MALAGUEÑA BEYOND A FORBIDDEN ZONE

He'd been unable to speak, and so they never knew whether he was human or ape, a misconception of both. They'd decided to nickname him Shaggy, in affection and after appearance.

They remember him in soft silence and a simple phrase: "I knew innocence best." It was true... and Shaggy lies dead...

His innocence murdered for all time by the sophisticated hands of peace, the gorilla warlord and scourge of peace.

The human youth called Jason will never forget that murder of innocence... for Shaggy died, never knowing why, in Jason's helpless arms.

You've already been too kind, Gunpowder. We couldn't impose on you...

Hugh yourself, lawyer. It's already decided... he and Dan are to take you folk back on home, in the riverboat Simian.

Way I figure it, times o' grief jest Moller fer friends... and anyhow, it's the least we kin do.

Jason has not noticed, but even the normally boisterous spirit of Gunpowder Julius has been touched by Shaggy's death and is bleak for the contact...
But it is not fair to expect Jason to notice the mood of others... when he is lost in his own dark world of murky thought and stark memory...

How 'bout it, Jason—does Julius' plan set well with you?

Hooded gorillas bursting from black terror with torches blazing...

Clubs and crossbows lashed with shrieks splitting the whine of flame and belch of smoke...

His parents—his mother, his father—murdered in a sea wash of blood and frenzy; their bodies left to burn in the place of their beloved home...

...murdered by Brutus—Brutus the warlord—Brutus the stinking gorilla—Brutus who will pay for killing his parents, for murdering Snaggy—Brutus who will choke on his own blood once Jason gets his hands around that hairy throat and squeezes, squeezes until he hears gasps and sobs and pleas for mercy, whimpers of agony, squeezes harder, tighter, crushing and squeezing until...

Wh-what...? Alex...

Yeah, me—Alex, are you coming with us or not?
LOOK, JASE--IF YOU CAN'T SNAP OUT OF IT LONG ENOUGH TO HELP US CAST OFF...

...CAN YOU AT LEAST PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER ENOUGH TO GET ABOARD?

Yeah... Sure, Alex...

Just thinkin', that's all...

ALL RIGHT, LADS--HEAVE 'ER MIGHTY...

WHAT WITH THE LAWSIVER'S FESTERIN' ARM AND JULIUS AT THE Stern... IT'S UP TO US THREE TO GUIDE THE SIMIAN ONTO 'ER FEET.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE BOAT'S FEET, DAN--BUT MY ARMS ARE FEELING IT.

DO YOU ALWAYS TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS LIKE THAT, SUNK-PowDER?

O' COURSE, LAWSIVER, HOW ELSE WOULD THEY KNOW THEY WERE MUTH FRIENDS?

KEEP YER POWDER DRY, YOU MANGY MEAL-WORMS -- WE'LL BE SEEIN' YA SOON--

BY DARRK, THE RIVERBOAT SMOOTHLY SKIMS THE Slick SHEEN OF WATER GLOSSY BY MOON, AND OBSCURED BY A TANGLES RIOT OF WEIRDLY MUTATED SWAMP FOLIAGE...

THE GREAT WAR, AND ITS PERVASIVE MASS OF RADIATION, HAS DONE MUCH TO CHANGE THE FACE OF THIS NOW-BIZARRE EARTH...
I’m worried about Jason. Lawgiver-Sir. Ever since Shaggy was killed, he’s been in a... well, in a trance...

Not only is Jason bereaved over Shaggy’s death, but I’m sure he must be experiencing a supreme sense of despondence and disappointment, even if only subconsciously...

Consider, young Alex. After repelling the assault by Brutus and the Mutant Inheritors—both sounds, successfully departing them as well...

An understandable reaction to a highly traumatic experience, young Alex...

...we watched helplessly as Brutus managed to escape—slipping right through Jason’s fingers, and murdering Shaggy in a final gesture of defiance.

That’s not easy for a vengeful youth to bear.

Numb thoughts. Estranged visions conjured in the depths of a dark mind...

Yes, but what’s wrong with him, Sir? What is he thinking...

And projected on the surface of darker water. Visions of Brutus, in his hood of terror... Visions of death... grin... ghastly death...

And Brutus again, now armed with a rifle. A rifle aimed at Jason. At his heart...

Numbness leaves the thoughts now, as the vision grows vivid. Threatening to explode. He hears the cock of the rifle and knows that he is about to die—knows that the rifle is about to...
STAND BACK, LAD--LES'N YOU WANT THIS RIVER-SLUG'S BARBED TONGUE WRAPPED AROUND YORE.

