

BADTIME STORIES

BADTIME STORIES by Berni Wrightson, Graphic Masters Publishers, 48 pages, available via mail order, \$5.00 per copy.

When a comic book editor wants a horror comix script illustrated with a shiver-ish style, these days, the first name on his lips is Berni Wrightson. Berni's terrific touch is so in demand, and so effective, that both of those giant comiconglomerates DC & Marvel use him to render their horror comic-zine covers as often as possible.

Even though he's just a couple of years past teen-hood (aged 23), Berni has had the honor of being the Boris Karloff-ian or Alfred Hitchcock-ian host to comic collections of horror, sci-fi stories in the DC line, drawing himself into splash panels, introducing the terror tales which are to follow. This is pretty rare in an industry where most comix artists and writers remain relatively anonymous, and unappreciated.

Now we have the first permanently-printed soft-cover slick paper collection of Berni Wrightson's own BADTIME STORIES.

Not only is Berni's work mysterious, it manically shifts from mood to mood with each story... and each story is drawn in a different media, black ink, or tone board, or painted grey wash, etc. as if each story were culled from different convolitional cubby-holes of Berni's burgeoning brain.

And what worlds are kept hidden in those creeping convolitional creases?! One of them is our world in the not-so-far future... our world, that is, if we don't control our environmental mucker-uppers... a world where THE LAST HUNTERS stalk their prey. There's writing in

BADTIME STORIES



WRIGHTSON '70

You have to admit, that this fellow-feller's KING OF THE MOUNTAIN, MAN!



AIN'T HE SWEET?... see him screaming down the street.

this; Wrightson word-smithery at its best... palpitating prose well-worthy of regaling remark;

"They sat in a world of bilious black slime... the shore of a once green and living ocean; a sea whose foamy brine once licked white sand... whose breakers once roared out its ceaseless symphonies in an endless ode to the miracle of creation. They waited... the After Men... they waited in silence, like the now silent waters... they waited... for the coming of the dawn..."

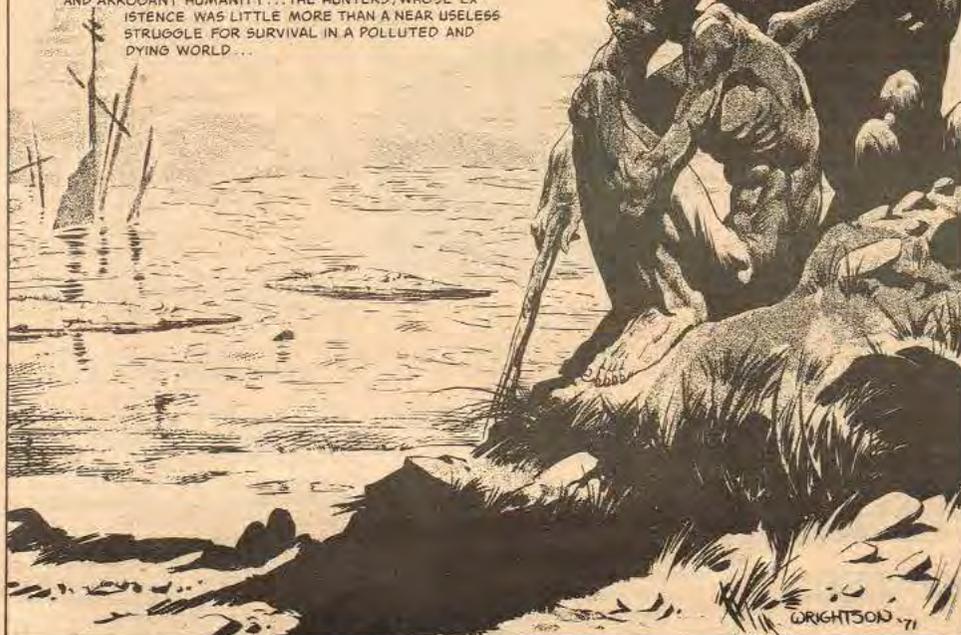
"The silence before the dawn was no different now than the silence that followed it. The world was all but dead, now... dead, except for the After Men. Those pitiful, tenacious remnants of a once-proud arrogant humanity... the hunters whose existence was little more than a near-useless struggle for survival in a polluted and dying world..."



UNCLE BILL'S BARREL never warn't the same, after Uncle Bill got into it. He hunted moonshine in the moonshine!

