

# Cauldron of Evil

GO, SARAH MAUNT! OUT OF OUR VILLAGE! INTO THE FOREST WHERE YOU BELONG!

KILL HER! THE WITCH PUT AN EVIL EYE ON MY CROPS!

YE CALL ME A WITCH! THEN, I SHALL HAVE A WITCH'S REVENGE!



**I**N THE FASTNESSES OF THE OZARKS, THE MOUNTAIN PEOPLE BELIEVE IN THE DARK TALES OF WITCHCRAFT, AND THOSE WHO DABBLE IN THE EVIL SECRETS OF THE DREAD CULT MUST FEEL THE FULL WEIGHT OF THEIR NEIGHBORS' FURY! FOR THOSE WHO FIND THE KEY TO THE POWERS OF DARKNESS MUST BE DRIVEN BEYOND THE PALE!

IT WAS THE NIGHT OF THE DARK MOON, WHEN EVIL REIGNED, THAT AMOS WHITCOMBE, VILLAGE ELDER, DROVE SARAH MAUNT OUT, BECAUSE SHE PRACTICED WITCHCRAFT...

WE DARE NOT GO ANY FURTHER! THIS IS THE WITCHES' NEST! ON THIS NIGHT, THE DREAD CREATURES OF DARKNESS ARE ABOUT!

AYE! SARAH MAUNT WILL BOTHER US NO MORE! SHE WILL DIE IN THE WITCHES' NEST!



DIE, WILL I? YE SHALL PAY FOR THIS-- EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU! SARAH MAUNT WILL HAVE HER REVENGE!



WHAT THINK YE, AMOS? IS SHE REALLY ONE OF THEM--ONE OF THE EVIL SISTERS--A WITCH?

SARAH MAUNT PRACTICED WITCH-CRAFT, LEMUEL! SHE HAD THE PROSCRIBED BOOKS! SHE IS NOT A FULL-FLEDGED WITCH YET, WITH ALL THE POWERS OF WITCHCRAFT! BUT THIS IS AN EVIL WE MUST NIP IN THE BUD!



DEEP INTO THE WITCHES' NEST, OLD SARAH WANDERED! DEEPER INTO ITS TANGLED DEPTHS THAN ANY VILLAGER HAD EVER VENTURED BEFORE! AND, AS IF FATE GUIDED HER STEPS, SHE FOUND HERSELF IN A GLEN...



I'M AFRAID! NOBODY HAS EVER GONE HERE AFORE! WHAT IF THE WITCHES FIND ME? WHAT WILL THEY DO TO ME?

AND EVEN AS SHE SPOKE, THE NIGHT WAS SUDDENLY FILLED WITH THE HIDEOUS CACKLING OF THE FOUL CREATURES OF DARKNESS...

OHH! HAVE MERCY ON ME!

WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU, SARAH MAUNT! COME! FOLLOW! THE CONCLAVE HAS GATHERED IN THE GLEN! ALREADY, THE CAULDRON OF EVIL BUBBLES WITH THE WITCHES' BREW!



SEE! THE CAULDRON OF EVIL! YOU WANT REVENGE ON AMOS WHITCOMBE! ON THE WHOLE VILLAGE-- AS DO WE-- FOR THEY HAVE EXORCISED MANY OF US!

AYE, SARAH MAUNT! BECOME OUR SISTER! THEN, WE WILL ALL TAKE OUR REVENGE!



SO, THE MACABRE RITUAL WENT ON, AS THE WITCHES CAPERED WILDLY AROUND THE CAULDRON OF EVIL, AND THE FOUL ASSEMBLAGE WATCHED...

CAULDRON SMOKE AWAY MUST GO! OUR NEWEST SISTER! SHOW! SHOW! SHOW!



THE SMOKE PARTED, AND REVEALED...

WELCOME, SISTER SARAH! YOU ARE NOW ONE OF US!

AND I AM GLAD! NOW, SISTERS! LET US PLOT OUR REVENGE!



SEVERAL DAYS LATER, IN THE HOME OF AMOS WHITCOMBE...

FATHER, I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU! ABOUT LUKE AND ME!

