

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! SO, NOW IT'S THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S TURN TO CHILL YOU. FOR THE WIND-UP SPOT TO O.W.'S MAG, I'VE CHOSEN A TALE BY *RAY BRADBURY*. SO COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR, SIT DOWN ON THAT TENT-SPIKE THERE, AND I'LL TELL YOU MY ADAPTATION OF MR. BRADBURY'S...

THE BLACK FERRIS!

THE CARNIVAL HAD COME TO TOWN LIKE AN OCTOBER WIND, LIKE A DARK BAT FLYING OVER A COLD LAKE, BONES RATTLING IN THE NIGHT, MOURNING, SIGHING, WHISPERING UP THE TENTS IN THE DARK RAIN. IT STAYED ON FOR A MONTH BY THE GREY, RESTLESS LAKE OF OCTOBER, IN THE BLACK WEATHER AND INCREASING STORMS AND LEADEN SKIES...



DURING THE THIRD WEEK, AT TWILIGHT ON A THURSDAY, TWO SMALL BOYS WALKED ALONG THE LAKE SHORE IN THE COLD WIND...

AW, I DON'T BELIEVE YOU, HANK.

COME ON, AND I'LL SHOW YOU, PETE.



PETER AND HENRY RAN TO THE LONELY CARNIVAL GROUNDS. THE MIDWAY WAS SILENT, THE GREY TENTS HISSED IN THE WIND LIKE GIANT PREHISTORIC WINGS. AT EIGHT O'CLOCK PERHAPS, GHASTLY LIGHTS WOULD FLASH ON, VOICES WOULD SHOUT, MUSIC WOULD GO OUT OVER THE LAKE. BUT NOW, THERE WAS ONLY A BLIND HUNCHBACK SITTING ON A BLACK BOX...



THE BLACK FERRIS WHEEL ROSE LIKE AN IMMENSE LIGHT-BULBED CONSTELLATION AGAINST THE CLOUDY SKY, SILENT...



PETE LET HIMSELF BE LED TO THE HIGH GREEN HIDING PLACE OF A TREE, SUDDENLY HANK STIFFENED...



MR. COOGER, A MAN OF SOME THIRTY-FIVE YEARS, DRESSED IN SHARP BRIGHT CLOTHES, A LAPEL CARNATION, AND A BROWN DERBY HAT ON HIS HEAD, DRIFTED UNDER THE TREE...



MR. COOGER NODDED AT THE BLIND HUNCHBACK, SPOKE A WORD. THE HUNCHBACK BLINDLY, FUMBLING, LOCKED MR. COOGER INTO A BLACK SEAT AND SENT HIM WHIRLING INTO THE OMINOUS TWILIGHT SKY...



THE BLACK FERRIS WHEEL WHIRLED TWENTY-FIVE TIMES AROUND. THEN THE BLIND HUNCHBACK PUT OUT HIS PALE HANDS AND HALTED THE MACHINERY, THE WHEEL STOPPED, GENTLY SWAYING, AT A CERTAIN BLACK SEAT, A TEN-YEAR OLD BOY STEPPED OUT...



THE TEN YEAR OLD BOY WALKED OFF ACROSS THE WHISPERING CARNIVAL GROUNDS, INTO THE SHADOWS. PETER SEARCHED THE FERRIS WHEEL WITH HIS EYES FOR MR. COOGER...



HANK DROPPED FROM THE TREE AND WAS SPRINTING BEFORE HE HIT THE GROUND...

THE LIGHTS WERE BURNING IN MRS. FOLEY'S WHITE MANSION. PIANO MUSIC TINKLED. WITHIN THE WARM WINDOWS, PEOPLE MOVED. OUTSIDE, IT BEGAN TO RAIN, DESPONDENTLY, IRREVOCABLY, FOREVER AND EVER...

I'M SO WET LIKE SOMEONE SQUIRTED ME WITH A HOSE. HOW MUCH LONGER DO WE WAIT, HANK?

I KNOW HIS NAME. MY MOTHER TOLD ME ABOUT HIM THE OTHER DAY.



THEY HAD FOLLOWED THE TEN YEAR OLD FROM THE FERRIS WHEEL UP THROUGH TOWN, DOWN DARK STREETS TO MRS. FOLEY'S HOUSE. NOW, INSIDE THE WARM DINING ROOM, THE STRANGE LITTLE BOY SAT AT DINNER...

