

THE RAY  
**BRADBURY**  
CHRONICLES

4



The Authorized Adaptations

# The Ray Bradbury Chronicles 4

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THE **RAY**  
**BRADBURY**  
**CHRONICLES**

VOLUME FOUR

**THE RAY**  
**BRADBURY**  
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**4**  
**Night Meeting**  
**By Daniel Torres**

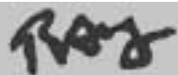
**18**  
**Punishment Without Crime**  
**By Ralph Reese**

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# NIGHT MEETING

Adapted by Daniel Torres

NIGHT Meeting was another of those experiments where I simply sat down at my typewriter and said let's bring two characters together from different Time Streams and see what happens. So I sat and typed and let the Martian and the Earthman talk, each convinced that the other was in space in another year, each trying to describe to the other what architectures lay below and what festivities awaited. And both, finally, having to give in, relax, and accept the other person's version of Time and the Truth. I let the characters speak for themselves and their dream of reality. I never interfere with my story people. Their lives and thoughts must be acted out on the typewriter as I watch. This is where the fun happens. If I did not have fun letting my characters come alive, you the reader would not have the same fun and everything would be born lifeless. As a result it is one of my favorite stories. And it all happened because I built a road and let two fantastic vehicles move along the road for a night encounter. The road and the Martian and the Earthman were between my ears one moment and the next out in the open, onto paper, and through your eyes into your head.



# Night Meeting



MARS, AUGUST, 2002



BEFORE GOING UP INTO  
THE BLUE HILLS...



... TOMAS GOMEZ STOPPED FOR  
GASOLINE AT THE LONELY STATION.







KIND OF ALONE OUT HERE, AREN'T YOU, POP?

Oh, IT'S NOT BAD.



HOW DO YOU LIKE MARS

FINE.



RIGHT POP.

I GET A KICK OUT OF THE DIFFERENT RAIN.



AND OLD MAN NEEDS TO HAVE THINGS DIFFERENT. YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO TALK WITH HIM.



THE BEST THING FOR ME WAS A PLACE WHERE YOU OPEN YOUR EYES AND YOU'RE ENTERTAINED.



SO I GOT THIS GAS STATION, WHERE I CAN EARN ENOUGH TO LIVE ON AND STILL HAVE TIME TO FEEL THE DIFFERENT THINGS HERE.



I'M NOT SURPRISED AT ANYTHING ANYMORE.

I'M JUST LOOKING. I'M JUST EXPERIENCING.



SOMETIMES I FEEL I'M HERE ALL BY MYSELF--NO ONE ELSE ON THE WHOLE DAMN PLANET.

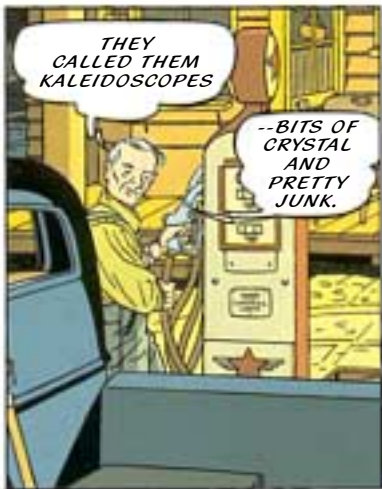




IF YOU CAN'T TAKE MARS FOR WHAT SHE IS, YOU MIGHT AS WELL GO BACK TO EARTH.



YOU KNOW WHAT MARS IS? IT'S LIKE A THING I GOT FOR CHRISTMAS SEVENTY YEARS AGO.



THEY CALLED THEM KALEIDOSCOPIES

--BITS OF CRYSTAL AND PRETTY JUNK.



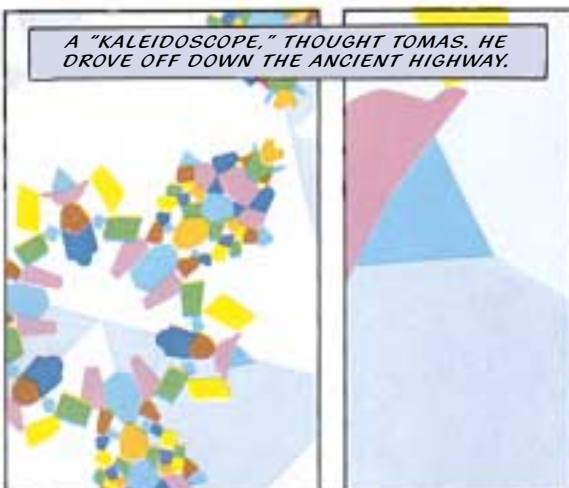
YOU HELD IT UP TO THE SUNLIGHT AND LOOKED THROUGH IT.