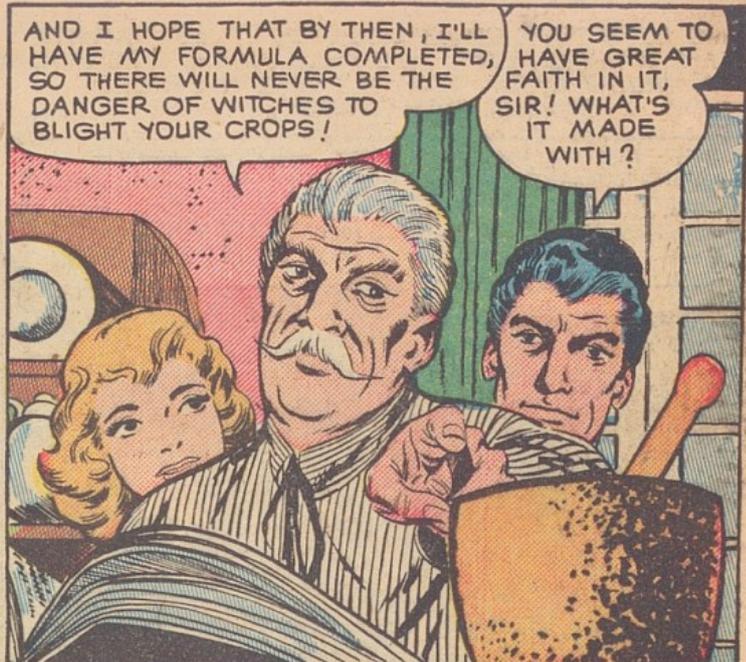
YES, ERNA! OF COURSE! I HAVE FOUND A NEW WAY TO EXORCISE AND DESTROY WITCHES IN THIS ANCIENT VOLUME! BUT WHAT IS THE NEWS ABOUT YOU YOUNG PEOPLE?





WELL, SIR, I'VE FOUND A LITTLE FARM ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE VALLEY! BEGINNING OF NEXT MONTH, I'LL HAVE THE MONEY FOR A DOWN PAYMENT! I'D LIKE TO MARRY ERNA THEN!

OF COURSE, MY BOY! OF COURSE! WITH ALL MY HEART!



AND I HOPE THAT BY THEN, I'LL HAVE MY FORMULA COMPLETED, SO THERE WILL NEVER BE THE DANGER OF WITCHES TO BLIGHT YOUR CROPS!

YOU SEEM TO HAVE GREAT FAITH IN IT, SIR! WHAT'S IT MADE WITH?



THE BONES OF A WOLF, MIXED WITH THE BLOOD OF A CALF, GROUND INTO A POWDER! WHEN THROWN INTO A FIRE, IT WILL DESTROY WITCHES FOREVER!



BESIDES, I HAVE FOLLOWED THE BOOK, AND MADE THREE SILVER-TIPPED ARROWS! SOON, WE WILL BE FULLY ARMED AGAINST THE WITCHES!



SO, THE WEEKS ROLLED BY, AND SOON, IT WAS TIME FOR LUKE TO MAKE HIS TRIP TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE VALLEY...

I'LL BE BACK IN A FEW DAYS, ERNA! AND WHEN I RETURN, WE'LL BE ON OUR WAY TO OWNING THE BEST FARM LAND IN THE COUNTY!

LUKE STARTED OUT ON WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS A ROUTINE TRIP, BUT FATE HAD OTHER PLANS FOR HIM...



WELL, IF THAT ISN'T ROTTEN LUCK! THE REAR WHEEL HAS WORKED LOOSE! I'LL HAVE TO FIX IT RIGHT HERE!



HOURS LATER... I NEVER SAW ANYTHING LIKE IT! FIRST THE WHEEL CAME OFF! THEN I NOTICED THE AXLE WAS SPLIT! NOW IT'S GROWING DARK, AND I'M WAY BEHIND SCHEDULE!

AS LUKE TOOK UP HIS JOURNEY, HE HAD TO PASS THE WITCHES' NEST. AND ONCE MORE, FATE PLAYED A TRUMP CARD, FOR THIS WAS THE NIGHT OF THE DARK MOON!

SEE, SISTER SARAH! HERE COMES THE MEDIUM OF OUR VENGEANCE! THROUGH HIM, WE'LL GET AT AMOS WHITCOMBE!

AYE, AND THE WHOLE VILLAGE! ALL YOUR SPELLS WORKED SO WELL, SISTER! FIRST THE WHEEL--THEN THE AXLE! HEE HEE!



