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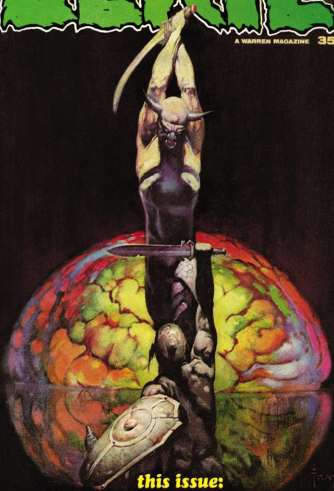
Illustrated tales of fantastic Terror!!

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**this issue:
"Demon Sword"**

WANT TO GET THE SCOOP ON WHAT'S GOING ON, KIDDIES? WELL, CAST YOUR GHOULISH GAZE INTO MY CRYSTAL BALL AND WE'LL TAKE A LOATHSOME LOOK INTO THE FEARFUL FUTURE... HOW FAR IN THE FUTURE? WELL, NOT TOMORROW, OR THE NEXT DAY... LET'S JUST SAY IT'S...



The Day After Doomsday!

OH, MY
GOD!



ADKINS

RICHARD CALDWELL HAD SURVIVED. HE HAD NO CONCEPT OF HOW LONG HE HAD BEEN UNDERGROUND. PERHAPS DAYS, PERHAPS MONTHS, PERHAPS YEARS... THINGS HAD STARTED TO GO WRONG IN THE SHELTER, GENERATORS HAD FAILED, EQUIPMENT HAD BROKEN DOWN... TIME HAD SLIPPED FROM HIS GRASP. NOTHING WENT AS PLANNED. HE HAD BEGUN TO DIG, AND ENDED BY CLAWING... BUT HE HAD SURVIVED!

ART BY DAN ADKINS, SCRIPT BY ARCHIE GOODWIN



T-THIS CAN'T BE ALL!!

THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING ELSE...

HIS STUNNED EYES BLINKED AND STARED UNBELIEVINGLY ACROSS THE RUBBLE-STREWN BLEAKNESS...

MORE THAN THIS...

LIKE SOME PITIFUL FIGURE IN A NIGHTMARE, RICHARD CALDWELL BEGAN TO WALK THROUGH THE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS REACH OF UTTER RUIN...

HE COULD NOT STOP TO REST...SCATTERED STONE AND MORTAR BEGAN TO GIVE AWAY TO BARREN, BURNED EARTH...TWISTED GHOSTS OF TREES CROUCHED AGAINST THE WASTELAND...

NOT MUCH, BUT STUFF'S BEGINNING TO GROW UP HERE... LIVE!

O-OTHERS!

I SURVIVED... IF I COULD DO IT THERE MUST BE...

I FOUGHT...KILLED TO HANG ON TO THAT SHELTER...SACRIFICED EVERYTHING TO STAY ALIVE...FOR THIS?

BEYOND THE CITY...IT WON'T BE SO BAD OUT THERE...BOUND TO BE BETTER...



CHEST HEAVING, BODY TREMBLING, CALDWELL ROSE ON SHAKY LEGS TO STARE DOWN IN DISBELIEF AT THE THING HE HAD JUST KILLED...

I-IT ALMOST GOT ME... JUST LIKE THESE OTHER POOR DEVILS IN THE GULLY! I MIGHT HAVE BEEN JUST ONE MORE SET OF BONES...

A SHUDDER PASSED THROUGH RICHARD CALDWELL, AND THE FULL IMPLICATION OF THE ATTACK SETTLED ON HIM LIKE AN ICY CHILL...

WHAT KIND OF WORLD HAVE I SAVED MYSELF FOR...? WHERE MONSTERS LIKE THAT PREY ON M-MEN AND...



FAINT, BUT CLEAR, THE SOUND STRUCK THROUGH THE SILENT WORLD AT CALDWELL, SENDING HIM FLUNGING TOWARD THE DIRECTION FROM WHICH IT CAME...

THE CRIES GREW LOUDER AS CALDWELL PUSH-ED NEARER, HINTS OF BOTH HOPE AND HORROR GROWING WITHIN HIM...

A WOMAN'S VOICE!
I SWEAR IT'S A WOMAN!

I WON'T BE TAKEN BY SURPRISE THIS TIME... ANYONE DOES THE ATTACKING, IT'S GOING TO BE ME!



