



FAT... GROSS... A SLOB... ANY OF THESE TERMS WOULD APPLY TO VERNON GLUTE... ALTHOUGH HE CONSIDERED HIMSELF A GOURMET...

HE WAS A RICH MAN, VERNON GLUTE WAS... WITH NO CONCERN FOR HIS FELLOW MAN... ALL HIS MONEY WAS SPENT ON HIMSELF... FOR FOOD, EXOTIC DISHES, AN UNBELIEVABLE KITCHEN, EXCELLENT DINING FACILITIES...

AND, OF ALL THE THINGS HE ATE, OF ALL THE STRANGE AND EXOTIC FOODS HE FAVORED, FROGS' LEGS WERE INDEED HIS FAVORITE DELICACY... MOUNDS AND MOUNDS OF FROGS' LEGS...



# THE GOURMET



BURPI

EXCELLENT AS ALWAYS, HORMSLEY, BUT HARDLY ENOUGH!

I DESIRE ANOTHER HELPING!

WHATEVER YOU SAY, SIR!

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STORIES ARE TOLD ABOUT VERNON GLUTE... AND OF THE MILLIONS HE SPENT TO OBTAIN EXOTIC FRUITS FROM FARAWAY LANDS...



...OF HOW THESE FRUITS WOULD BE SOAKED FOR YEARS AND YEARS IN EXPENSIVE BRANDIES AND LIQUEURS...



... BEFORE THEY WOULD FINALLY REACH THE MASTER GOURMET'S TABLE... TO THEN BE SAVORED AND CONSUMED...



YET NOT EVEN THESE FRUITS COULD COMPARE, AS FAR AS VERNON GLUTE WAS CONCERNED, WITH HIS FAVORITE OF FOODS...



HERE YOU ARE, SIR... ANOTHER HELPING...



GOOD!

VERNON GLUTE DEMANDED THAT THE FROGS' LEGS BE AS FRESH AS POSSIBLE... THAT THE FROGS BE SLAUGHTERED RIGHT THERE, IN HIS OWN KITCHEN...



...THIS MADE FOR A MUCH BETTER FLAVOR... A FLAVOR THAT COULD BE TRULY SAVORED...



WHA-?



HORMSLEY! THESE ARE UNDER-COOKED!

I... I'M SORRY, SIR! I'LL TAKE THEM BACK AND COOK THEM SOME MORE!

NO, YOU FOOL! I WANT A NEW BATCH!

I WANT THEM FRESH! FRESH!



Y-YES, SIR!

WH-WHATEVER YOU SAY!



NOW, VERNON GLUTE SIMPLY SAT, WAITING FOR HORMSLEY TO RETURN WITH THE NEW BATCH ... PERHAPS THE 300TH BATCH OF FROGS' LEGS HE HAD HAD THAT YEAR. YET HE NEVER GREW TIRED OF THIS FOOD... AND NOW, HIS ANTICIPATION MOUNTED AS TIME WORE ON...



MY GOD!  
WHAT'S TAKING  
HIM SO LONG?

IT WAS QUITE A JOB, QUITE A TASK FOR VERNON GLUTE TO LIFT HIS OWN BULK... TO GET TO HIS FEET, TO STAND... AND IT WAS SOMETHING HE SELDOM DID...

BUT NO SOONER HAD HE RISEN THAN HE HEARD THE STRANGE SOUNDS... AND HORMSLEY'S SHOUT...



BETTER GO IN THERE... SEE WHAT'S--



NO! STAY AWAY!

HUNKH?

PLEASE! I DIDN'T MEAN TO! I WAS ONLY DOING AS I WAS TOLD! I...

**SCREE SCREE SCREE SCREE**

THEN, A BLOOD-CHILLING SCREAM...



**YAR RRRRE**

VERNON GLUTE HAD NO IDEA WHAT HAD HAPPENED, BUT HE WAS SCARED. THE STRANGE SOUNDS CONTINUED... HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO... HE WAS FROZEN WITH FEAR...

**SCREE SCREE SCREE SCREE**

SOUNDS LIKE SOME KIND OF WHEELS SPINNING... OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT!



NOW THE SOUNDS WERE COMING FROM ALL AROUND HIM... FROM BEHIND EACH AND EVERY DOOR... AND THESE SOUNDS WERE GROWING LOUDER AND LOUDER... BECOMING AN UNBEARABLE DIN...



SUDDENLY, THINGS BEGAN TO THUD AGAINST THE DOORS...

MILLIONS OF SMALL OBJECTS HITTING THE DOORS AGAIN AND AGAIN... CAUSING THE WOOD TO SPLINTER...

...THE LATCHES TO LOOSEN...



THE DOORS BEGAN TO GIVE WAY, TO BUCKLE INWARD... AND VERNON GLUTE GOT HIS FIRST GLIMPSE OF WHAT WAS COMING FOR HIM...





THEN, THEY WERE POURING INTO THE ROOM... LEAPING UPON HIM... MILLIONS OF THEM... CROAKING, SCREECHING, SEEKING REVENGE...



NO!

AARRRRRG GHHH

CROAK SCREE CROAK

SCREE SCREE SCREE

SCREE SCREE

CROAK

VERNON GLUTE WAS NEVER HEARD OF AGAIN. YEARS PASSED... AND THE STORIES ABOUT HIM BECAME LEGEND! THEN ONE DAY, IN A CERTAIN SLEAZY DINER IN A POORER PART OF TOWN...



MY GOD! THE FLIES IN HERE ARE GETTING SO THICK I CAN HARDLY SEE!

YEAH! GLESS WE'D BETTER CALL IN THE "FLY-CATCHER!"

ONE OF THE MEN WHISTLED AND THE ONE THEY HAD REFERRED TO WHEELED IN...



SCREE SCREE SCREE SCREE

HE WAS NOW KNOWN AS THE "FLY-CATCHER"... HE SURVEYED THE SCENE... HIS EYES RIVETING ON ONE OF THE FLIES...

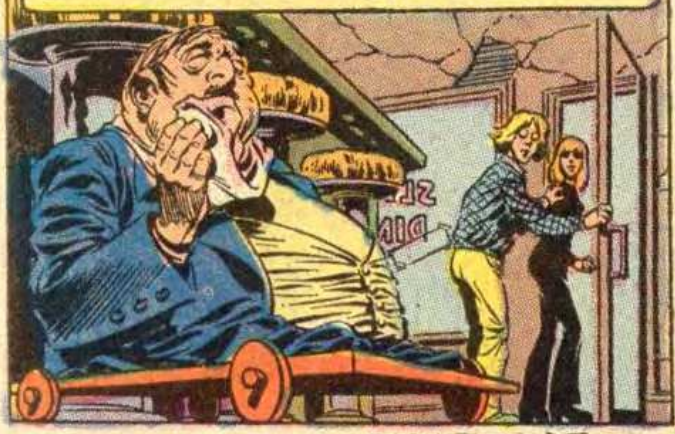


AND THEN...



HORMSLEY HAD BEEN THE LUCKY ONE. THEY HAD SIMPLY KILLED HIM. BUT VERNON GLUTE'S FATE WAS FAR WORSE... ESPECIALLY FOR A MAN WHO HAD ONCE SAVORED ONLY THE BEST OF FOODS...

...TO BE TRANSFORMED INTO THIS STRANGE, HALF-HUMAN CREATURE... TO DINE FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE ON THE MOST COMMON OF INSECTS...



≡CROAK!≡

WRIGHTSON '72