PROLOGUE

(Night. Such a dark night, made darker by the glow, the blue shimmering glow of... WHAT?)

(O: A PHANTOM...?)

THERE ARE THREE OF THEM. ALARIC, STARKOR. AND GRAV-MALKYN. ALL TIED TO A COMMON LINE OF FEAR. EACH BOUND BY HIS VERY PRIVATE FEARS...

ALL RIGHT. SWING FORWARD AND GRAB YOURSELVES.

AYE, ALARIC, BUT AGAINST WHAT MUST WE GRAB--?

IF YOU ASK ME, ALARIC, YOU'RE RIGHT ON ALL THREE COUNTS...

WE'RE DYING. THE SHIP'S DEAD AND ITS GHOSTS ARE WAITING FOR US.

THE NAME IS GRAV-MALKYN, HUMAN. I'D THOUGHT YOU WOULD HAVE LEARNED IT BY NOW.

AS FOR THIS SHIP, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF THE THING. OTHER THAN FEAR AND DREAD.

BUT IF GHOSTS THERE ARE LURKING AMONG ITS MISTY ROTTED TIMBERS...

...THEY'LL SOON FLEE AT FIRST SIGHT OF YOUR FEARLESS ASPECT.

WHY, YOU DIRT--

...NOT WHEN IT WOULD ONLY ADD TO YOUR AGONY.

HAVE A CARE, LADS-- ONE SLIP NOW AND YOU'LL SNAP YOUR SPINE ON THE WARS OF THIS HULK OR CRUSH YOUR SKULL ON THE BOTTOM OF OUR OWN LONG-BOAT BELOW.

...SE--

...AND COWERING IN THE DISTANCE, WITH THE INSPICITION OF FEAR--

(Gods, Alaric... I LIKE IT NOT...)

LET US LEAVE THE PLACE... GO BACK TO THE FREEDOM REAPER!

BUT THE FREEDOM REAPER OFFERS NO RETURN... NO COMFORT... NO SAFETY.

FOR IF THIS MONSTROUS SHIP, GLORIOUS BLUE SHINING LIGHT, SEEMS TO LIVE AND TO INSPIRE CHILLING FEAR...
IT UPLIFTS UPWARD, PIERCING THE STAR-FLECKED SKY. A STRUCTURE STRIVING TO REACH THE SKY, TO REACH ANGELS THEMSELVES. TO ENTER THE VALE BEYOND LIFE AND DEATH...

...IT'S A CATHEDRAL...

A... WHAT?

A PLACE OF SILENCE, STARK OR...

...A PLACE OF WORSHIP.

(BUT WHAT IS THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP IN THIS BLACK, BIZARRE PLACE?)

(MYSTERY OR DANGER?)

(The Unknown)

(OR THE FORCES OF LIVING DEATH?)

---

The Shadows of Haunted Cathedraulus

Future History Chronicles IV

Story by Doug Moench  Art by Tom Sutton
LOOK... THE MAIN STRUCTURE IS SURROUNDED BY A COMPLEX OF SMALLER BUILDINGS... ALMOST LIKE ONE OF THE CITY SHIPS...
AND YET, I SEE NO INDEPENDENCE HERE. ALL OF THE SMALLER DWELLINGS SEEM TO FLOW INTO THE CATHEDRAL...

Doubtless they are monasteries, Alaric... such as those found on the mainland... prior to the great depth of which Grimstark spoke...
I neither know what monasteries are, nor do I care!

All that concerns me is whether this hellish ship is haunted or not...

Haunted... by what? The unknown... the darkness of ancient worship...

And the only way we'll learn, Starkor, is by exploring this place...

I suggest this small structure, most likely it eventually leads to the main cathedral... should we care to venture there...

Well, Alaric... what say you? Do you plan to what the Freedom Reaver will do... or not?

(Enter the unknown... or flee? The choice is yours... what the Freedom Reaver says... not there.)

Alaric... what's wrong with you man? Has the devil taken your mind?

(Note to the arms of dead love... and newborn hate...)

(Hate spawned less than an hour past aboard the Freedom Reaver...)

Therefore I insist on boarding the ship with you!

I said no, Reena--and I meant no!

The crew listened, embarrassed uncomfortable...

You are my wife and a crew member of this ship... as your husband and the captain of this ship, I expect you to obey me... both capacities.

...pretending they heard nothing...
THERE IS NOTHING FURTHER TO BE SAID, ALARIC. I MAY BE YOUR WIFE, BUT I AM NOT A MALEWHO MUST BE PROTECTED EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.