RAGE AND FURY SWELLED BEYOND FEAR INSIDE CALDWELL AND BURST FORTH, GALVANIZING HIM INTO ACTION...

IMAGES OF THE BONES HE HAD FOUND IN THE GULLY ROUNDED IN CALDWELL'S MIND AS HE RACED FORWARD THIS WAS MORE THAN JUST SAVING THE GIRL, IT WAS SURVIVAL...MANKIND OR THESE MONSTROUS FLESH-EATER!



THE CREATURES WHIRLED IN PAIN AND SURPRISE AS OVER AND OVER AGAIN, CALDWELL FIRED, DEAF TO THEIR TERRIBLE SHRIEKS OF AGONY...



EXHAUSTED, IN A HOARSE VOICE GASPING FOR BREATH, HE EXPLAINED, AS SOFT FRIGHTENED EYES STUDIED HIM...

...B-BUT...THESE THINGS...WHERE DID THEY...COME FROM...

YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT THEM?

THEY'RE **MUTANTS**! RADIATION MADE THEM DIFFERENT THAN HUMANS... THEY'RE TRYING TO WIPE US OUT! BE-CAUSE OF THE FOOD PROBLEM...

EARLIER I SAW SOME BONES... FRESH...

THEY WERE FROM MY TRIBE... WE WERE SENT OUT TO SCOUT FOR FOOD. THE SITUATION'S DES-PERATE, BUT WE DIDN'T FIND ANY...

THEN THE MUTANT'S ATTACKED, EH? DON'T THINK ABOUT IT... JUST BE GLAD IT'S ALL OVER!

RICHARD CALDWELL MARVELED AT THE WAY THE GIRL HAD HELD UP TILL NOW, BUT HE HAD TO REMIND HIMSELF IT WAS A NEW WORLD, A HARDER ONE THAN HE HAD LEFT WHEN HE SEALED HIMSELF IN THE SHELTER...

HE FOLLOWED HER UNTIL NIGHTFALL... HE CAUGHT THE SMELL OF FIRE AND THE SOUND OF VOICES... HUMAN VOICES...

SO IT'S TRIBES NOW... BANDING TOGETHER... I GUESS, IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE NOW.

OTHERWISE, IT'S DOG EAT DOG, MR. CALDWELL. NOW, WE'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE MORE MUTANTS ARRIVE... THIS IS THEIR TERRITORY!

THERE! THE HOME OF MY TRIBE... THEY'LL BE HAPPY TO SEE YOU!

AMID ALL THE HORROR AND DES-OLATION I'VE SEEN TODAY, IT'S A WON-DERFUL SIGHT...

AS HE APPROACHED, CALDWELL WAS GREETED BY SMILING, EAGER FACES. HE SMILED TO HIMSELF... JUST AS HE'D SURVIVED THE WARS OF THE LAST WORLD, HE'D SURVIVED THE MUTANTS AND DANGERS OF THIS NEW ONE...



THEN, A SUDDEN DOUBT OVERTOOK HIM...

BUT... IF THERE'S A FOOD PROBLEM, WON'T I BE JUST ONE MORE BURDEN FOR YOUR TRIBE?

NOT AT ALL, MR. CALDWELL...



...JUST THE OPPOSITE!

WOK!



STUNNED AND BLEEDING, CALDWELL FOUND HIMSELF UNABLE TO RISE. HAZILY, HE COULD HEAR HER FLAT, ALMOST SNEERING WORDS...

USUALLY WE HAVE TO SETTLE FOR A MUTANT OR ONE OF OUR OWN AS A LAST MEASURE... LIKE THOSE FOOLS ON PATROL WITH ME! IT'S THE ONLY WAY LEFT, MR. CALDWELL!

OF COURSE THE MUTANTS KEEP TRYING TO STOP US, CHANGE US, BUT THERE AREN'T MANY OF THEM...



...AND THEY'RE STRICT VEGETARIANS!



WE MAY BE LEAVING RICHARD CALDWELL IN THE DARK BUT LET'S RUSH ON TO THROW SOME LIGHT ON MY NEXT LITTLE HORROR HAPPENING!



THE LEERING FACES LOOMED CLOSER AND CLOSER UNTIL DARKNESS COVERED RICHARD CALDWELL, A HIDEOUS DARKNESS THAT NOW HUNG HEAVILY ABOVE ALL SURVIVORS OF THE DAY AFTER DOOMSDAY!