MOM SAID, 'HANK, YOU HEAR ABOUT THE LI'L ORPHAN BOY MOVED IN MRS. FOLEY'S? WELL, HIS NAME'S JOSEPH PIKES AND HE JUST CAME TO MRS. FOLEY'S ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO AND ASKED FOR SOMETHING TO EAT, AND HIM AND MRS. FOLEY BEEN GETTIN' ON LIKE HOT APPLE PIE EVER SINCE!' THAT'S WHAT MOM SAID.

I'M SCARED, HANK. I'M GOLD AND HUNGRY AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS'S ALL ABOUT.



GOSH, YOU'RE DUMB, PETE! DON'T YOU SEE? THREE WEEKS AGO THE CARNIVAL GAME, AND ABOUT THE SAME TIME THIS LITTLE OLE ORPHAN KID SHOWS UP AT MRS. FOLEY'S. AND MRS. FOLEY'S OWN SON DIED A LONG TIME AGO, AND SHE'S NEVER BEEN THE SAME, SO HERE'S THIS LITTLE OLE ORPHAN WHO BUTTERS HER ALL AROUND...

OH!



THEY MARCHED UP TO THE FRONT DOOR AND BANGED THE HUGE KNOCKER. AFTER AWHILE THE DOOR OPENED...

YOU'RE ALL WET! COME IN! MY LAND! WHAT DO YOU WANT? YOU'RE HENRY WALTERSON, AREN'T YOU?

UH-HUH! CAN WE SEE YOU ALONE, MA'AM?



HANK GLANCED FEARFULLY AT THE DINING ROOM WHERE THE STRANGE LITTLE BOY LOOKED UP FROM HIS EATING. HANK CREEPT OVER AND SHUT THE HALL DOOR AND WHISPERED...

WE GOT TO WARN YOU. IT'S ABOUT THAT BOY COME TO LIVE WITH YOU... THAT ORPHAN!

WELL?



THE HALL GREW SUDDENLY COLD. MRS. FOLEY DREW HERSELF HIGH AND STIFF...

HE'S FROM THE CARNIVAL AND HE AIN'T NO BOY, HE'S A MAN, AND HE'S PLANNING ON LIVING HERE WITH YOU UNTIL HE FINDS WHERE YOUR MONEY IS AND THEN RUN OFF WITH IT SOME NIGHT, AND PEOPLE WILL LOOK FOR HIM BUT BECAUSE THEY'LL BE LOOKING FOR A TEN YEAR OLD, MR. COOGER WILL GET AWAY...

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?



THE CARNIVAL...AND THE FERRIS WHEEL GOING BACKWARD MAKING MR. COOGER YOUNGER, I DON'T KNOW HOW, AND HIM COMING HERE AS A BOY, AND YOU CAN'T TRUST HIM, BECAUSE WHEN HE HAS YOUR MONEY HE'LL GET BACK ON THE FERRIS WHEEL AND IT'LL GO FORWARD AND...

GET OUT, HENRY WALTERSON! GET OUT AND DON'T EVER COME BACK!



THE DOOR SLAMMED. PETER AND HANK FOUND THEMSELVES IN THE RAIN ONCE MORE. IT SOAKED INTO THEM, COLD AND COMPLETE...

SMART GUY! NOW HE... HE YOU FIXED IT. SUPPOSE HE HEARD US, SUPPOSE HE COMES AND KILLS US IN OUR BEDS TONIGHT, TO SHUT US UP FOR KEEPS!



PETER SEIZED HANK'S ARM AND POINTED...

WOULDN'T HE? LOOK!



IN THE BIG BAY WINDOW OF THE DINING ROOM NOW THE MESH CURTAIN PULLED ASIDE. STANDING THERE IN THE PINK LIGHT, HIS HAND MADE INTO A MENACING FIST, WAS THE ORPHAN BOY. HIS FACE WAS HORRIBLE TO SEE, THE TEETH BARED, THE EYES HATEFUL...



DURING SUPPER, FATHER LOOKED AT HANK AND SAID...

IF YOU DON'T CATCH PNEUMONIA, I'LL BE SURPRISED. SOAKED, YOU WERE, BY GOD! WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT THE CARNIVAL?

DO YOU KNOW MR. COOGER, THE CARNIVAL MAN, DAD?



THE ONE WITH THE PINK CARNATION IN HIS LAPEL? SURE. HE STAYS DOWN AT MRS. O'LEARY'S BOARDING HOUSE. GOT A ROOM IN THE BACK. WHY?

NOTHING. JUST WAS WONDERING IF YOU KNEW HIM.