STARNA RO AND ORYMHARK, WE WILL REACH THE LONG-BOAT NOW.

DO YOU HEAR ME, ALARIC? I AM THROUGH OBEYING YOUR ORDERS! I AM SICK AND TIRED OF BEING TREATED AS YOUR INFERIOR--

AND I'LL HAVE MORE!

SNUID

(SILENCE.
INCOMPLETE.

...NO MORE LAUGHTER)

...NOTHING BUT REENA'S COLD, SORRY VOICE... HISSING WITH HATRED...

HEAR ME, ALARIC... I HAVE STRUCK YOU, AND YOU HAVE STRUCK ME...

WE SHALL NEVER AGAIN TOUCH EACH OTHER.

(THE LONG-BOAT WAS LOWERED, BUT WITH THREE ABOARD... BOBBING ACROSS THE CHOPPY SEA...)

MOVING TOWARDS THE SLOWLY SLEEPING GALE WHICH HEAVED AND SIZED ON THE DECKS OF THE UNKNOWN...

(GOODBYE, ALARIC... FOREVER

(THIS WAS HATE ABANDONED, AND THE UNKNOWN JOINED...)}
AND THERE IS NO RETURN, NOWHERE TO FLEE... DO YOU HEAR ME, ALARIC—? SHALL WE ENTER OR NOT?

OH... EH... MALKY...

WE SHALL ENTER.

I'VE SEEN THE HALL OF THE UNKNOWN (IT CREAKS!)

DESERTED, OF COURSE. IT'S GONNA BE A DEAD SHIP AND I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF IT WERE HAUNTED AS WELL...

PERHAPS, BUT THERE ARE TWO BRANCHING CORRIDORS, NOTHING CAN WE DO BUT SPLIT UP...

BUT THEN, WHO WILL GO ALONE?

YOU AND STARKOR TAKE THE LEFT CORRIDOR, ALARIC.

--WHILE I VENTURE INTO THE RIGHT.

VERY WELL, COME ON, STARKOR--THE SOONER THIS IS DONE, THE SOONER OUR MINDS WILL REST...

AWE, WE'RE AGREED ON THAT, ALARIC...

I NOTICE, STARKOR...

SCHUFFING--FOOTSTEPS, RUNNING--AROUND THE CORNER...

SOMEBODY'S HERE, STARKOR!

DAMN MY EYES FOR OFFERING TO GO ALONE THROUGH THIS--

DID YOU HEAR THAT?

...AND IT WASN'T MAD SMACK...
Then, fleeting just beyond the periphery of vision...

EH? There—what's that?

No! By the bones of Grim-Stark, it was a Shadow—and shadows are cast not by phantasms, but by flesh...

Halt!

A... Ghost—?

—And I mean for you to Halt!

Now let's see what kind of flesh is contained by this quivering bundle of...

Yes—but not a traitor like you! Not an ape who serves the New Order against his own kind—who captures fellow apes and consigns them to burn in the New Order's hell...

Aghh... no!!

(Could not have been a ghost—there are no ghosts! The figure was flesh—must have been flesh...)

Quickly, Starkor...

I'm certain he fled down this corridor?

And I'm certain we follow him straight to hell...

Aye—and we've lost him, Andric... unless you use your crossbow to...

No, Starkor—whether man or ape, he'll be no good to us with a crossbow bolt in his back. We need answers to the series of this ship—and the figure may provide these answers.

The Chancellor has heard the own music and that of candels long enough—Perhaps it will bear...
ALARIC, WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO--

--NO! ALARIC.
--NOO!!

I WANT HIM ALIVE, STARKER...

ENOUGH TO RISK MY OWN DEATH!

--NUT HIS LINE--

NOW TO SWING FORWARD--

(SO... YOU ARE A MAN. WHEN I HAD MOST EXPECTED AN APE!)

AND YOU, TOO--THANK THE GODS YOU'RE A HUMAN... AND NOT AN APE.

(... AND DROP...)

YOU ARE IN A HURRY, MY FRIEND... WE SHALL LEARN WHY... SHALL WE NOT?

OODENN--!

NOW, YOU SNIVELLING EXCUSE FOR AN APE. JUST WHAT IS THIS "NEW ORDER"?

YOU MEAN YOU DON'T KNOW...? YOU'RE NOT ONE OF THE TRAITORS... ONE OF THEIR APE GUIILDES?

NO! WHO ARE THEY?

THE "NEW ORDER" BORN OF OLD SINS--HUMANS--HUMANS WHO FORCE APES LIKE YOU AND ME TO SERVE THEM...