IT TOOK YOUR BREATH AWAY-- ALL THE PATTERNS!

WELL, THAT'S MARS. ENJOY IT. DON'T ASK IT TO BE NOTHING BUT WHAT IT IS.

THAT'S A DOLLAR FIFTY, THANKS.



A "KALEIDOSCOPE," THOUGHT TOMAS. HE DROVE OFF DOWN THE ANCIENT HIGHWAY.



TOMAS WAS FEELING GOOD. HE HAD BEEN WORKING HARD FOR TEN DAYS STRAIGHT. NOW HE WAS ON HIS WAY TO A PARTY.









THE MARTIAN RESPONDED IN HIS OWN LANGUAGE.





TOMAS FELT HIS HEAD TOUCHED, BUT NO HAND HAD TOUCHED HIM.



THERE! THAT'S BETTER!

YOU LEARNED MY LANGUAGE SO QUICK!



NOTHING AT ALL!



THIS IS CALLED COFFEE. MAY I OFFER YOU A DRINK?

PLEASE.



THEIR HANDS MET AND--LIKE MIST--FELL THROUGH EACH OTHER.



DID YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENED?

INDEED!



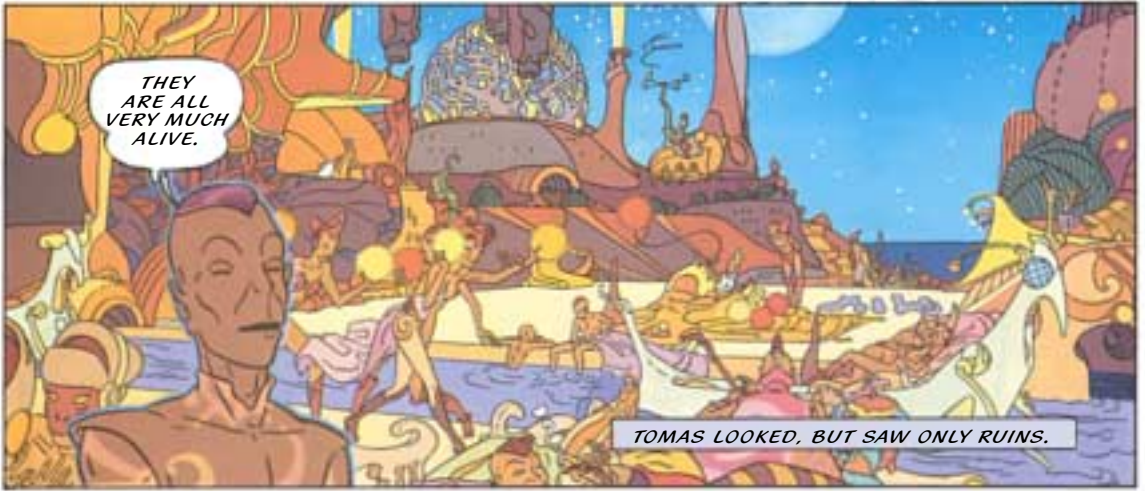
THE STARS! I CAN SEE THROUGH YOU!



THE STARS WERE WHITE AND SHARP BEYOND THE FLESH OF THE MARTIAN.











IT'S TRUE, I TELL YOU. ALL DEAD-- FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

I CANNOT SEE WHAT YOU DESCRIBE. FOR ME IT LIVES.



AS I CAME UP THE PASS I FELT A STRANGENESS TO THE ROAD, THE LIGHT. FOR A MOMENT I FELT AS IF I WERE THE LAST MAN ALIVE ON THIS WORLD...

SO DID I!



THIS CAN ONLY MEAN ONE THING. IT HAS TO DO WITH TIME. YOU ARE A FIGMENT OF THE PAST!

NO, YOU ARE FROM THE PAST.



YOU SEEM SO CERTAIN. BUT THE RUINS PROVE IT! I AM THE FUTURE.

YOU ... ARE DEAD.



EVERYTHING IN ME DENIES THIS. MY HEART BEATS, MY STOMACH HUNGERS.

NOT DEAD. NOT ALIVE, EITHER.

CAUGHT BETWEEN IS MORE LIKE IT. TWO STRANGERS ... PASSING IN THE NIGHT. RUINS, YOU SAY?