THE HEAD WITCH GESTURED WITH HER CLAW-LIKE HANDS, AND...



NOW, THE HORSE!

STEADY, BOY! STEADY! AAAHHH!

MOMENTS LATER...



SEE! IT IS AS I PLANNED! THE WAGON PASSED OVER HIM! CRUSHED HIM! NOW, HE IS DYING! HE IS OURS!

QUICKLY, SISTERS! BRING HIM TO THE GLEN!

AND IN THE GLEN, WITH THE CAULDRON OF EVIL POURING OUT ITS EVIL FUMES, THE WITCHES PERFORMED A STRANGE RITE...



YOUR BLOOD ALONE CAN SAVE HIS LIFE, SARAH! AND WHEN IT FLOWS IN HIS VEINS, HE WILL BECOME A WITCH-MAN! AS LONG AS YOU LIVE, HE MUST DO OUR BIDDING!

GOOD! HOW LONG I HAVE WAITED FOR THIS! IT WILL BE SWEET TO MAKE AMOS WHITCOMBE SUFFER, JUST AS WE HAVE SUFFERED!

AND SOON... LISTEN TO ME, LUKE BARNES! AS LONG AS SARAH MAUNT LIVES, YOU MUST DO OUR BIDDING! WE SHALL SUMMON YOU, ON THE NEXT NIGHT OF THE DARK MOON! OUR SIGNAL WILL BE A LONG BLAST ON THE WITCHES' HORN! DO YOU HEAR?



I--I HEAR!

GO NOW! YOU WILL GET INTO YOUR WAGON, AND REMEMBER NOTHING! WHEN THE HORN SUMMONS YOU, THEN YOU WILL DO OUR BIDDING!

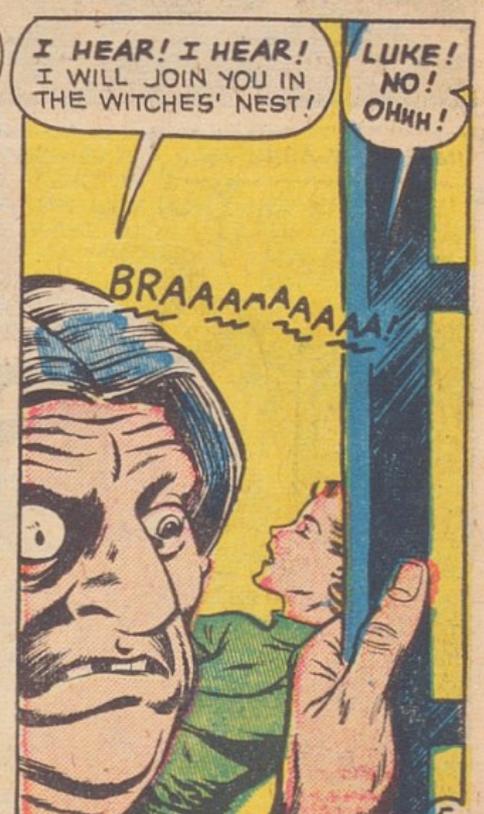
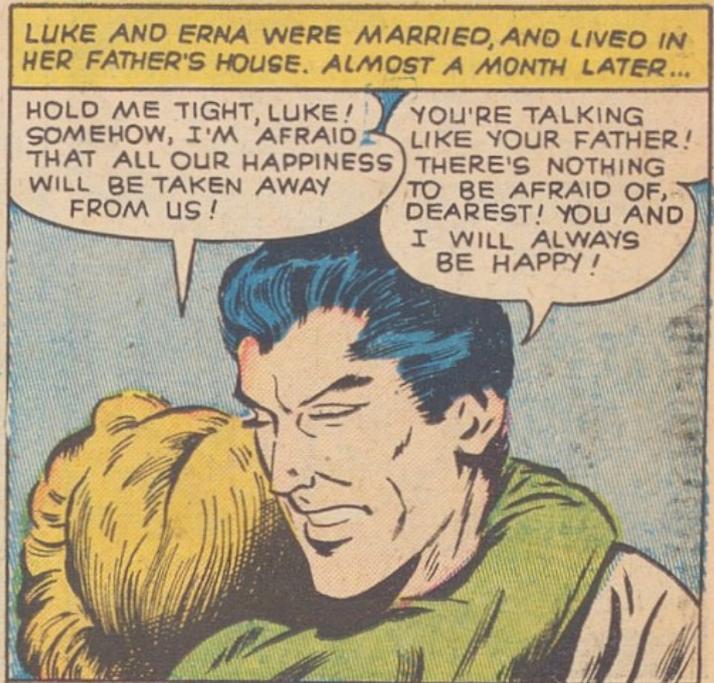


LUKE WENT ABOUT HIS BUSINESS, WITH NO MEMORY OF THE AWFUL EVENTS THAT HAD HAPPENED...



