

~~Waterfield~~ LASFS

# Mephisto

CANADA'S WEIRD FANZINE



BD

# MEPHISTO

BD

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER by Gordon L. Peck

SATAN SPEAKS (editorial) . . . . . 2

GIRL OF THE GREEN PASTURES (fiction) by Ray Elliott . . . . . 3

"The smell of sulphur and brimstone invaded the room. A small green and white flame flickered and went out. Dead eyes stared at a whisp of grey smoke drifting slowly upward . . . . ."

PRO - PANITY (excerpts from letters) . . . . . 6

THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND BELIEFS (article, first of a series) by Fred Hunter, Jr. . . . . 7

All religions are basically the same.

THE TWO MASTERS (play in one act) by Walter Starling . . . . . 8

For one man it was a triumph, for the other a disillusionment like the million other disillusionments he had experienced since Times beginning.

Some wish no. I will show you a land where people attend to their own affairs and yet assist when assistance is asked of them. I will show you a land where open-mindedness reigns; and along the road to this paradise, we shall talk together of weird unearthly things and sleep together under cool starry skies. We will criticize each other and jest with each other. But stop, do you think I am tempting you? Perhaps I am but is tempting a sin? Have not we all heard the temptations of another man, telling us of another kingdom? There is room for those too. Their beliefs are welcome.

MEPHISTO published approximately quarterly by Alan Child, 880 Kingsway, Vancouver, B.C. Canada. Fantastic and religious material needed desperately. Will exchange subscriptions with any fanzine. (I can hardly stand to lose on that arrangement) Advertisements exchanged with any fanzine. Sub. rate 5¢ copy





# Satan Speaks

Are you ready my friends? The way is not very long and the road is wide. At times you will find the journey monotonous. Other times, I trust, you will find things of interest along the way. Come at least the first mile. You can always turn back. But enough of this double talk. Now I must greet you. Hello. And now a few things about MEFHISTO. To begin with, it's a mess. There will be no controversy over that point. It shall remain a mess because I have little time (ever hear that one before?) and because it must be hacked (I see little sense in buying a mimeograph when I will probably be called up in a few months). The next issue should be out in March, or at the latest, in May. Of course, if the magazine dies suddenly, all subscriptions will be returned. Oh yes, subscriptions: MEFHISTO, following this first issue, which as you have probably judged, is free, will sell at 5¢ a copy. I suppose I am expected to say that my mag is another link in the chain of Canadian fanzines; very well I have fulfilled that obligation. I will say quite freely that MEFHISTO with the exception of the letters printed, is all-Canadian this number. What's the matter, Yankees, are Canadians the only people going to the devil?

Thanks to those who made this issue possible. Thanks to Gordon Peck who did the cover and most of the other art work. Thanks to Fred Furter for his article. Fred, by the way, is working like a fiend at McGill University with the result that he has dropped out of affairs to some extent. But Fred, please try to take time off to write the next chapter. Thanks also to newcomers to fanity who have done admirable work for MEFH. The first of these, Roy Elliott has been a friend of mine for the best part of my life. Recently, I interested him a little in fanity and thus got a story from him. He also draws. Anyone desiring some of his art work may contact him through me. The second prodigy, Walter Starling, is also a good friend of mine. He writes little, but what he does write packs quite a punch. It is possible that Walt has unknowingly started a MASTER series. I have written a theory on the Barth's ruler and called it THE MASTER'S WORKSHOP, which will likely appear in the next issue. Let's have some more ideas on this business.

Now, what kind of a mag do you want this to be? Do you want it to feature broad humour or do you want it to feature broad humour and serious stuff or do you want just serious stuff with a few touches of cold humour? Do you want the editorial to remain SATAN SPEAKS or do you want it to be HOT FROM HADES as Gargal Crouch recommends? Do you want the letter section to be WORDS OF DAMNATION AND ACCLAMATION or MOANS OF THE DAMNED (letter also a brain-storm of friend Crouch).

By the way all those sending material may consider themselves in the BROTHERHOOD OF DEMONS. I hope to print some membership cards soon. The Brotherhood will have no definite rules unless someone would like to make some, and follow no program unless someone wants to run it. In fact there is as little sense in it as in other things fans do. To show that you are in the Brotherhood sign the initials B.D. after your signature. I have said my share. Now let's hear from you.