YES. ARE YOU AFRAID?

WHO WANTS TO SEE THE FUTURE? A MAN CAN FACE THE PAST, BUT ... THE SEAS EMPTY, THE CANALS DRY?

I SEE THEM AS I ALWAYS HAVE.



LET US AGREE TO DISAGREE.





WHAT DOES IT  
MATTER--WHO IS  
PAST OR FUTURE?  
WHAT FOLLOWS  
WILL FOLLOW.



TOMAS PUT OUT HIS HAND.  
THE MARTIAN DID LIKEWISE.  
THEIR HANDS DID NOT TOUCH.



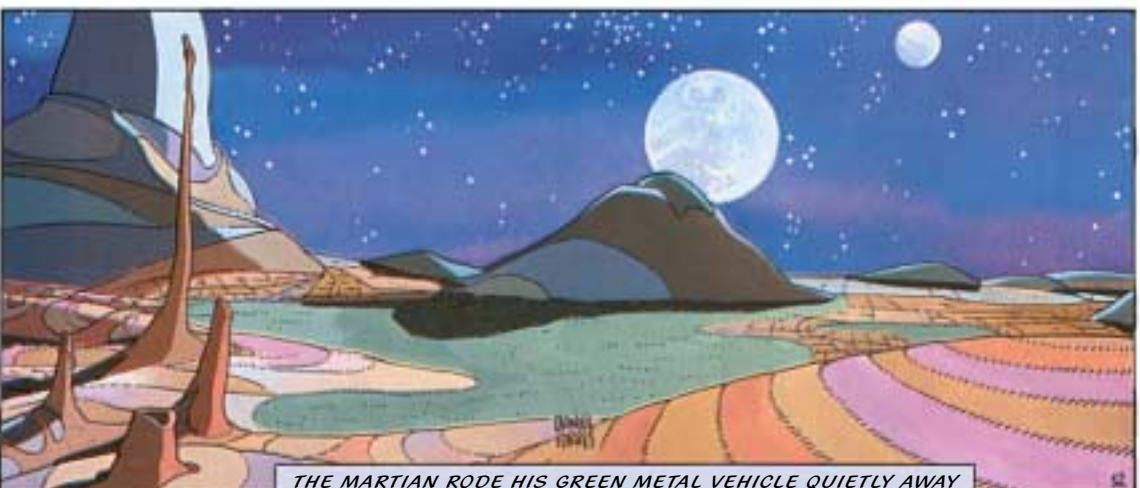
WILL WE  
MEET  
AGAIN?

WHO KNOWS?  
PERHAPS SOME  
OTHER NIGHT.

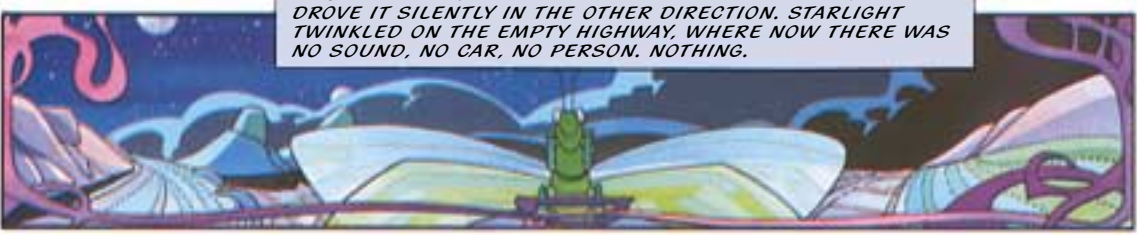


GOOD  
NIGHT.

GOODBYE,  
THEN.



THE MARTIAN RODE HIS GREEN METAL VEHICLE QUIETLY AWAY  
INTO THE HILLS. THE EARTHMAN TURNED HIS TRUCK AND  
DROVE IT SILENTLY IN THE OTHER DIRECTION. STARLIGHT  
TWINKLED ON THE EMPTY HIGHWAY, WHERE NOW THERE WAS  
NO SOUND, NO CAR, NO PERSON. NOTHING.

