin, due to the fact that the death of the lesser being was part of God’s will.

Hmmm... you’re either rapt in fascination or attempting to cower in fear. Either way, I like that I have your attention.

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The sensation was akin to the combination of good sex, a good cigarette, a world shattering epiphany, and the excitement of a near life experience. It’s as if every life affirming experience I’ve

ever known before this night were added together and multiplied by some ludicrous number that exists only in space and national economies.

My violent euphoria was taken from me by a sorrowful whimper, the kind that engenders people to buy those unwanted puppies inside cardboard boxes on wayward street corners. My vision reawakened into a world of brown. At first I thought I still had mud in my eyes, but I quickly realized that it was a cascade of long, wavy locks blocking my vision. My mortification came and went like a New York taxi cab, until my senses returned enough for me to realize that I not only had someone in my arms, but that I was sucking on them. I forced myself to ignore the connotations behind the copper taste in my mouth, and at first became resolute to allow my reverie to continue. I felt truly at peace, clasped onto this person like a lamprey. It was like a womb for my mind, the monster coiled throughout, placating my every desire in one perfect moment. This was love. This was Heaven. This is what I was meant to do with my life.

A sharp burst of lightning cracked hard behind me. Something deep inside spoke to me, warning me that someone, or something, was going to take my Heaven away from me. I was resolute in my need for this feeling, so what I did was squeeze a little harder. At the time I was too enveloped in what I was doing to realize that I was constricting harder and harder every time my Heaven pulsed, or I heard the strange whimper, or the lightning exploded. Eventually, after a twig snapped, the whimpering stopped.

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Have you ever contemplated Hell, my friend? What is Hell, if but the absence of God's sight? Would God need to watch over a perfect creation? No, I doubt that. What would a perfect being need with voyeuristic tendencies? That's right, my gagged friend, he wouldn't need to watch at all. A perfect being does everything perfectly... and thus does not require God's constant vigil.

But if being consigned to Hell is being taken from God's sight, doesn't that make one perfect in God's eyes? Being Damned is transcendence, my friend, or, at the very least, transcendent. If a being becomes Damned, that being is forever taken from the eyes of God, which, in turn, one may surmise that it also frees one from God's plan. Therefore, Damnation is the ultimate freedom... freedom from mortality, freedom from limitation, freedom from the world of man and God.

There is a price for this freedom, as hypocritical as it may seem; the thought that one would be a slave to debt in payment for ultimate freedom is a paradoxical juxtaposition at best. Once set free, you are alone... forever. Your freedom is such an affront to God that his presence tears at your very being. As a being set aside from the God-Created world, the fires of Creation and the light of his loving oppression seek to bring you back into the fold via the Mortal Coil. Fortunately, we have our own Coils. And with each further Coil we transcend, we come closer to our imminent goal...

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Upon regaining consciousness, I discovered that there was blood on my hands now, a viscous glove of spilt life that, like Midas, brings ruination to everything it touches. The rain danced

around my statuesque form as I watched water attempt to clean the sin from my hands.

The form at my feet was now nothing more than a thing, an object once imbued with life that now surged like frozen liquid fire through my veins. Once there was bliss, now there is only the mocking laughter of the Serpent, who brought ruination to my own personal innocence. The red fruit of Eden was taken from the Eve at my feet, her body ravished, crushed, and laid disdainfully at my feet. I now knew evil; I now knew that I had become like the Eve sinking into the mud at my feet. I remember the precious feeling of her heartbeat as I held her body close to mine, the warmth of her skin as my cold mouth rested open and hollow on her supple flesh, and the feeling of her life, as the years left in hers came to rest in me to fuel one more day of my blasphemy.

The percussion of thunder rang loudly in my ears as the wind caused the trees to play a subtle melody. Nature itself roared in applause of this silent song, a requiem for Eve, and her new Adam. There was no doubt within my mind after this point that I was indeed damned. Through vicious wrath I had sated my gluttonous thirst. I had become sin incarnate, a monster so abhorrent that life itself had left me, and now I stand, cold, dead, and hollow.

In my rush to learn what it was to live, to stare intently into the abyss, but I had completely ignored the eyes staring at me back. Now I know exactly what must be done to live... others must die. The men and women in the world must now become my Eucharist, for their blood shall give me life. The prospect was too much to bear, the idea that a higher power would allow these things to happen. I made one last promise before I initiated myself into a race of liars: I promised that I would become like unto God himself, if only to prove that transcendence lies in the realms beyond his sight...

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I bet you're asking what it's like to be Damned. What it's like to know, for a fact, that God does not like you, and, if anything, would like to see you obliterated. It's quite liberating, I assure you. As a man, before my Embrace some seventy-five years ago, I was quite concerned about my place in God's plan and what he thought of me. Every day I took it on faith that he truly loved me like the good book said he did, and I followed all the little rules and regulations required of me... like all good Christians. Oh, sure, I slipped every now and then. I enjoyed the drink a little too much one night (despite its illegality), and on the next I would enjoy a... bad woman. Heh. But a quick trip to the confessional and the requisite renunciation of my acts was enough to get me in, right?

Deep inside I felt that the answer was not one I'd like to hear, but I held hope that, despite my faults, I was the type of man that would get to sit next to the throne of the Lord when my day finally came. That I would be forgiven. But then the nagging questions began: "What if my religion isn't the correct one" or "What if my religion is correct, but I am ultimately a failure in the eyes of God?" For a man as concerned over religious matters as I was, these were questions to which I lost sleep. Then, one day I met my un-Maker, and became... free.

Hmmm.... You aren't going anywhere... let me tell you a story...