WELCOME BACK, MY BOY! AND WHAT IS THE NEWS?

I PUT THE DOWN PAYMENT ON THE FARM, SIR! BUT THERE ARE A NUMBER OF REPAIRS TO BE MADE ON THE HOUSE! WE WON'T BE ABLE TO LIVE THERE FOR AT LEAST THREE MONTHS!



A MOMENT LATER...

WHAT GHASTLY THING HAS HAPPENED HERE? SPEAK TO ME, ERNA! FOR ALREADY THE AIR IS FOUL WITH THE SMELL OF THE SMOKE FROM THE WITCHES' CAULDRON!



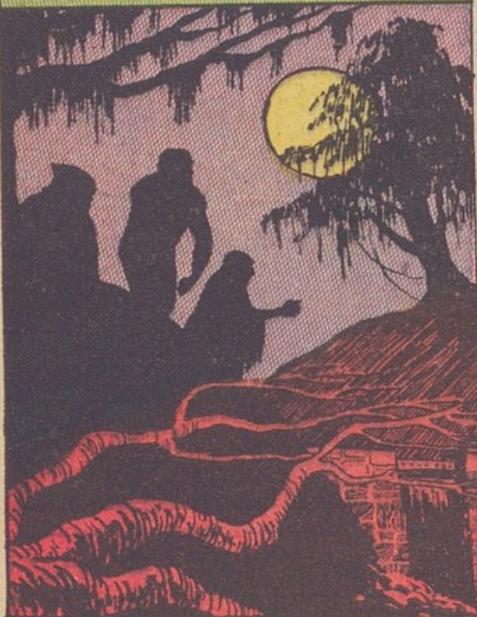
MEANWHILE, IN THE WITCHES' NEST...

WELCOME, BROTHER! THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE! NOW, WE SHALL GO TO THE SLUICE GATE, ATOP THE VALLEY!

HEE! HEE! BEFORE THIS NIGHT IS DONE, THE WHOLE VILLAGE SHALL SLEEP SOUNDLY-- UNDER TONS OF WATER!



THUS, THE WEIRD PROCESSION MOVED TOWARD THE MOMENT WHEN LUKE WOULD CARRY OUT THE COMMANDS THAT WOULD DOOM HIS WIFE, AND HIS VILLAGE!



AND IN THE HOUSE...

IT WAS HORRIBLE, FATHER! THERE WAS THIS SOUND, LIKE A HORN! LUKE CHANGED! HE BECAME A-- A WITCH!

AYE, THE WITCH'S HORN! SOMEHOW, LUKE HAS WITCH BLOOD IN HIM! ONLY BY DESTROYING THE ONE WHOSE BLOOD FLOWS IN HIS VEINS, CAN WE SAVE HIM!



WE MUST WORK FAST! QUICKLY, ERNA! BRING MY BOW, AND THE SILVER-TIPPED ARROWS, WHILE I GET THE WOLF-POWDER AND A TORCH!

YES, FATHER!



IN A FEW MINUTES...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, FATHER? WHY ARE YOU SNIFFING THE AIR?

WHEN YOU HAVE HUNTED WITCHES AS LONG AS I, YOU WILL KNOW THEY CARRY ABOUT THEM THE SMELL OF DEATH-- AN ODOR THAT TAINTS THE AIR! EVEN NOW, I KNOW IN WHICH DIRECTION THEY MOVE!