*Mephisto*

# Girl OF THE

BY ROY ELLIOTT

# Green Flame

As Richard Devlon stood waiting for his bus one evening after work a friend approached him.

"Hello Dick." Richard turned. "Why, hello Harry."

"Doing anything special to-night?" Harry asked.

"Why--Why-- No. No, I don't think so. Why?"

"Just thought you'd like to come over to-night. Havin' a big party."

"Party?" asked Richard. It must be something pretty special, he thought, for Harry Delano to throw a party. But then Harry's conception of a big party was probably a beer and dancing to a juke box.

"Sure," cried Harry, waking Richard from his dreaming by slapping him heartily on the back. "It's for Joey. He's getting hitched, remember?"

"Oh yes, sure, I remember. Queer how I forgot." He studded enthusiastically, "Don't worry. I'll be there. Satan, himself, couldn't keep me away!"

OH NO ???

The bus finally came along. Upon boarding it, Richard saw that all the seats were filled, all but one. There was a girl occupying the seat next to it. He walked to the vacant seat, turned to sit down, then stood and gaped in awe at the girl.

She looked up at him, then spoke in a soft, musical voice: "Whatever are you staring at, Mr. Devlon?"

"Why ---- nothing," he stammered. Then he realized that she had called him "Mr. Devlon". "How did you know my name?"

"I know quite a bit about you. Your name is Richard Devlon. You are a stock broker for the A. C. Jason Company. You are single and live in a modest three-room apartment in the Austin Block."

Richard was stunned. "But how did you know all this?" he asked.

"Let's let that remain my secret, shall we?" She realized that he was still standing. "Sit down?"

Richard sat down but continued to stare at her. Never before in his entire life had he seen a girl quite like this one. She was not exactly beautiful, yet there was something ---- a faint unearthliness about her. "Perhaps," Richard thought, "It is because she is so pale."

The bus screamed to a stop. Richard got up and walked to the door. Some unseen force made him turn and look back. The girl, too, had risen. He stepped down onto the pavement, lit a cigarette, and walked toward his apartment. He had the uneasy feeling that he was being followed, ignored it and hurried on. When he reached the entrance to his apartment block, he turned abruptly. The girl was indeed following him. Possessed of a dread unease, he ran rapidly up the stairs, dashed down the corridor to his apartment. He reached his door. In his haste, he fumbled his key. Finally, however, he got inside. He leaned against the door and shivered with fear.

"What's the matter with me?" he asked himself. "Have I gone crazy?"

He gave a shrill scream as he felt a hand upon his arm.



"Hello Richard," that dreadful, soft voice said.  
He turned in terror. It was she.

"What---how---did---did you get in here?"

"I've been waiting for you, Richard," she replied. "Yes waiting for a long time."

"What---do---you mean waiting?"

"You must come with me," said the girl, "Your time is near. You will be mine."

"Get out!" Richard screamed hysterically. "Get out!"

"We will be gay," she informed him. "We will be together." It is not really disagreeable, except at first, when there is pain...."

"No!" he shrieked.

"Come with me," she said softly, hypnotically.

"No!" he screamed, now thoroughly terrified.

Her body began to glow. The smell of sulphur and brimstone invaded the room. Smoke rose around her snapely white legs. Then flames licked around her lithe form. Not earthly flames, but weird green and white flames. A soft roar-----then louder-----LOUDER!

"Richard, come with me!" she screamed above the din.

He stared, speechless. The roar increased. The flames grew larger! Brighter!

"I shall wait for you!" she called, her voice maddeningly shrill  
"But I am impatient!"

The room was a chaotic mad-house of smoke and flame. The noise was unbearable. Louder it became! LOUDER! Suddenly there came a deafening crash. Then utter silence.

The smoke slowly disappeared.

.....  
Harry Delano and Joey Ross were a block away from Richard's apartment. They could see Richard's window plainly. One moment it was the orange of a light globe, the next it was a brilliant green, intermingled with a dazzling white.