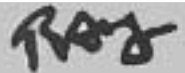





# PUNISHMENT WITHOUT CRIME

Adapted by Ralph Reese

Over the years, as we began to imagine robots of every size and shape, including humanoid, I could not help wondering what would happen when more and more of these electric machines took over the tasks of real men and women. Could or could not a computer, or any of its mechanical cousins, do good or evil, directly or indirectly? And what of the people who ran these machines? How do we look at them and accuse them of good or bad behavior? Out of such meandering thought, I conjured up PUNISHMENT WITHOUT CRIME, thinking: if it is murder to kill a live human, what sort of sin is it if you slay a duplicate of that human? Is it the equivalent, in many ways, of making a wax effigy of your enemy and sticking sharp needles in it to assassinate that person long-distance, by suggestion? If you refuse and outlaw witchcraft, what do you do with the super witchcraft of the robot designed to resemble a former associate, lover or spouse, and "killed" at the moment of technological birth? The answer could move in many directions. The idea in my story PUNISHMENT WITHOUT CRIME could be duplicated by other writers with different goals and happier or unhappier endings. When you finish with my tale, write your own version of this strange sad encounter.





**THREE MINUTES TO TWELVE...**  
THREE SHORT MINUTES IN THE LIFE  
OF GEORGE HILL. BUT THEY ARE THE  
MOST IMPORTANT THREE MINUTES HE  
WILL EVER SPEND. THEY ARE THE  
LAST THREE MINUTES OF HIS LIFE.  
THREE MINUTES TO THINK...

TO FEEL...

TO REMEMBER...

# PUNISHMENT WITHOUT CRIME

*Adapted by Ralph Reese*

TIME TO THINK BACK...BACK TO THAT DAY SEVERAL MONTHS AGO...BACK TO THE STRANGE DARK MAN IN HIS SHADOWY OFFICE...



YOU WISH TO KILL YOUR WIFE?

YES... NO... NOT EXACTLY... I MEAN...

MARIONETTES INC.

NAME AND ADDRESS?

GEORGE HILL. ELEVEN SOUTH SAINT JAMES, GLENVIEW.



THE MAN WROTE THIS DOWN EMOTIONLESSLY.

YOUR WIFE'S NAME?

KATHERINE.



AGE?

THIRTY ONE.

THEN CAME A SWIFT SERIES OF QUESTIONS... COLOR OF HAIR, EYES, SKIN... FAVORITE PERFUME, TEXTURE AND SIZE INDEX...



HAVE YOU A DIMENSIONAL PHOTO OF HER? A TAPE RECORDING OF HER VOICE? AH, I SEE YOU DO. NOW...

AN HOUR LATER, GEORGE HILL WAS PERSPIRING. THE DARK MAN AROSE AND SCOWLED.

THAT'S ALL. YOU STILL WANT TO GO THROUGH WITH IT?

YES.

SIGN HERE.



HE SIGNED.

YOU KNOW THIS IS ILLEGAL?

YES.

THE MAN SMILED FAINTLY...

IT'LL TAKE NINE HOURS TO PREPARE THE MARIONETTE OF YOUR WIFE. SLEEP AWHILE... IT'LL HELP YOUR NERVES. THE THIRD MIRROR ROOM ON YOUR LEFT IS UNOCCUPIED.



...AND THAT WE'RE IN NO WAY LIABLE FOR WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU AS A RESULT OF THIS REQUEST?

YES, YES... FOR GOD'S SAKE! LET'S GET ON WITH IT!



GEORGE MOVED NUMBLY, SLOWLY TO THE MIRROR ROOM. HE LAY ON THE BLUE VELVET COT, HIS BODY PRESSURE CAUSING THE MIRRORS IN THE CEILING TO WHIRL. A SOFT VOICE SANG...

HE MURMURED SOFTLY...

KATHERINE...I DIDN'T WANT TO COME HERE... YOU MADE ME DO IT... I DON'T WANT TO... KILL...YOU...

THE MIRRORS GLITTERED AS THEY ROTATED HYPNOTICALLY...HE SLEPT.

HE DREAMED HE WAS FORTY-ONE AGAIN. HE AND KATIE ON A GREEN HILL SOMEWHERE WITH A PICNIC LUNCH, THEIR HELICOPTER BESIDE THEM. THE WIND BLEW KATIE'S HAIR GOLDEN STRANDS AND SHE WAS LAUGHING...

OTHER SCENES...HE AND KATIE FLYING OVER GREECE AND ITALY AND SWITZERLAND, IN THAT LONG, CLEAR AUTUMN. FLYING AND NEVER STOPPING!



THEY KISSED AND HELD HANDS, NOT EATING. THEY READ POEMS. IT SEEMED THEY WERE ALWAYS READING POEMS...



