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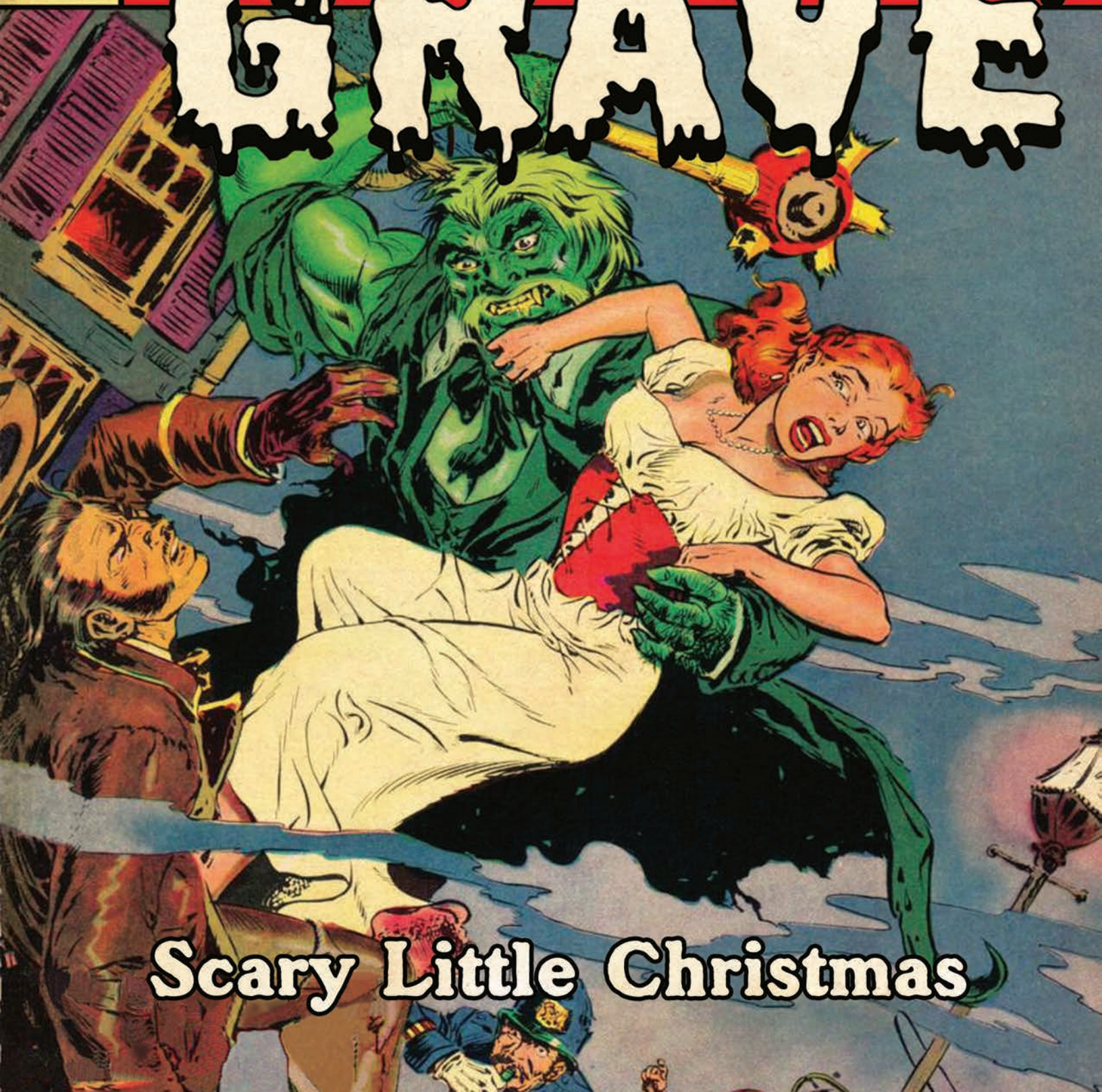
No.0
2016

STORIES

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GRAVE



Scary Little Christmas

About Installment Seeds

What follows is a collection of installment seeds. Each seed gives you, the Grave Keeper, the basic skeleton of an installment that can be fleshed out a little and run for your player(s) without much effort. They lack the detail found in full-blown installments, giving you a perfect chance to add your own touches!