"Harry, look!" Joey called, "The place is on fire!"

They raced to the apartment. The place was in an uproar. The noise was deafening. They forced their way to Richard's rooms. The house detective was hammering at the door. Suddenly there came a thundering crash. Then silence. The door gave way. Richard Devlog lay unconscious on the floor.

.....  
When Richard regained consciousness, he found himself in the private ward of a hospital. His two friends, Harry and Joey were sitting beside his bed.

"How are you, pal?" Harry asked.

Richard looked at him in a dazed fashion. Finally he asked, "What happened? How did I get here?"

"We brought you here. Suppose you tell us what happened."

"But I--I don't understand."

"Same here," said Joey, "For instance, where did that sulphury smell come from? And what scorched all the furniture?"

Richard looked at him in disbelief. "Then--then it really happened?" he choked out.

Fuzzled, Harry inquired, "What really happened, Dick?"

The door opened and a nurse entered. She walked to the foot of the bed and stood staring at Dick. He paid no attention to her. Finally she spoke.

"Are you ready, Richard?"

"Ready for what?" he asked.

She remained silent. Richard looked at her. His eyes bulged. He tried to scream, but could not.

"You must come with me this time, Richard."

Richard continued to stare. Joey stood up and looked queerly at

Richard and the nurse. "Sat what is this," he asked. "A private show or can any one get in on it?"  
 He received no answer. The girl's soft voice continued.  
 "Are you ready, Richard?"  
 Richard's terror mounted. Perspiration poured down his brow.  
 "Come with me now." Her voice was becoming more shrill.  
 He gave her one, long terrible glance, screamed a ghastly, hysterical scream, then collapsed, his face a picture of terror and death.

"Now you are mine!" cried the girl.  
 The two men looked at her, then back at Richard.  
 "Hey!" Harry cried, realization dawning upon him, "He's dead."  
 They looked at each other, then at the foot of the bed. They gasped. Their eyes met. Speechless, they stood, then turned and dashed from the room.

THE SMELL OF SULPHUR AND BRIMSTONE WAS STRONG IN THE ROOM, A SMALL GREEN AND WHITE FLAME FLICKERED AT THE FOOT OF THE BED AND WENT OUT. DEVLON'S EYES SEEMED TO STARE AT A WHISP OF GREY SMOKE, DRIFTING SLOWLY UPWARD.

End.

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BY FRED HURTER

## Chapter one

The origin and development of religious beliefs has in recent years attracted much attention, and that particular branch of Anthropology has furnished a wealth of material. When this line of research, which is quite recent, was begun, there was considerable confusion, as it was found that there were at least three different sources of religious origin; and each as it was discovered was claimed by the discoverer to be the source. Now however that the field has been fairly thoroughly covered, we can take a comprehensive view of the whole matter. It will be seen immediately that the three "sources" are steps in a large evolutionary process that has kept pace with mental development of Man, all over the earth. Thus it is that we find the same religious thoughts and beliefs cropping up again and again all over the world, and thus it is that among the more primitive races of to-day, will be found the beliefs of our own primitive ancestors. The Christian Church has kept itself aloof from these researches and has still managed to convince the public that it is unique, in spite of the fact that it has the same origin as paganism and that by far the larger part of its doctrines and rites are identical with those of pagan religions.

As has been mentioned, there are three distinct "origins", or rather steps in religious evolution; first, the connection of religion with the movement of the sun, moon, and the planets in the sky, which finally lead to the belief of a god ruling the world from a great distance; second, the nature myths, or the connection of religion with the growth of food-bringing plants; and third, the phallic cults, the connection of religion with the power of sex and reproduction. These are listed in the order in which they appear in most texts on the subject, the order in which religious evolution has been investigated. However, in the actual evolution of religious thought, the order is the exact opposite, as it is at once apparent that the third mentioned step was probably noticed by primitive man long before he realized the existence of seasons, and that the astronomical connection of religion could not have been developed until recently, relatively speaking.