AND THEN -- THE NIGHTMARE. KATIE AND LEOPARD PHELPS. GEORGE CRIED OUT IN HIS SLEEP. WHY? WHY HAD IT HAPPENED? WAS IT THE DIFFERENCE IN AGE? GEORGE TOUCHING FIFTY, KATIE SO YOUNG, SO VERY YOUNG...

THE SCENE WAS UNFORGETTABLE VIVID...PHELPS AND KATHERINE IN THE GREEN PARK. GEORGE HIMSELF APPEARING ON THE PATH ONLY IN TIME TO SEE THEM KISSING...

THE RAGE... THE STRUGGLE...THE ATTEMPT TO KILL LEONARD PHELPS...MORE DAYS, MORE NIGHTMARES...



GEORGE HILL AWOKE, WEEPING.



MR. HILL, WE'RE READY FOR YOU NOW.

HILL AROSE, CLUMSILY, HE SAW HIMSELF IN THE HIGH AND NOW-SILENT MIRRORS...



HE LOOKED EVERY ONE OF HIS YEARS. A LITTLE TOO MUCH STOMACH...A LITTLE TOO MUCH CHIN...HE EYED HIMSELF WITH LOATHING. IT HAD BEEN A WRETCHED ERROR.



THIS IS KATIE'S ROOM!

WE TRY TO HAVE EVERYTHING PERFECT.

GEORGE HILL DREW FORTH A CHECK FOR TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS. THE MAN TOOK IT AND DEPARTED. A LOT OF MONEY, BUT THEN RICH MEN COULD AFFORD THE LUXURY OF CATHARTIC MURDER. THE VIOLENT UNVIOLENCE...THE DEATH WITHOUT DEATH. THE ROOM WAS QUIET AS HE SAT, FEELING THE GUN IN HIS POCKET, WAITING....



HELLO, GEORGE.

HE WHIRLED AROUND...



KATIE...

SHE STOOD IN THE DOORWAY BEHIND HIM. HER HAIR WAS BRIGHT AROUND HER THROAT AND HER EYES WERE BLUE AND CLEAR. HE DID NOT SPEAK FOR A LONG WHILE...

HE PUT OUT HIS HANDS LIKE A SLEEPWALKER, WALKING FORWARD AS IF UNDER A DEEP PRESSURE OF WATER. HE WALKED AROUND AND AROUND HER, TOUCHING HER...



YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL.

HOW ELSE COULD I BE?



LET ME LOOK AT YOU.

HAVEN'T YOU SEEN ENOUGH OF ME IN ALL THESE YEARS?

NEVER ENOUGH.

HIS EYES WERE FILLED WITH TEARS.



GEORGE SAT DOWN WEAKLY...



WHAT DID YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME ABOUT?

GIVE ME TIME, PLEASE... JUST A LITTLE TIME...

IT'S INCREDIBLE! HOW DID THEY MAKE YOU?

WE'RE NOT ALLOWED TO SPEAK OF THAT... IT SPOILS THE ILLUSION.



HER TOUCH WAS WARM. HER FINGERNAILS PERFECT. THERE WAS NO SEAM, NO FLAW...



GEORGE ?

HE REMEMBERED AGAIN THE WORDS THEY HAD READ SO OFTEN IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS:

"Behold thou art fair; my love; Behold thou art fair: Thou hast dove's eyes within thy locks... Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, And thy speech is comely... Thy two breasts are like two young roes That are twins, That feed among the lilies... There is no spot in thee."



GEORGE?

WHAT?

HE WANTED TO KISS HER LIPS. HIS HEAD WAS HUMMING...

"Honey and milk are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon:"



GEORGE?

HE CRIED OUT AGAIN.



HOW DID THEY DO IT?

IF YOU TALK THAT WAY I'LL GO.

DON'T!

SHE SPOKE COLDLY...



LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS, THEN... YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME ABOUT LEONARD.

GIVE ME TIME, I'LL GET TO IT...



NOW.

HE KNEW NO ANGER. IT HAD WASHED OUT OF HIM AT HER APPEARANCE. HE FELT CHILDISHLY DIRTY...

SHE WASN'T SMILING...

WHY DID YOU COME TO SEE ME?  
WASN'T IT ABOUT LEONARD?  
YOU KNOW I LOVE HIM,  
DON'T YOU?

STOP  
IT!