... TO RUN THE CITY SHIP OF CARTHARUS, AND TO BE OFFERED UP AS SACRIFICES TO THE DARK FORCES WHICH RULE THEIR NEW ORDER.

...IS THE "NEW ORDER"? WHO ARE THEY?

WHY, APES, OF COURSE! ARE YOU SO STUPID? YOU DON'T KNOW THAT--?

THE NEW ORDER OF OLD SINS IS A RELIGION OF PURE APES...
...and when our usefulness has passed, they murder us like animals...

...and then they use our initiated flesh as sacraments to their heathen gods! Do you hear me? You devour our flesh!

Can it be true...? Now... when peace between man and Ape is restored, freedom renews, isn't enough to convince you, nothing will.

That settles it, Alaric. I'll hear no more! If apes eating humans, it's not enough to convince you, nothing will.

We must return to the freedom renewed. And even if you cannot deny...

...that this city-ship cannot be rammed...

...and rammed again, until every last one board has drowned!

That I've convinced you... I'm a friend. Tell us more about this new order of humans. Where do they come from? How did they originate?

On a peninsula of the land beyond the sea, after the great depth which claimed the skies...

"...there was a vast forbidden zone, which only one of the old buildings remained standing..."

"No one knew why or how, it had escaped the awesome destruction, which made ruins of everything around it. But the building became like unto a fortress without entry..."

"Outside the fortress, man was not counted. Number... But were starving for each other... And many were they who fell victim to the spreading plagues and diseases spawned by the holocaust..."
"But inside the fortress, there were humans... and there was food and water in great quantities..."

"The humans had a leader, and it was he who ordered them to occupy the fortress, and to gather the vast stores of food and water and weapons..."

"To the humans, he was more than a leader. To them, they say..."

"But to the apes, he was a demon. They were starving, and knew that food was stored within the fortress. They needed that food..."

"So they moved on the fortress. They needed that food..."

"But the leader of the humans, their savior, in what he said was infinite wisdom..."

"And so, a great battle ensued, and many were the numbers who perished that day... in battle, more swift than the pleasure or starvation had wrought..."

"Those who perished were glad for their deaths... for they were mostly apes, and without food to sustain their flesh, death was their only comfort..."
"Still, one are there was who broke through the barricades--and who, by the free will of starvation, became the scavengers.

He was nameless, faceless, a wanderer in the wilderness.

But not before he released his ritual weapon with the aid of his life's strength.

And though the apes' weapon did not bring death, the leader of the humans--

K-CHOW!

"It nevertheless brought death upon him.

With their leader--their savior--now slain, the apes were placed in the heart's despair with madness and fury.

And when the great battle had ended, with every fortress in ruins from the fortresses' death in a religious ritual, they committed suicide, too, rather than flee to safety.

This was created a religion of revenge--all because our fellow apes had killed them.

And this new order of humans continues to murder apes--in the name of the human who ordered that long-ago slaughter--!

"...and sacrifices apes to the gods of his Earth!"

"Graymalkyn..."

"Yes.

But who cares how it started, Alanio? What does it matter? I say we return to the freedom reaver and--

"Yes--I shall tell you... tell you of the horror.

Not so quickly, Starkor--let him tell his tale..."

"A group of humans had fought to possess the area which had now come to be forbidden.

"Their supply of food had dwindled, and eventually became depleted, and so they began their long trek--a pilgrimage for a new land... a land which promised many said abundant food and shelter..."

After the great death, when all places were destroyed in thunder and flames..."
Their journey was long and arduous, passed over vast regions of desolate sand and rock.

"But at last they reached a vast, flat land which was green everywhere, the land of the great apes, where they felt they must be the most revered of them all.

"But the land, they found, was a ready occupied by a race of apes who had ruled there with reason and speech.

"Ruined by their long trek, and near death, they approached the apes for entrance to their city...

"...And they fell upon their knees and begged for succor.

"...But he who was the leader of the apes, the languior had nothing to offer but words of charity in return, and barked commands to his gorilla followers.

"...There was one human who could not bear the treatment -- who would not submit to the slavery -- who, upon seeing the apes' languior...

"The languior's followers replied to the human in kind...

"...And all of the apes were instantly put to madness, rushing through the streets to slay every human who had been taken in as a slave.

"BLAM!

"CHUK!

"Seized up a weapon in righteous wrath, and put an end to the languior..."
AND THAT NIGHT, THE BODIES OF THE SLAIN HUMANS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER, AND WERE USED IN UNSPEAKABLE RITES.