Fear formed the basis of all these steps, the basis of the whole development. Through fear, divinities and demons were created, and through fear, rites for the appeasement and placation of these divinities and demons were established. And again we see the connection of religious development with mental development, for fear, the kind that would result in the creation of divinities would not become apparent until the evolution of self-consciousness; until man began to realize that he was an individual, that at some time he would die. Before that, when the human mind was the same as the animal mind, fear was only a protective instinct. Man was untroubled by any such thoughts or things that might destroy himself, was untroubled by, and did not think of the future. Thus it was only with the development of self-consciousness, when man began to stimulate his imagination with thoughts of death that he created divinities.

To quote Edward Carpenter, "The immense force and domination of Fear in the first self-conscious stages of the human mind is a thing which can hardly be exaggerated, and which is even difficult for some

of us moderns to realize. But naturally as soon as man began to think about himself --- a frail phantom in the midst of tremendous forces of whose nature and mode of operation he was entirely ignorant --- he was beset with terrors; dangers loomed upon him on all sides. Even to-day it is noticed by doctors that one of the chief obstacles to the cure of illness among some black or native races is sheer superstitious terror; and Thanatomania is the recognized word for a state of mind (obsession of death) which will often cause a savage to perish from a mere scratch."

To allay this fear, taboos developed, which are basically warnings against the doing of dangerous acts, or such as might be considered dangerous. In time some became rather far-fetched, the fear of incest for instance, as Freud mentions in Totem and Taboo, developed into such taboos that forbid a man to eat with his sister-in-law or walk behind his mother-in-law along the beach until the rising tide washed away her foot-prints. These taboos were the beginning of religion.

Life under such a strict set of regulations was not very easy for primitive people, but fear was more or less overcome, and they certainly provided for the growth of self-control. In time, as more became known about the world through observation, the basic fear became transposed into a sort of awe and finally into reverence. Thus by taking a broad view of the subject we see the connection of religious and mental development; first the animal mind, with no religious thoughts, then the beginning of self-consciousness in primitive man, bringing with it fear, taboos, and superstition, then the gradual increase in knowledge, leading to the belief in Magic, then the personification of nature (the nature myths) and finally the beginnings of that state of mind we term as civilized, and the appearance of the solar myths.

This evolution of religious thought has been the same all over the world. Indeed, it was this strange similarity of religions that first attracted the attention of anthropologists, and lead to their investigation. Thus it is seen that all religions are basically one, that Christianity is but a branch of one episode, and that since religion is an evolutionary process, there is promise in the future of a better conception, a better understanding of our place in the universe.

Now, after this rather long and somewhat boring introduction we will in future chapters investigate each phase separately and inclusively, and I ask the reader to bear in mind that they are all but parts of a large pattern, and that though the treatment will be exclusive, all present religions are built up of and interwoven with all the past religions (i.e. as there is no religion that is pure solar myth or pure nature myth, for the sake of simplicity the solar and nature aspect will be treated separately). As the solar myths were the first to be investigated, and as they are more definite and provable, we will begin our investigation with them, even though they form the most recent development in religious thought. From them, we will move backwards, branching out on the way to a discussion of various rites.

((((((((((S))))))))))

As the evolution of religious thought and beliefs is a rather large and complex subject, even a brief treatment of it will take several articles. I strongly recommend that anyone interested in this subject, should, after reading this brief outline, read Pagan Christ by J. M. Robertson, The Golden Bough by Dr. Frazer, and Pagan and Christian Creeds by Edward Carpenter, which form the texts from which the material for this series has been drawn. F. H.



# PRO-FANITY

## EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS

A PROMINANT CANADIAN FAN ----- FRED HURTER OF MONTREAL.

Well here it is. /THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND BELIEF in this issue .. Sa./ The first chapter. I got your letter and immediately sat down and wrote it. I realized that if I put it off, I would never get it done. This the first chapter is rather dull, but I felt that it was needed as an introduction. The others will be interesting; eyeopeners.

When is your rag coming out????? /I dunno .. Sa./

FROM HAGERSTOWN ACROSS THE LINE WRITES HARRY WARNER, JR.

The enclosed obituary gives full and complete details, in all their gory blackness. Fandom will have to take it bravely. The war is apt to cause even greater horrors than the suspension of SPACEWAYS, in the years to come.