AFTER SUPPER, HANK PUT IN A CALL TO PETER. AT THE OTHER END OF THE LINE, PETER SOUNDED MISERABLE WITH COUGHING...

LISTEN, PETE! I SEE IT ALL NOW. WHEN THAT L'IL OLE ORPHAN BOY, JOSEPH PIKES, GETS MRS. FOLEY'S MONEY, HE'S GOT A GOOD PLAN.

WHAT?



HE'LL STICK AROUND TOWN AS THE CARNIVAL MAN, LIVING IN A ROOM AT MRS. O'LEARY'S. THAT WAY, NOBODY'LL GET SUSPICIOUS OF HIM. EVERYBODY'LL BE LOOKING FOR THAT NASTY LITTLE BOY AND HE'LL BE GONE. AND MR. COOGER WILL BE WALKING AROUND, AND NOBODY'LL SUSPECT THE CARNIVAL AT ALL. IT WOULD LOOK FUNNY IF THE CARNIVAL SUDDENLY PULLED UP STAKES. SO WE GOT TO ACT FAST.

NOBODY WILL BELIEVE US, HANK. I TRIED TO TELL MY FOLKS, BUT THEY SAID HOG-WASH!



WE GOT TO ACT *TONIGHT!* BECAUSE IF WE *DON'T*, HE'LL *KILL* US! WE'RE THE *ONLY ONES* WHO *KNOW!* I BET HE JUST *TRIES* SOMETHING *TONIGHT*. SO, I TELL YOU, MEET ME AT MRS. FOLEY'S IN *HALF AN HOUR*.

AW!



YOU WANNA *DIE?*

N-NO!



WELL THEN, *MEET* ME THERE AND I BET WE SEE THAT ORPHAN BOY SNEAKING OUT WITH THE MONEY, *TONIGHT*, AND RUNNING BACK DOWN TO THE CARNIVAL GROUNDS WITH IT, WHEN MRS. FOLEY'S ASLEEP. I'LL *SEE* YOU THERE. SO LONG, PETE!



HANK HUNG UP. HIS FATHER STOOD BEHIND HIM...

YOU'RE NOT GOING *ANYWHERE*, YOUNG MAN. YOU'RE GOING *STRAIGHT TO BED*. *C'MON!* UPSTAIRS!

BUT, *POP!* AW... *GEE...*



HANK WAS MARCHED UPSTAIRS. HANK UNDRESSED. HIS FATHER TOOK HIS CLOTHES AND LOCKED HIM IN HIS ROOM. THE REST OF HANK'S WARDROBE HUNG OUTSIDE THE LOCKED BEDROOM DOOR IN THE HALL CLOSET...

NOW, GO TO BED!

HOLY COW!



PETER STOOD OUTSIDE MRS. FOLEY'S HOUSE, LOST IN A VAST RAINCOAT AND MARINER'S CAP, SNIFFLING. FINALLY THERE WAS A RUSTLING IN THE WET BUSHES.

PSST! PETE! HEY! LEND ME YOUR *PANTS!* DAD WOULDN'T LET ME *OUT!*

GOSH, HANK! YOU'RE... YOU'RE *NAKED!*



C'MON! YOU'VE GOT THAT *RAINCOAT* ON. NOBODY'LL *KNOW* SO LEND ME YOUR *PANTS*, BEFORE I GET *PNEUMONIA!*

WELL... ALL RIGHT!



THE RELUCTANT TRANSACTION WAS MADE. HANK PULLED THE PANTS ON. THEY WAITED...

THE RAIN LET UP... IN ABOUT TEN MINUTES, A SMALL FIGURE EMERGED FROM THE HOUSE, BEARING A LARGE PAPER SACK FILLED WITH SOME ENORMOUS LOOT OR OTHER...

THERE HE GOES!

AFTER HIM!



THEY GAVE CHASE THROUGH THE CHESTNUT TREES, UP THE HILL, THROUGH THE NIGHT STREETS OF TOWN, DOWN PAST THE RAILROAD YARDS...

HURRY, PETE.

WE CAN'T LET HIM GET TO THAT FERRIS WHEEL. IF HE CHANGES BACK, WE'LL NEVER PROVE ANYTHING...

I'M HURRYING!



THE ORPHAN BOY WAS SWIFT. PETER WAS LEFT BEHIND AS HANK THUDDED ON ALONE AFTER THE DARTING ORPHAN BOY, NOW VANISHING INTO THE CARNIVAL GROUNDS...