YOU KNOW, I SPEND ALL OF MY TIME  
WITH HIM NOW. REMEMBER THE PICNIC  
GREEN ON MOUNT VERDE WHERE YOU  
AND I USED TO GO? WE WERE THERE  
LAST WEEK. WE FLEW TO ATHENS A  
MONTH AGO, WITH A CASE OF  
CHAMPAGNE.

HE PUTS HIS HANDS TO HIS EARS.

SHE KEPT AT HIM...

YOU'RE NOT GUILTY... YOU'RE NOT HER!  
YOU HAVEN'T DONE WHAT SHE 'S DONE...  
SHE'S GUILTY, NOT YOU!

HE GRABBED HER AND SHOOK...

LOOK, ISN'T THERE SOME WAY, CAN'T I-  
PAY MORE MONEY? TAKE YOU AWAY  
WITH ME? WE'LL GO TO PARIS OR  
STOCKHOLM OR WHEREVER YOU LIKE!

THE MARIONETTES ONLY RENT,  
THEY NEVER SELL. IT WAS TRIED,  
LONG AGO. IT LEADS TO INSANITY.  
EVEN THIS MUCH IS ILLEGAL...

ON THE CONTRARY... I AM HER! I CAN  
ACT ONLY AS SHE ACTS. I DID ALL  
THOSE THINGS... I MADE LOVE TO HIM...

ALL I WANT IS TO LIVE WITH YOU,  
KATIE!

ENOUGH OF THIS-I WARNED YOU, WE  
MUSTN'T SPEAK OF THESE THINGS.  
YOU'LL FEEL FRUSTRATED WHEN YOU  
LEAVE. YOU PAID YOUR MONEY, NOW DO  
WHAT YOU CAME TO DO.

ONE PART OF YOU  
DOES YOU'RE WALLING  
IT IN, TRYING NOT  
TO LET IT OUT!

THAT CAN NEVER BE,  
BECAUSE I AM KATIE. ANYWAY,  
MARIONETTES CAN'T LEAVE  
THE PREMISES... WE MIGHT BE  
DISCOVERED OR DISSECTED.

BUT  
I DON'T  
WAN'T TO  
KILL YOU!

I'M AN OLD  
FOOL. I SHOULD  
NEVER HAVE COME.



I'M GOING TO SEE LEONARD TONIGHT.

DON'T TALK.



HE TOOK THE GUN FROM HIS POCKET...

WE'RE FLYING TO PARIS IN THE MORNING...

YOU HEARD WHAT I SAID.



SHE LAUGHED AND CARESSSED HIS CHIN...

...AND THEN ON TO STOCKHOLM, MY LITTLE FAT MAN!

SOMETHING BEGINS TO STIR IN HIM...THE HIDDEN REVULSION AND HATRED IN HIM WERE SENDING OUT THEIR FIRST FAINT PULSES. SHE FELT THEM, SOMEHOW, IN HER LOVELY CLOCKWORK HEAD, AND FANNED THE FLAMES...



PLUMP ODD LITTLE MAN, WHO ONCE WAS SO FAIR...

DON'T!



HE RAISED THE GUN BLINDLY...

OLD WHILE I AM ONLY THIRTY ONE. AH, GEORGE, YOU WERE BLIND, WORKING ALL THOSE YEARS FOR ME... DON'T YOU THINK. LEONARD IS LOVELY?

KATIE...

SHE RECITED SOFTLY...

"His head is as the most fine gold... His locks are bushy, and black as a raven... His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl..."

HOW COULD SHE SPEAK THOSE WORDS?! THEY WERE IN HIS MIND... HOW COULD SHE REMEMBER THEM...?

KATIE, DON'T MAKE ME DO THIS!



"His cheeks are as a bed of spices... His belly is as bright ivory, overlaid with sapphires... His legs are as pillars of marble..."



KATIE, DON'T!



SHE FELL.

FOUR MORE TIMES HE PUMPED BULLETS INTO HER BODY...



SHE LAY SHUDDERING, SOME INSANELY WARPED MECHANISM CAUSING HER TO REPEAT AGAIN AND AGAIN...

AS THE GUN SLIPPED FROM HIS NERVELESS FINGERS, GEORGE HILL FAINTED.



HE AWAKENED TO A COOL CLOTH ON HIS BROW...



IT'S ALL OVER.

OVER?

THE DARK MAN NODDED.

GEORGE LOOKED DOWN AT HIS HANDS. THE LAST THING HE REMEMBERED AFTER HE FELL WAS THE BLOOD... HER BLOOD...POURING OVER THEM. NOW THEY WERE CLEAN...