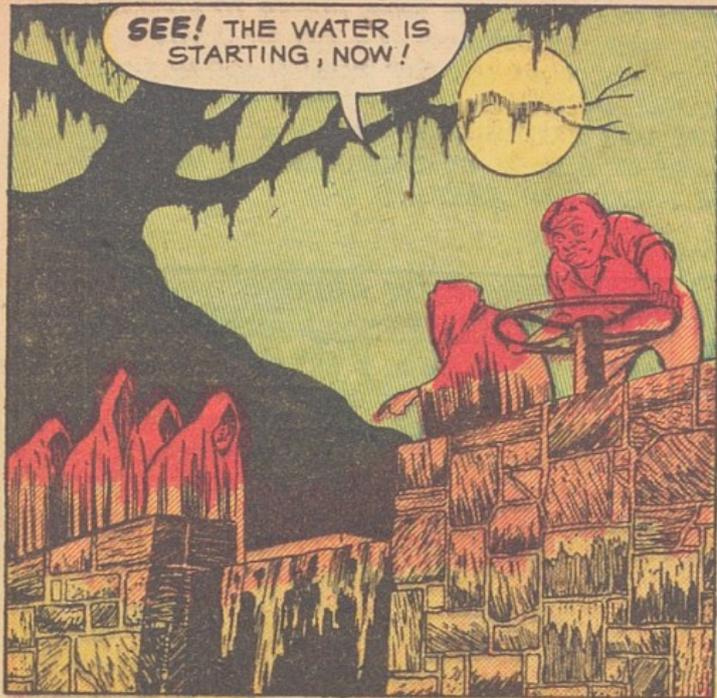


AND JUST THEN...

TURN THAT WHEEL AND OPEN THE SLUICE GATE, BROTHER! TO HEAR IS TO OBEY! DO YOU HEAR?

HEE! HEE! ONCE THE SLUICE IS OPEN, THE WATER WILL POUR DOWN ON THE VILLAGE, AND WE WILL BE AVENGED!





SEE! THE WATER IS STARTING, NOW!



SUDDENLY!

WHAT... WHAT... AM I... DOING... HERE?

AAAAAHHH!



FLEE TO THE GLEN! IT IS WHIT-COMBE!

LUKE! CLOSE THE GATE! CLOSE THE GATE!

YES! HOW DID IT OPEN? THE VALLEY WILL BE FLOODED!

THERE! IT'S CLOSED! WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

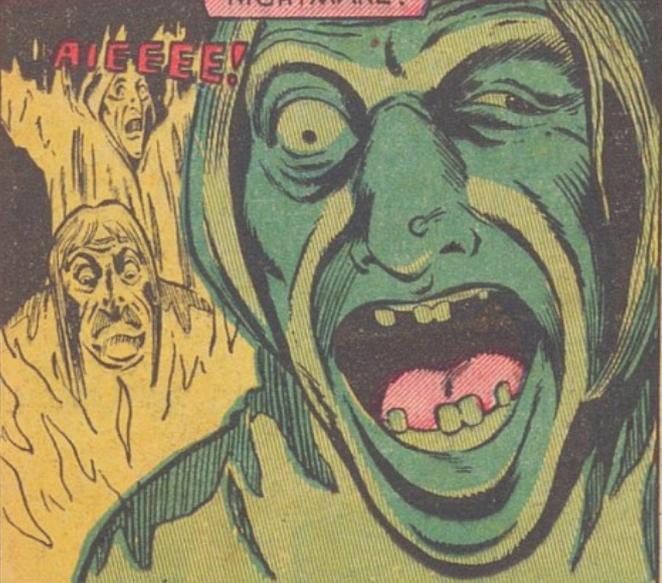
THE ANSWER LIES LOCKED IN DEATH, WITH HER! ALREADY SHE IS DUST! NOW, QUICKLY! WE CAN DESTROY THEM ALL!

SOON, AFTER AMOS HAD SPRINKLED THE POWDER NEAR THE WITCHES' GLEN...



SET THE TORCH TO THE POWDER, ERNA! AT LAST WE HAVE THEM! THESE FLAMES WILL DESTROY THEM!

THE HUNGRY FLAMES LICKED AT THE WITCHES, AND THEIR GRUESOME, BLOOD-CURDLING CRIES TURNED THE FOREST INTO A HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE!



AAAAAHHH!

IN A FEW GRISLY MOMENTS, THE FLAMES HAD DONE THEIR WORK! FOR ALL TIME, THE WITCHES AND THEIR CAULDRON OF EVIL WERE GONE FROM THE VALLEY!



LUKE-- IT'S AWFUL!

IT'S BETTER THIS WAY! THEY WOULD HAVE DESTROYED US!

NOW THE PEOPLE OF OUR VALLEY NEED NO LONGER FEAR THE COMING OF THE DARK MOON!

THE END