NOOOO--

AGHK-K--!!

--THROAT.

HOLD ON, ALEX--!!

AIN'T NO DRUULIN' RIVER-SLUG GONNA BE YORE HANGMAN--LEASTWAYS, NOT WHILE I STILL GOT MULH PI-G STICKER TUH HAND!!

BETTER USE THAT SKIFF-POLE, JULIUS--CUZ IT SEEMS LIKE MULH MUSKET AIN'T NO MORE THAN 2 WATER ON A RIVER-RAT'S BACK--!!

AND A SECOND MUTATED LEVITIAN BREAK'S THE SURFACE IN MENACE...
YOU SAID A MOUTHFUL, DAN--!

AN' IF THIS CROSS-EYED SLIME-
SLUG IS SO ALL-FIRED HUNGRY,
I'M GONNA GIVE 'IM A MOUTHFUL
RANPED RIGHT DOWN HIS
UGLY GULET IN SPLINTERS
ALL THE WAY!!

THE NUMBNESS HAS RETURNED,
AND JASON WATCHES--UNMOVING,
UNCARING--AS THE SECOND
CREATURE STRIKES...

HELP ME, JASON--!!!

HE SEES ONLY
APE--

HELP BRUTUS? NO NEVER!

JASON--MOVE!! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE CLOSE ENOUGH TO HELP THE
LAWGIVER--!!

AND JASON MOVES--!!
**I said**

**LET GO OF HIM!**

**SCHWANG!**

**IT SINKS INSTANTLY, BELOW A RISING JET OF BUBBLED CRIMSON...**

**...AND COMES TO REST WITH THE LAWSNER STILL PINNED IN IT'S LIFELESS MAW.**

**BUT HAVING BROKEN HIS TRANCE, AND BEGUN TO MOVE--**

**--JASON IS NOT ABOUT TO STOP NOW.**
I’LL MOVE THE SIMIANS AROUND, DAN-- AND YOU GET A POLE OUT TO ‘EM--!

WILL HE BE ALL RIGHT, ALEX?

FINE-- ONCE HE DRIES OUT.

BUT... WHAT ABOUT YOU, JASE?

ALL IN ONE PIECE, ALEX... INCLUDING MY HEAD NOW.

GOOD TO HEAR, PAL-- GOOD TO HEAR. FOR A WHILE THERE, I WASN’T SURE ANYTHING COULD PULL YOU BACK TOGETHER.

WHAT IN HELL-BURNED, BLUE-LACED TARNATION IS THAT--?

YOU GAVE IT TO ME, STEELY DAN-- SO YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN ME...

NO, LAWSYVER-SIR-- DAN’S TALKING ABOUT THAT... OVER ON THE SHORE...

BUT FROM THE WAY IT’S BURNING MY STOMACH, I’D GUESS THAT IT’S LIQUID FIRE.
NOPE, BUT IT SHORE WOULD BE COZY T'UH FEEL A CAMPFIRE ON MUH BACKSIDE RIGHT ABOUT MOW.

YEAH... AS LONG AS THE OWNER O' THAT CAMPFIRE DON'T HANKER T'UH COOK MUH BACKSIDE...

WHAT DO YOU SAY, ALEX? DO WE GO ASHORE TO INVESTIGATE??

WELL, WE'VE CERTAINLY DONE ZANKER THINGS JASE, WHY NOT?

THUS, IT IS SETTLED, AND STEALTHILY, THEY CREEP THROUGH UNDERGROWTH TOWARD BRIGHT-ENING LIGHT...

--UNTIL--

WELL, NAIL ME TO A TREE AN' CALL MUH BLAST-ED HIDE A SCARECROW...!

I AIN'T NEVER SEEN NOTHIN' LIKE THIS--!

THOSE WEIRD SOUNDS...

AIN'TCHA NEVER HEARD MUSIC B'FORE, ALEX?
"Yeah, but none like that, Gunpowder... none that made the back of my neck shiver...!"

"Hoo-c! Gee -- jest look at them dance..."

"That's... Dancing...?"

"You bet your poppin' eyeballs that's dancin', Alex..."

"...Dancin' 'tuh make the dad-damned floor stand up an' take notice--!"

"Beautiful, my friends -- a beautiful display--!"

"Like the whirling wind, when she sweeps from the skies to caress a scarf of the finest silk."