"THIS, A NEW RELIGION WAS BORN, THE RELIGION OF THE DEATH OF THE APE'S LAWGIVER..."

"AND THAT NEW ORDER OF RELIGION HAS SPREAD HERE TO THE SEAS.

TO THIS DAY, THE APE'S STILL DEVOUR HUMAN FLESH AS MEANS OF COMMUNION WITH THEIR MARTYRED LEADER.

NOW, ALARIC--WHAT DO YOU SAY NOW?"

NOW, ALARIC--WHAT DO YOU SAY NOW?"

I SAY YOU ARE RIGHT THIS TIME, STARKOR. WE WILL GO TO THE FREEDOM BEARER--

--AND WE SHALL RETURN TO RAM THIS HELLISH CITY-SHIP UNTIL IT LIES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

COME, HUMAN. YOU ARE FREE TO COME WITH US NOW--TO ESCAPE THIS STINKING PLACE.

KEEP GOING, LITTLE ONE, IF YOU WANT ME TO TAKE YOU OFF THIS--

UHNN! ALARIC!

A HUMAN--A HUMAN?

THERE'S ONE OF THE FILTHY FLESH-EATERS!

PROTECTED BY GAR, BLADALON, NO LESS--

I SAID HOLD, STARKOR! WHAT...

HOLD, STARKOR! WHAT...

AND PROTECTED BY GOR-MALKIN, NO LESS--

NO -- I'VE HELD MY BLADE LONG ENOUGH, APE!!

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK!
ENOUGH!

Dear Marvel,

Enough is enough. Marvel, please don't use the letter columns as argument pages. This letter is concerning the arguments about Jack Kirby and Neal Adams. Instead of this being a discussion piece it has turned into a bickering free-for-all.

Fair enough. People are allowed their opinions. But have you ever thought that these opinions hurt peoples feelings towards the artists? E.g. An Adams fan says, "Adams is King, Kirby is rubbish". That is not a sensible comment, that's an insult. When referring to your favourite artist don't drag others in and insult them. Adams, when he draws, aims for realism, whereas Jack Kirby aims for action, powerful action. They are both master artists in their own right. When Jack was D.C. his 'god' work was great. I had never seen the likes of it. Then he took on more editing, scripting, inking. It was too much for one man. And he got so used to his rushed work that he now works that way naturally. Adams best work, most notably, was Green Lantern, Green Arrow and The Avengers (others may not agree). I am a Kirby fan, have been so for years, but Adams is also brilliant. Best wishes.

M. Cetgrove, 20 Fernwood, Hadleigh, Benfleet, Essex.

MEMBERS WANTED

Dear Bozos,

If you would all turn back to the pages of Titans ish 45, you will see a letter advertising the opening of the "Comix Club". In those early days the club was run by Dougal, Mike and John. Well, I answered that letter, as many others did, and am now a fully-fledged co-editor, and to celebrate this appointment I am issuing this appeal to those who either did not see, or did not answer that invitation to join.

We run our own adzine/fanzine with a letters page, comics to buy/swap/sell in large lists, and amateur art on the front cover.

If our membership swells with this letter the entire fanzine will also swell. We hope to include a larger letters section, more comics and a swap-shop for members. The inclusion of competitions is also a great possibility. There is also the chance for members to draw their own cover design and see it printed free!

So, anyone who is interested in joining the club, send a stamped addressed letter telling me about yourself to:

The Comix Club, 14N Peabody Estate, Dacoly St., London, SE1.

The Dougal, Mike and John club - oh yes, we remember it well. And delighted we are to learn that it is alive and well and apparently thriving. Here's power to you, boys.

BACK TO REALITY

Dear Sir (and Gordon Robson),

I absolutely disagree with Gordon Robson's letter in MWOM 226 about comics having "too much reality". He wrote, "Which would you rather watch, a James Bond movie, or Crossroads?" I would watch James Bond.

Well, it is my opinion that the endlessly spreading virus of too much reality has finally infected the media which was originally created to provide an escape from it," he wrote. Very silly. If I wanted laughable comics I would buy them. But I don't. I buy comics to think about what I am reading. I buy my comics for reality.

If Mr. Robson wanted reality in Marvel, why not buy "Howard the Duck"? Take Peter Parker, student at a university. The death of Gwen Stacy shook him, but he soon got out of
it. His friendships and hardships with Mary Jane Watson. His super-hero career does not affect him in anyway.

Gordon, make a choice. Either take a risk of embarrassment and read "Funny" comics or read comics filled with signs of reality. Think it over again. You might feel differently.