I note that you're planning a couple of fanzines. /Harry has evidently been misinformed --- MEPHY is my only baby/ Ave atque vale! It's quite unusual for me to say I'll subscribe, instead of asking whether you're willing to exchange with SPACEWAYS.....

ERIC FREDERIC RUSSELL SENDS SOME INTERESTING NEWS FROM SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA.

Aussie fanity isn't very big, there are not more than 35 fans that make up our little kingdom. At present the war has curtailed many of our activities and also kept a lot of fans from participating in affairs, such as those in the forces. Also some fans have dropped out of affairs altogether, whilst some are seen only occasionally.

One of the biggest factors responsible for the decline in activities was the Commonwealth's prohibition of the importation of most American pulp magazines, including all the science fiction magazines. This started in June '40. But this did not seem so bad for we received occasional mags from kind American fans in exchange for various items. Also we had TALES OF WONDER appearing every three months, a British reprint of ASTOUNDING every month, and a similar issue of UNKNOWN every alternate month. Now ToW has ceased publication because of paper difficulties and there are no more reprint UNKNOWN. Now, we thought we were sunk. Then a Sydney publisher brought out a series of small paper-covered books including - western, detective, adventure, and SCIENCE FICTION!!!! This was good news and we wrote to him, receiving the reply that more were forthcoming 'if the Japs will let us'. So far he has put out 4 and a rival has issued 1. So we will have Currawonges and the ASTOUNDING reprints.

Soon Ted (that's my brother - fan also) and I will be publishing a maglet similar to Bob Tucker's YEARBOOK. It will be called the AUSTRALIAN FANMAG INDEX, will consist of 30 pages approx. and list the contents of all Australian fanmags that appeared between 1937 and the end of 1941. Price will be 20¢ per copy or the equivalent in Canadian editions of stf mags. By the time you get this letter it will have been published. Perhaps you could act as a Canadian agent for the INDEX and ask any of the fans in your locality whether they want copies and send the order to me and I'll mail them to you for distribution or to individual fans. /Any fans interested please contact me and I'll see that you get an INDEX ..Sa./

Walter Starling's

# THE TWO MASTERS

CHARACTERS (in order of their appearance):

THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

FEAR  
LOVE  
ANGER  
HOPE

CYNICISM

FAITH  
BRAVERY  
THE SOUL  
MAN, THE 1ST.

MAN, THE 2ND.

(As the curtain rises, a bare stage is revealed. In the background there is a black silk curtain. In front, centre, the SUBCONSCIOUS MIND is seated. He is dressed in a silk, flowing robe.)

SUBCONSCIOUS MIND:

I am the subconscious mind. I never sleep. I possess all the characteristics of the conscious mind plus the element of confusion. Although some characteristics of the conscious mind I have in very small proportions, the offset of that mind plants them firmly in me so that they remain always. I am more creative than the conscious mind. I conjure up weird unreal visions, always influenced by something seen by me when the body which I inhabit, is awake. I am the master of dreams wherein unbelievable horror plays a great part ----

(The lights dim, and then a spot comes up I. A man in a black robe, whose face cannot be seen, kneels down. Another man with a huge sword, swings the weapon and lets it fall toward the kneeling man's head. Before it strikes the spot goes out. The lights come up. The incident was only a few seconds in duration.)

And yet the incident you just saw will soon be a reality.

(FEAR enters r. He, like the other characteristics who later enter is dressed after the same fashion as the SUBCONSCIOUS MIND. Like the others, FEAR has a sign across his chest with his name upon it. FEAR's hair is dishevelled and his eyes are red.)

FEAR:

No! It cannot be. I won't believe it. I try to sleep --- to hide the dreadfulness of it from me, but always it returns. Why should this happen? Why must we all die?

SUBCONSCIOUS MIND:

It will happen. It will happen in five hours.

FEAR:

Must you be so cruel? Does it not pain you to think that soon you will be no more. Think --- no longer will you be able to soothe my brothers and me with sweet dreams --- no longer will you be able to torture us with your fearful nightmares. (He covers his face with his hands and weeps.)

SUBCONSCIOUS MIND:

Of course it troubles me. But panic is of no avail.