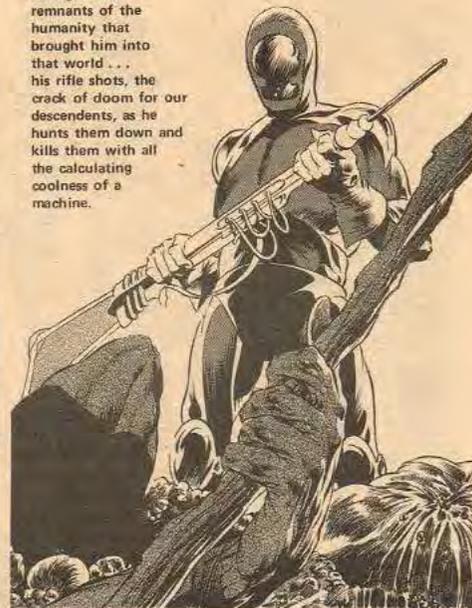
THEY SAT ON A BEACH OF BILEOUS BLACK SLIME... THE SHORE OF A ONCE GREEN AND LIVING OCEAN, A SEA WHOSE FOAMY BRINE ONCE LICKED WHITE SAND... WHOSE BREAKERS ONCE ROARED OUT ITS CEASELESS SYMPHONIES IN AN ENDLESS ODE TO THE MIRACLE OF CREATION. THEY WAITED—THE AFTER MEN—WAITED IN SILENCE, LIKE THE NOW SILENT WATERS... THEY WAITED IN THE DARKNESS, AS THE MEN OF THE VIRGIN DAYS MUST HAVE WAITED FOR THE COMING OF THE DAWN...

THE SILENCE BEFORE THE DAWN WAS NO DIFFERENT NOW THAN THE SILENCE THAT FOLLOWED IT. THE EARTH WAS ALL BUT DEAD, NOW... DEAD, EXCEPT FOR THE AFTER MEN. THOSE PITIFUL, TENACIOUS REMNANTS OF A ONCE PROUD AND ARROGANT HUMANITY... THE HUNTERS, WHOSE EXISTENCE WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A NEAR USELESS STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL IN A POLLUTED AND DYING WORLD...



The After-Men survey their world of soot and grime and oil-slicks and dim sunrises, in THE LAST HUNTERS.

The truly LAST HUNTER, that prowls Wrightson's fearful future world: takes no pleasure, and no pain in killing the last remnants of the humanity that brought him into that world... his rifle shots, the crack of doom for our descendants, as he hunts them down and kills them with all the calculating coolness of a machine.



A grim world, indeed... and a little more eloquent than "It's clobberin' time!" or other coined comix phrases we've all heard.

Not to give you the idea that this is a heavy book, tho. There's plenty of gore and grue and fiendish fun to be found amongst the other BADTIME STORIES.

For instance, there's the last story in the book, UNCLE BILL'S BARREL, which was originally drawn for a defunct horror comic called WEB OF HORROR... in 1968. There are few more humorous horror stories ever done... than this gleeful tale of a hillbilly corpse who kept rising from his grave for his nightly swig o' moonshine.

Upon Uncle Bill's first rising from his grave, his hillbilly kin-folk grab his "animated prune" corpse and shove it into a store-bought coffin (nailed shut) and bury him again. As the hill-tad narrator observes; " 'Cause he was raisin' such a

racket inside the coffin, in front of the grave, we put a stone sayin' 'Rest in Peace'..."

KING OF THE MOUNTAIN, MAN is a more recent Wrightson merging of the macabre with pioneer humor... but with an ending that is definitely not for minors... so all you under 17's out there, be ye warned... this book is not for you. As far as ol' John Law is concerned. That's sort of a shame, but that's the way things are... a badtime story of another nature.

The \$5.00 price on this volume seems a little steep, but it is well done, and the paper is slick and the covers are neat... particularly the back, which is an almost same-size full-color reproduction of Berni Wrightson's version of the devil ala FANTASIA'S Night on Bald Mountain sequence.

So it's worth \$5.00 to us... we're really into Wrightson's writing work.



Beware THE REAPER OF LOVE. He eats broken hearts and drinks shed tears and even sleeps with Teddy Bears.

...MY WEAPON IS USELESS, ITS BLADE BURIED TOO DEEPLY IN THE LOG TO REMOVE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO... IT IS REFLEX RATHER THAN STRATEGY THAT GUIDES MY ARM... I THROW THE RIDICULOUS THING AT THE FACE OF MY ATTACKER... HE GRINS, AND COLD, DEAD LAUGHTER ESCAPES HIS LIPS...



...HE MOVES, EASILY, AND THE MISSILE STREAKS BY HIS HEAD... BUT, THE FORCE OF THE THROW PULLS ME FORWARD AND THE HEAVY CHAIN ENCIRCLES HIS THROAT... I CATCH THE PROJECTILE WITH THE SAME HAND THAT LOOSED IT, AND HOLD IT IN A GRIP THAT ONLY DEATH WILL BREAK...



...THE OGRE GASPS AND STRUGGLES BUT I CLING TO HIM LIKE THE WOLF TO THE BEAR... THE SWEAT BEADS AND ENCIRCLES MY BROW AND THE OGRE SCREAMS... HIS MOVEMENTS SLOW AND FINALLY CEASE... TILL HE DROWNS IN HIS OWN BLOOD...



THE TASK... is the title of a fine story about a contest between "good" and evil!