Lance Hanson, Dudley, W. Midlands.

This is one of your lucky weeks, Lance. Because not until we typed out your name at the foot of your letter did we realise that very recently indeed we were typing out the same name at the foot of a letter to be published in POTA. So-o-o-o, just in case Marveloom gets the sneaking idea that your uncle/older brother/cousin or whoever is a member of the Bullpen we're gonna explain that it was just one of those little tricks that fate is so fond of playing on us.

IN THE RAIN WITH STAN

Dear Marvel,

Your comics are simply fantastic, and the artwork is wayout.

Your best stories are the ones the Fantastic Four are in, because they are very exciting. I like all the different heroes, villains and co-stars who pop up.

One of my favourite FF stories was in issue 94 of the FF's own mag, where they were fighting the Frightful Four and Agatha Harkness turned the Sandman into solid rock.

I recently went to see Stan (the Man) Lee down at Charing Cross. I had to wait an hour in the rain before I could get his autograph on Captain Britain 1 and 2.

Talking about CB, I think he is brilliant, his costume is just right and his quarter-staff is a perfect weapon.

Alan Handscombe, 147 Denton Crogland Rd., Chalk Farm, London, NW1.

Thanks for writing, hero, but there's just one thing bothering us. Those Cap Britain issues 1 and 2---have they dried out yet?

SCI-FI, PLEASE

Dear Bullpen,

Alfredo Alcala is brilliant. His work on "Battle for POTA" and "Beneath ...." is so life-like. His mutants are too good to be true, especially Breck, whom I immediately recognised from "Conquest ...." The double-page spread on pages 6 and 7 of 112 was fantastic. It must have taken ages for him to do. Alfredo is one of my favourite artists, beaten only by Alex Nino and Bruce Jones. In issue 115 the art was not nearly as good as the preceding ones.

Another thing I want to bring up is Sci-Fi, or lack of it. In America there are many S.F. strips. So why not make a British Science Fiction comic. Look at all the scope you have - 2001: A Space Odyssey, The Eternals, The Guardians of the Galaxy, Doctor Who, Captain Marvel, Warlock, and the up-and-coming Logan's Run comic. Convinced? I hope you are, because if you aren't, how about all the articles from the Black and White mag, UWOFS?

Stephen Moore, KOE, ONS, RFO, 29 Red Sear Dr., Newby, Scarborough.

Okay, we'll admit it. We HAVE considered putting out a British Marvel devoted to the Sci-Fi scene. Then why haven't we done it, you demand. Because we couldn't be convinced that there'd be large enough audience for such a mag. Maybe we're wrong, if so Marveloom will surely let us know.

STOP PRESS!

Orders keep coming in from far and wide for those great Marvel Punch Bags—indeed we've just received one from Algeria!

The trouble is that we've sold out 4,000 bags so far, and we've run out of supplies.

The next batch won't be supplied until the end of April, so all those who are waiting to receive a Punch Bag have a decision to make . . .

You can either wait till the end of the month for your Punch Bag to be dispatched, or you can have your money refunded.

If you decide that you would like a refund, write to:

PUNCH BAG REFUND, Marvel Comics, Tubs Hill House, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Your money will be promptly refunded!

ZOKI, POW! WHAM!

Dear Stan,

Congratulations on Captain Britain. Although he needs a bit more character development I think he'll be okay. Your new origin book, "Bring on the Bad Guys" is truly a tribute to Marvel Mania. The Superman book was all very well, but I spotted a few "Pows", "Zoks" and "Whams" which, like Superman, are totally unrealistic.

Jack Kirby did a good job on the Bicentennial book, but (there's that word again) I didn't like pages 77, 78 and 79. All I can say is 'Sorry' (No hard feelings, Jack). The 2001 Space Odyssey was great, I also like the series. While on the subject of US Marvel manga, I like The Eternals, Omega Ms Marvel and the Man Called Nova. How about bringing them to merry ol' England? I totally recommend Paul Burton's comic lists. He has helped me fill many a gap in my collection, so if you're out there, Paul, "thanks".

Well, that's my letter and I've had my say, and all that's left is 'Marvel Rules OK!'

Paul Holmes, 34 Windsor Road, Swindon, Wilts.

With the aid of Irving Foshack's side-rule we worked out that there's a lot more about Marvel that you've been enjoying than there's been for you to disapprove of, so there'll be no cause for us to have a sleepless night. It's our intention to eventually have ALL our UK titles on sale in Merry Ol' England, and that will cover your particular requests. Natch!