(Enter ANGER c. He pushes FEAR roughly across the stage.)

ANGER:

You idiot! Must you wake us all with your childish prattle?

SUBCONSCIOUS MIND:

Are you, then, able to sleep when death looms ever nearer?

ANGER:



There is nothing I can do. (His voice becomes louder) But why in Hell must this fine body perish? To think that it must die and we must die, for something we did not do. You know that. There has not been a time in months when I have triumphed over you and my other brothers sufficiently to kill a man. But they say that it is so --- the lunatics! So this fine young son of the desert must die.

FEAR (sobbing):

No more shall he ride over great expanses of land. No more shall he ride with his Nomad tribe.

ANGER:

Shut up!

(LOVE enters r. He places a consoling hand upon FEAR's shoulder.)

LOVE:

We know that this wasn't brought upon us by you.

ANGER:

Of course, you do --- dolts!

(He strides out c.)

LOVE:

I can remember well the times I have admired his reflection in the calm waters of some oasis. How sweet the breeze used to feel when night approached. How sweet life was!

(Enter HOPE and FAITH l. SUBCONSCIOUS MIND rises and walks slow-up-stage and sits down again.)

HOPE:

How sweet the future life is. There is no strife, no unkindness. Life is sweet in the tranquil domain of Allah.

FEAR:

Perhaps --- perhaps there is no future life.

(Enter CYNICISM c. He stands in the doorway.)

CYNICISM:

There is no future life. Certainly not. We mortals are but toys for the Almighty to laugh at and kill when he pleases. It is indeed a good thing that we shall die. It is a good thing that we shall stop our stupid bungling in this senseless world. (To LOVE) Praise our boss in your smug way if you wish, but it is every bit as imperfect as the bodies of other mortals.

FAITH:

Yes, the very minds of men are imperfect. But I am confident that the noble virtues of this mind will not surrender to such base characters as you and FEAR. The son of the desert will meet his death courageously.

FEAR:

No, it is not possible. They will come and drag our body out. There will be a long walk and then the body will be forced down, a sharp blade will whistle through the air and our blood will mingle with the sand. The head will roll over and over on the ground. (He walks the length of the stage.) That will not be. It need not be. The guards have not found the pistol hidden in the robes. We need only shout to the arm to raise the pistol and press the trigger (he trembles) and the ordeal will be spared us. It is a quick death and as we must die ---

HOPE:

Perhaps it seems to you that we must die, but there might be a pardon.

FAITH:

It is no use destroying the body through FEAR.

(Enter ANGER c. He pushes his way past CYNICISM)

ANGER:

Stupid fools. We must not destroy the body ourselves. Do you not see that it would be a far better thing if we shot as many of our

MR. FAIR, STOP! YOU ARE GOING TO RESENT! YOU DO NOT THINK SO? OTHERS DID NOT THINK SO UNTIL THEY FOUND THEMSELVES WALKING DOWN PURITY STREET, TIPPING THEIR HATJES AT PASSERS-BY. REPORT BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE. SUBSCRIBE TO REPHISIC AND DISMISS FOREVER FEARS OF HEAVEN.

captors, as possible, as they come. That would pay the filthy swine for their injustice.

CYNICISM:

But the fact remains that they would be responsible for our death in the end. If we fire the gun, think how cheated they will feel. Besides the sooner we end this foolish existence the better.

LOVE:

Life might be better, but every minute of it is precious. We must not do this thing.

(Enter BRAVERY 1.)

BRAVERY:

It would be a sign of cowardice. The only way in which we can win a victory is to face the sword unflinchingly.

HOPE (to SUBCONSCIOUS MIND):

Surely you don't think we should commit suicides, do you?

SUBCONSCIOUS MIND:

It is said that death is an eternal dream. If that is so, I shall not die. I yearn for such an existence. I yearn to be away from you all --- you quibbling infants. Raise the gun!

FEAR:

Point the gun at the temple --- close to the temple.

FAITH:

It is giving way to base characters.

HOPE:

There may be a paragon.

LOVE:

Life is good.

ANGER:

Save the silly dogs that they can never kill us.

BRAVERY:

Be noble. Face the sword unafraid.