I'VE GOT TO LEAVE.

IF YOU FEEL CAPABLE.



I'LL GO TO PARIS NOW, START OVER, I'M NOT TO TRY TO SEE KATIE AGAIN, AM I?

KATIE IS DEAD.

YES, I KILLED HER. DIDN'T I?



GOD, THE BLOOD... IT WAS REAL!

WE ARE PROUD OF THAT TOUCH.

HE WENT DOWN THE ELEVATOR TO THE STREET, IT WAS RAINING, AND HE WANTED TO WALK FOR HOURS. THE ANGER AND DESTRUCTION WERE PURGED AWAY. THE MEMORY WAS SO TERRIBLE HE WOULD NEVER WANT TO KILL AGAIN. SHE WAS DEAD NOW. THE RAIN FELL COOL ON HIS FACE.



THE MARIONETTES' FUNCTION WAS TO PREVENT ACTUAL CRIME. IF YOU NEEDED TO KILL, TORTURE, OR HIT SOMEONE, YOU TOOK IT OUT ON ONE OF THEM. HE COULDN'T GO BACK TO ME APARTMENT NOW...SHE MIGHT BE THERE. HE WANTED TO THINK OF HER AS DEAD...

A MANACLE WAS SLIPPED OVER HIS WRIST...

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!

BUT...



YOU MEN GO UPSTAIRS AND ROUND UP THE OTHERS!

YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME!

FOR MURDER... YES WE CAN!



A CLAP OF THUNDER SPLIT THE MURKY SKY...

MR. HILL?

YES?



IT WAS EIGHT-FIFTEEN AT NIGHT. IT HAD BEEN RAINING NOW FOR TEN DAYS, STREAMING DOWN THE GREY PRISON WALLS OUTSIDE. A DOOR CLANGED BEHIND HIM AND GEORGE DID NOT MOVE, BUT STOOD THERE AT THE WINDOW, STARING...



HIS LAWYER LOOKED UP AT HIM FROM HIS SEAT BY THE DOOR...

IT'S ALL OVER...YOU'LL BE EXECUTED TONIGHT AT TWELVE.

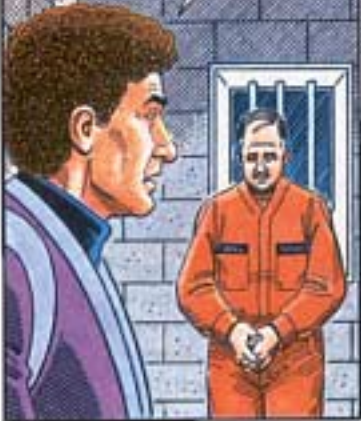
BUT, SHE WASN'T REAL! I DIDN'T KILL HER!



IT'S THE LAW, ANYHOW. YOU REMEMBER. THE OTHERS ARE SENTENCED, TOO. THE PRESIDENT OF MARIONETTES, INC. WILL DIE AT TWELVE THIRTY. HIS THREE ASSISTANTS WILL GO AT ONE.

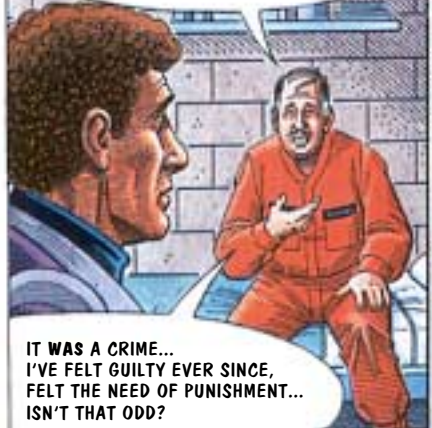
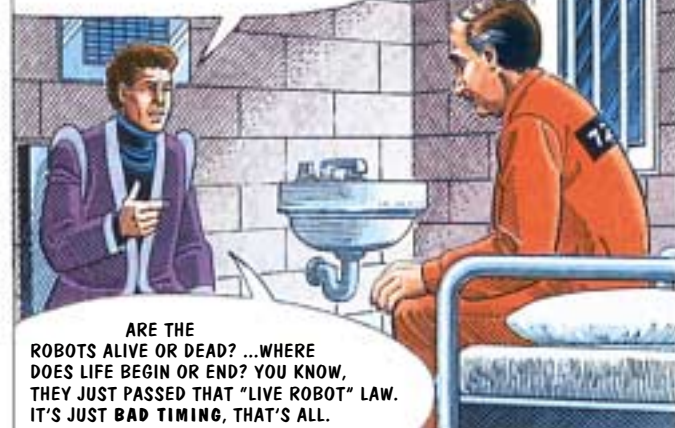
THANKS...YOU DID ALL YOU COULD. I GUESS IT WAS MURDER, IMAGE OR NOT, THE IDEA WAS THERE, THE PLAN WAS THERE...IT LACKED ONLY THE REAL KATIE HERSELF.