HANK STOPPED AT THE EDGE OF THE CARNIVAL LOT THE FERRIS WHEEL WAS GOING UP AND UP INTO THE SKY, AND THERE SAT JOSEPH PIKES, LAUGHING UP AND AROUND, AND THE BLIND HUNCHBACK HAD HIS HAND ON THE ROARING OILY MACHINE. AND EACH TIME THAT JOSEPH PIKES RODE INTO THE SKY AND CAME DOWN AND WENT AROUND, HE WAS A YEAR OLDER, HIS LAUGH DEEPENING, HIS FACE CHANGING...



HANK RAN FORWARD AT THE BLIND HUNCHBACK BY THE MACHINE. ON THE WAY, HE PICKED UP A TENT SPIKE...

WHO'S HERE?
WHO...
OOOOOF!



THE HUNCHBACK TRIED TO REACH THE BRAKE TO STOP THE FERRIS WHEEL. HANK RAN IN AND SLAMMED THE SPIKE AGAINST HIS FINGERS, MASHING THEM...



THE FERRIS WHEEL WENT AROUND AND AROUND AND AROUND. JOSEPH PIKES—MR. COOGER, FLUNG UP IN A STORMY COLD SKY IN THE BUBBLED CONSTELLATION OF WHIRL AND RUSH AND WIND, SCREAMED. THE HUNCHBACK WITH HANK ON HIS CHEST... THRASHING, BITING, KICKING... GROANED...

STOP THE WHEEL!

I CAN'T MOVE!



MR. COOPER, A MAN, A DIFFERENT MAN AND VOICE THIS TIME, CRIED OUT, COMING AROUND IN PANIC, GOING UP INTO THE ROARING HISSING SKY OF THE FERRIS WHEEL, THE WIND BLEW THROUGH THE HIGH DARK WHEEL SPOKES...

STOP! OH, PLEASE STOP THE WHEEL!



HANK LEAPED FROM THE SPRAWLING HUNCHBACK. HE STARTED IN ON THE BRAKE MECHANISM, HITTING IT, JAMMING IT, PUTTING CHUNKS OF METAL IN IT...

STOP, STOP, STOP THE WHEEL! STOP...



THE VOICE FADED. NOW THE CARNIVAL WAS ABLAZE WITH SUDDEN LIGHT. MEN SPRANG FROM TENTS, CAME RUNNING. HANK FELT HIMSELF JERKED INTO THE AIR WITH OATHS AND BEATINGS RAINED ON HIM. A POLICEMAN APPEARED, PISTOL DRAWN...

STOP! STOP THE WHEEL!



THE VOICE REPEATED AND REPEATED, SIGHING AWAY IN THE WIND. THE DARK CARNIVAL MEN TRIED TO APPLY THE BRAKE. NOTHING HAPPENED. THE MACHINERY HUMMED AND TURNED THE WHEEL AROUND AND AROUND. THE MECHANISM WAS JAMMED. THE VOICE CRIED ONE LAST TIME.

STOP!



THEN... SILENCE...

WITHOUT A WORD THE FERRIS WHEEL FLEW IN A CIRCLE, A HIGH SYSTEM OF ELECTRIC STARS AND METAL AND SEATS. THERE WAS NO SOUND NOW BUT THE SOUND OF THE MOTOR WHICH DIED AND STOPPED. THE FERRIS WHEEL COASTED A MINUTE, THEN CAME TO REST, ALL THE PEOPLE GAZING UP AT IT...

LOOK!



THE POLICEMAN TURNED AND THE CARNIVAL PEOPLE TURNED AND THEY ALL LOOKED AT THE OCCUPANT IN THE BLACK PAINTED SEAT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RIDE. A SKELETON SAT THERE, A PAPER BAG OF MONEY IN ITS HANDS, A BROWN DERBY HAT ON ITS HEAD...

GOOD LORD!

CHOKE...



HEH, HEH! AND THAT'S THE STORY, KIDDIES, THE WAY RAY WROTE IT. HOPE YOU LIKED IT. NOW IT'S TIME TO CLOSE THE OLD WITCH'S MAG. BEFORE YOU CREEP FROM THE CRYPT, LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THE HUNGRY GHOUL. HE LEFT NO STONE UNTURNED! HEH, HEH!

WELL, WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG, TALES FROM THE CRYPT. THERE'LL BE ANOTHER RAY BRADBURY YARN FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT. 'BYE, NOW! BUY BOMBS!



- THE END -