CYNICISM:

The sooner this foolish existence is ended, the better.

(There is a tumult of voices. Then above the noise ----)

FEAR:

Don't do it. Don't!

(There is a shattering explosion back-stage. All the lights on the stage go out, and at the same time all the voices cease and there is a sound of falling bodies. There is a pause and then a light appears c. illuminating SOUL. The SOUL wears no label.)

SOUL:

I am the soul of this dying body. I have seen the furthest star for I have travelled a good deal. I am not confined to this little brain. I am of a restless character. Most of my life I have spent away from this frame and I shall leave it now forever. I am about to depart on my greatest journey. Soon I shall enter a door which I have hitherto found closed to me --- a door behind which ever I know not what is to be found. (To the almost-dead bodies, which occasionally groan or writhe on the floor.) You sometimes doubted my existence, didn't you? Yet here am I --- greater than all of you. There is not one thing which you have that I have not. I have much more understanding than you have and more intelligence



by far. And then, I am eternal. They may do what they want with this body. They may lop off the limbs, burn it until only cinders remain --- still I am not the least affected.

(The stage is now completely illuminated, although not as brightly as before. It can now be seen that all the bodies are lying face-down. MAN, THE 1ST. appears at l. He has a very gentle and kind face, at the same time being stern. He is taller than any of the other characters. SOUL notices MAN, THE 1ST. and runs over to him.)  
I suppose I am to go with you.

MAN 1:

I am afraid not.

SOUL:

But why? I have never doubted your power, O great one. I have lived a good life, and I didn't kill that man, I swear I didn't.

MAN 1:

I know that you did not kill him, my son.

SOUL:

Then why is it that I cannot go with you?

MAN 1:

O, the number of crimes the evil man can commit against me. Perhaps you forget when you killed your body that I forbid such an action. Furthermore, it is my demand that every man must prize above all other things and give more time to me than to anything else. Have you done this? You have cared more about your family than about me you have given more time to courting girls than to worshipping me. You have even worshipped inanimate things such as wealth. Thus I cannot possibly allow you to enter into my realm.

SOUL (very worried):

But --- but can't you forgive a penitent sinner (drops on his knees). I will mend my ways. Believe me. I'll do anything, but please take me with you. I must go with you.

MAN 1 (gently but firmly):

O wicked man, you have done the unforgivable. I am the most lenient person imaginable but I am very jealous. That is my right. Besides, if I took you with me, think what evil effect your presence would have upon my perfect followers. Of course, I haven't many followers yet, but I have faith in the ultimate goodness of man.

(SOUL rises) When man can surrender himself to me saying, "Your will be done," then, in truth the Kingdom will be very close to having become established.

SOUL (dryly):

I am intrigued.

MAN 1:

Farewell.

SOUL:

But where do I go now?

MAN 1 (smiles benevolently, places his hand upon SOUL's shoulder):  
Have courage, my son.

(SOUL wanders slowly back to the middle of the stage, glancing at MAN 1, as if he thought the latter mad. His glance also speaks of outrage and great disillusionment. He sits on one of the still moving characters and takes a thoughtful attitude. He then puts his hands over his eyes. MAN, THE 2ND, also a large man, enters r. He is rather stooped.)

MAN 2:

Okay, kid, snap out of it.

SOUL (rising):

Very well. I'll go. But I didn't think I was as bad as that. Isn't there some in-between place?

MAN 2 (assuming a conversational tone):

Now you don't have to come with me. You can hang around this place if you want. But 'spretty tame. I think you'd like my home better.

SOUL (rather elated):

You mean you won't make me go?

MAN 2:

Nope. And you ask how bad you are. Well, I'll tell you, you're not bad enough. For instance ---- (notices MAN 1) Whoops, forget. Well, have you ever --- (bends over and whispers to SOUL.)

SOUL (alarmed):

Certainly n . . .

MAN 2:

There you see. And I'm supposed to have fun with guys like you around. It ain't hummi! Well, you don't seem to want to come anyhow. S'long. (starts away)

SOUL (hastily jumping up):

No, don't go. I may be alone for a long time. Let's talk. (MAN 2 turns) Er --- won't you sit down? (MAN 2 sits on one of the bodies. SOUL takes his former seat.)