"The words freeze then, as the beautiful girl rises from her bow... and--"

"Thank you -- thank you... but it was only--"

"Wh-who are you--?"

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK...
Dear Marvel,

WOW! Ta very much for the Terrific, Gorgeous, Fabulous, Lovely pics of gorgeous Roddy McDowall (Swoon) in ish 57 of you Ace mag, POTA. I bet there’re loads of R.A.M.F.’s (Roddy Andrew McDowall Fans) no, MILLIONS of R.A.M.F.’s, swooning over the fab pics. I’m always glad of any pics of Roddy, as I am madly in love with the lovely man, so thanks very much.

Could it be that there are still R.A.M.F.’s wishing to join Roddy’s fan-club and do not know the address? If so, I shall make their say by supplying the address for them. It is: Roddy McDowall Fan Club, Margie Jones, 33 Ramsbottom Street, Acrington, Lancs. B55 1BZ.

OK? so, all you R.A.M.F.‘s meet Margie and the gang (Lorraine, Bill and Liza) who run the best fan club in the country. Oh, one more thing. Could you send a stamped and addressed envelope when you’re enquiring...ta.

Now onto your mag. The adaptation of “Escape...” is terrific! Nothing could be better, except for maybe your “Beneath...” story, which was terrific, too. I hope you go on to do the other two Fab films. I enjoy reading “Apes Forum” and love reading letters from fellow R.A.M.F.’s. Im glad to see you are putting articles and pics in regularly, cos they’re just great, and your writers are good.

Keep up the good work, lads.

Alison Lesley (R.A.M.F. Q.N.S.)
Slough, Berks.

We, too, regard the low-rating position of the “Planet...” TV series as one of the mysteries of the age. Because few people are in a better position than we are to know just what a power-thrust there is behind the Ape movement in Britain. We know that POTA is needed, and as long as its needed it’ll be there!

Dear Marvel,

I would like to pass a few comments on the present Marvel scene.

1. Congrats on the new mag, THE TITANS. I spent ages trying to figure out how on counter-earth you were going to squeeze twice as much action into the same size of mag. Quite simple when you think about it, isn’t it? The poster was also excellent. But if you look in almost any recent American Marvel comic you should find an ad for stickers etc., from the American Comicon ’75. Take a look at the poster advertised and you will see that it is almost identical to the one given away in The Titans. On the subject of The Titans, The Inhumans have started up a new series in the American mags, so-o-o, when the old series runs out there’ll be a new series to look forward to.

2. There have been some new arrivals on the American scene recently. a) The Inhumans are back. b) The Champions — a new super-group featuring Hercules, Black Widow, Ghost Rider, Angel and Iceman. 4) Modred the Mystic. “Sorcery from the past invades the world of today.” Please get all these new features in British mags as soon as possible.

3. Now for the new-look Superheroes. Giant-Man is a worth replacement for Silver Surfer, but The Cat is not so good, although still o.k. What happened to Doc Savage? I want to see more of him.

4. Now for my favourite mag, Planet of The Apes. People have been writing in condemning it. (Fools!) It’s because of this that I do not think the mag will make its 100th issue. Don’t take this as a criticism. I really enjoy Planet and would like to see it continuing for many issues to come, but I am only being realistic about this. Personally I think the only way out of the situation is a merger with another mag. To my mind the only mag that could really adopt Planet is Dracula Lives.

Howard Harcourt, RFO Harrogate, N. Yorks.

Dear Stan and Co.

I opened No. 60 of your fantastic mag POTA and to my horror I could find no Apes Forum. I have seen three of the five films and I think your adaptations are fantastic. There is only one thing that spoils the mag and that is that it is called ‘Planet of The Apes’ but only 35-40% of the mag is on apes. The rest goes on other things, sometimes rubbish, e.g. Man Gods, but sometimes good, like ‘The Black Panther’. All the same, this is the best mag I have ever read and I hope it never stops. I would like to say that I am willing to swap Nos. 2 to 60 minus Nos. 40, 41 and 55 for any modern, up-to-date cassettes.

Mark Lawton,
31 Maple Grove,
Stokebridge, Sheffield.

Sneaky! We’re talking about the way you slipped in that request for a swap, right at the end of your letter. We found ourselves setting it up on the page before we realised what we were doing. But we digress. Yep — we readily confess that many Ape fans take us to task (as you do) for not devoting the entire mag to the Apes. But we’re still not convinced that that would be the right thing to do. Remember, we have a mighty lot of Marvelities to please.

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