“... And All Through the House”

*An installment seed for 1 PC
by Cynthia Celeste Miller*

Story Frame: Hapless

Primary Character Background:

- **Luigi Gisetto:** An aging furnace-tender, someone who is paid to service people's heating stoves and to shovel coal into them so that the heat is always on during the coldest months. He's family-oriented, likeable and has a strong work ethic, but has suffered some health woes in recent years, including two heart attacks.

Story Notes:

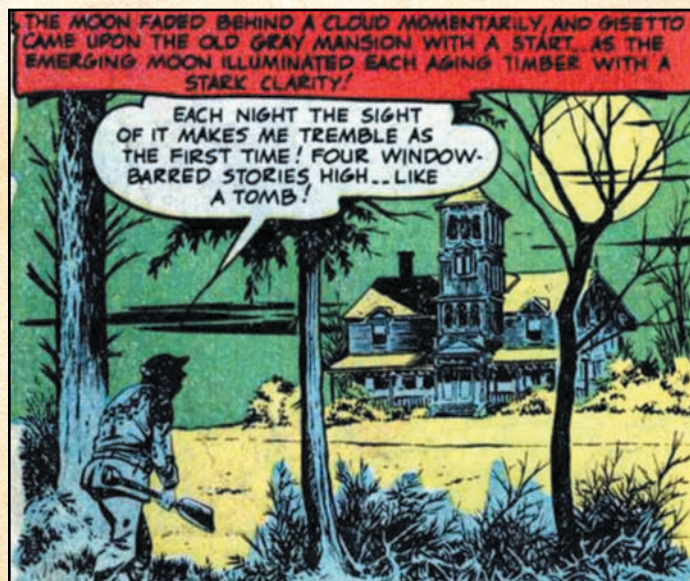
- The story takes place on Christmas in 1952. It's snowy and frigid outside. The initial scene should be interaction between Luigi, his wife (Eustice) and his 13-year-old granddaughter (Drina, who presumably lives with them). They've just opened presents and she reminds him that he's supposed to go to service the Maddox sisters' basement furnace. This should start a conversation that gives the player the necessary background and set-up to the installment. The following information should be mentioned by Eustice and Drina:

-- The sisters are recluses.

-- He's been servicing their furnace for ten years, yet has never seen them. He was even hired by way of a note.

-- He has never been allowed to enter the main levels of the house; only the basement, via an outside door.

-- He always finds his payment on a table in the basement.



- The Maddox's house is an old, run-down structure. Most of the house is two stories, but the front-most portion reaches an additional two stories in height, giving it the illusion of a creaky old tower. The exterior door to the basement is in back of the house.

- Upon entering the basement, Luigi will find that the payment is not there. The exterior door slams shut and can't be open. Was it the wind? The only way out is the door at the top of the staircase that leads to the main level of the house... where he is forbidden to go.

- The house has no electricity, making it very dark. He stumbles across the corpse of Laura Maddox. Go into detail about how shriveled and disgusting it looks. He then starts hearing ominous footsteps but can't see anyone. Worse, all the doors of the house seem to be locked or jammed, preventing an easy escape.



- If the player fails any Intention that revolve around moving around the house, he suffers a mishap that injures his leg, creating an Obstacle of 1 for any future Intentions in which that leg would play a role.

- Let Luigi see a light coming from one of the top two floors. A staircase leads to those levels. If he ascends the stairs, he will see a figure standing at the top. The figure falls down the stairs (possibly a Flesh-based Grave Intention to move out of the way!). It's the cadaver of Angela Maddox!

- Remember to keep mentioning the footsteps, but do not let him see anyone. Keeping it mysterious is key to the horror of the situation.

- Regardless of what happens, build the tension up to a crescendo. When it seems appropriate, particularly when it looks as if Luigi has no hope of escape, his granddaughter comes with the police.

- The police officers won't believe anything he tells them and the bodies are nowhere to be seen. They check the house for intruders and come up empty-handed. It should come to light that the sisters disappeared ten years ago... just before Luigi started servicing their furnace. You could play it one of two ways: 1) They think Luigi is just a delusional/scared old man and offer to take him home to his wife in time for Christmas supper, or 2) Luigi is taken away by the police officers as a suspect in the disappearance. Either way, as he leaves the house, describe a shadowy form looking out the window at Luigi.