MAN 2:

You're curious?

SOUL:

Perhaps.

(A pause)

SOUL:

How is the weather in your realm? A little warm?

MAN 2:

I can't complain. I'm used to it. Doesn't take long.

SOUL:

You have a lovely tan.

MAN 2:

Thank you.

(MAN 2's seat moves violently, throwing him forward.)

SOUL:

Frightful nuisance.

MAN 2:

Quite.

SOUL:

Hurt?

MAN 2:

Nope. (Seats himself on a more stable character) I say, you're afraid of me, aren't you?

SOUL:

I was. I'm not now--- very.

MAN 2:

Then what's wrong with you? Are you sorry that you aren't going (jerks his head toward MAN 1) with the other guy?

SOUL:

I'd rather counted on it.

MAN 2:

Well, you're very queer, but I don't blame you. I don't blame anyone for any ideas they have as long as they have fun. But somehow or other, I don't think you guys have much.

SOUL:

What do you mean "us guys"?

MAN 2:

Conventional guys. Yes, you're either very queer or else you don't know what the score is.

SOUL (sarcastically):



Would you like to re-educate me?

MAN 2:

Don't mind if I do. Now to start with, you think I'm evil don't you?

SOUL:

Naturally.

MAN 2:

Propoganda. 'Spot true. That's the illusion you all suffer from it seems. I'm not horribly evil. I'm just open-minded.

SOUL:

Can't one be too open-minded?

MAN 2:

It's a world of extremes, kid. I have to play my part. No in-betweens. Jes, there (motions to MAN 1) is at one end of the ladder and I'm at the other. Those in the middle just flutter in the breeze --- half-dead. No, I'm completely open-minded. And believe me, kid, it doesn't work too badly.

SOUL:

I suppose you don't like ---- Jes very much?

MAN 2:

Why not? He's a fine fellow. But of course, he's not my type. I've tried to be friendly, but it's no use, he's a terrible prude. I've sent him invitations, everything. Well, he's very stubborn. Sticks to his guns no matter what. I think he knows he's wrong sometimes, but he won't admit it. Ah, well.

SOUL:

You say that things don't work out too badly in your realm. How is that? On Earth it was always the or --- open-minded people who made the most trouble.

MAN 2:

Please don't compare the Earth with my joint. On the Earth, people are material. They must eat, etc. Your evil doings result from, no, not open-mindedness, but selfishness. Open-mindedness does not cause any serious crimes on Earth. At least it isn't the main factor in many crimes. The reason I have to have an open mind is to forgive the evil-doers.

SOUL:

You have no material needs. Then, I suppose, you gain pleasure from simple things like playing in fire and that sort of thing. Rare sport, no doubt.

MAN 2:

Man, don't talk rubbish. We still have our love of culture, most of our emotions and --- (judges SOUL in the ribs) we still have our wits.

SOUL (as his eyes widen):

Ghhh.

MAN 2:

as we have no need for money, the dances are really the only trouble. Most of them are --- heh heh, like state-property. And so are the men. A man can have as many wives as he likes, if the wives are willing and the dames can have as many husbands as they like. The trouble sometimes comes when a man and dame decide on the mono-marriage system. When they do we thank nothing of it --- it's their right --- but occasionally someone gets jealous and the fireworks start.

SOUL:

I guess I owe you an apology. I had the whole thing figured wrong. I thought you were kind of a fiend who tortured helpless victims. I didn't know. And if you'll have me down there, I'll do --- my best.

--- to be a little --- more evil.

MAN 2 (laughing):

Right. Glad to have you. Got some swell pictures to show you too, and a pip of a horse all ready. A phantom horse. Well, let's go. (They swagger to door r. arm in arm.) Whoops. One moment. (The bodies on the floor give one final movement and are still.) Thought you were going to live for a second there. Would have been awful after all my trouble.

(They continue, laughing. SOUL gives one quick glance at MAN 1, and they exit. MAN 1's eyes show a mixture of anger and sadness, and the proud, stubborn expression on his face remains.)

End.

(((((L))))))



The Audience