IT'S A MATTER OF TIMING, TOO... TEN YEARS AGO OR TEN YEARS FROM NOW, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN DEATH. THEY NEEDED AN OBJECT LESSON... A WHIPPING BOY.



THE USE OF MARIONETTES HAS GROWN SO MUCH IN THE LAST YEAR IT'S FANTASTIC. THE PUBLIC MUST BE SCARED OUT OF IT, AND SCARED BADLY...

YOU KNOW, THE GOVERNMENT'S RIGHT...I SEE THAT NOW. THEY CAN'T LET MURDER BE LEGAL, EVEN IF IT'S DONE WITH ROBOTS.



ARE THE ROBOTS ALIVE OR DEAD? ...WHERE DOES LIFE BEGIN OR END? YOU KNOW, THEY JUST PASSED THAT "LIVE ROBOT" LAW. IT'S JUST BAD TIMING, THAT'S ALL.

IT WAS A CRIME... I'VE FELT GUILTY EVER SINCE, FELT THE NEED OF PUNISHMENT... ISN'T THAT ODD?



THE DOOR SHUT. GEORGE STARED OUT AT THE RAIN, HIS HANDS TWISTING TOGETHER. SUDDENLY, A RED LIGHT BURNED IN THE WALL...A VOICE CAME OVER THE INTERCOM...



GEORGE GRIPPED THE BARS...



THE RED LIGHT WINKED OFF...LIGHTNING FLASHED IN THE SKY AND LIT HIS FACE. HE PRESSED HIS BURNING FOREHEAD TO THE COLD BARS, STARING, WAITING...



AFTER A LONG TIME. A DOOR OPENED SOMEWHERE BELOW. HE SAW TWO CAPED FIGURES EMERGE FROM THE PRISON, CROSSING THE COURTYARD...

UNDER AN ARC LIGHT, THEY PAUSED BRIEFLY AND ONE OF THEM GLANCED UP...



IT WAS KATIE, AND BESIDE HER LEONARD PHELPS.

VAINLY, HE SHOUTED THROUGH THE BARRED AND SEALED WINDOW...

HER FACE TURNED AWAY THE MAN TOOK HER ARM AND THEY HURRIED THROUGH THE BLACK RAIN INTO A LOW CAR...

HE WRENCHED AT THE BARS, BEATING AT THE CONCRETE LEDGE WITH HIS FISTS...



KATIE!



HE HEARD THE ENGINE START



SHE'S ALIVE! GUARD! GUARD! I SAW HER! SHE'S NOT DEAD!

THE GUARDS CAME RUNNING...

THE CAR DROVE AWAY, WITH LEONARD AND KATIE INSIDE IT. AWAY TO PARIS AND LONDON AND VENICE IN THE SPRING, STOCKHOLM IN THE SUMMER AND VIENNA IN THE FALL...

SHE'S NOT DEAD! I SAW HER! NOW YOU CAN LET ME OUT! I DIDN'T MURDER ANYONE...IT'S ALL A MISTAKE! I SAW HER!

WE SAW HER TOO, SIR...WE WENT THROUGH ALL THAT AT THE TRIAL!

KATIE, COME BACK! YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME!



BEHIND HIM, THE GUARDS MOVED TO TAKE HOLD OF HIM AS HIS SCREAMS ECHOED IN THE CONCRETE CELL...



Ralph Reese is a veteran illustrator and comics artist. He began as an assistant to the legendary Wally Wood. Later, he became a regular contributor to "National Lampoon", drawing the continuing strips "One Year Affair" and "Two Year Affair". In 1977 he illustrated one of the first graphic novels, "The Son of Sherlock Holmes". More recently, Ralph was the illustrator of the continuing daily comic strip "Flash Gordon" for King Features.

Daniel Torres was born in Valencia, Spain, where he began his career as an illustrator. He is the creator of the comic characters Roco Vargas as well as an illustrator for *Esquire*, *Playboy*, *Premiere* and *Sports Illustrated*.

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