"A Dolly for Johnny"

*An installment seed for 1-3 PCs
by Barak Blackburn*

Story Frame: The Item

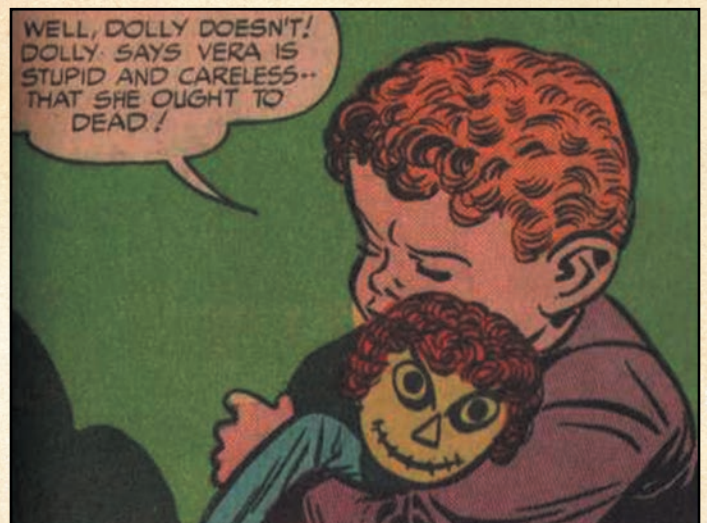
Grave Hag Intro: Sometimes, unfortunate things happen. Sometimes they have no explanation. *You* could get hit by a bus tomorrow, isn't that how the expression goes? Sometimes, houses burn down, and everyone inside dies. Sometimes this happens around the holidays, which could bring a very morbid spin to chestnuts roasting on an open fire. Sometimes, it is about what *isn't* lost in the fire. Why do bad things happen to good people? I'm asking you, because I don't know any truly good people. Maybe this holiday yarn will warm our hearts, or maybe it will burn us to a crisp.

Primary Character Backgrounds:

- **Ray Shelton:** A hard-working traditional 1950s father.
- **Mae Shelton:** Very traditional 1950s stay-at-home mother.
- **Johnny Shelton:** Nine-year-old boy.

Story Notes:

It's the 1950s, the month of December, and as much as the Sheltons want to give their son Johnny a wonderful Christmas, fate is proving to be a real pain in the... X-Mas. The Murphys' house, next door to the Sheltons' recently burned to the ground. There were no survivors. From the rubble, Johnny picked up a doll, seemingly unharmed by the fire (...but in desperate need of a wash). Johnny's parents would rather Johnny not hold on to such a thing, but all attempts to bribe him away from it have failed, and it seems the doll has a malevolent soul all its own.





At the end of Act One, Ray Shelton will take a dangerous fall down the stairs. This will be a Flesh-based Intention with an Obstacle of 4.

Johnny does not reveal the origin of the doll until the beginning of Act Two. Give this handout to Johnny's player at that time.

You didn't want to tell your parents how you rescued Dolly, but Dolly needed rescuing! After the Murphys' house burned down, the firemen and police did everything they could, but no one could be saved. Of course, they didn't think twice when they saw Dolly. So, you gave Dolly a new home.



In Act Two, the correlation between attempts to tamper with Dolly and injury becomes even more apparent. When the housekeeper, Vera, is found dead in her apartment, the police are called in, and all anyone can think of is that Dolly must be involved, as ridiculous as that idea sounds. Dolly has F0, B2, T1, G3.

Act Two ends when Ray and/or Mae discover a fire in Johnny's room, with Johnny pleading not to put the fire out, because Dolly likes the fire.

ACT THREE:

Grave Hag Intro: It is that most epic of battle, man versus..... Doll. Are you kidding me? It's a doll, and it is terrorizing this entire family. Pathetic. If you can't defeat this Doll, I guess you deserve what fate has in store for you. *Sheltons roasting on open fire.... Grave Hag munching on some toes... Reh-heh-heh-heh!*

To up the ante, Act Three should be precisely 10 Intentions long. That way, it is almost ensured that characters will be fighting to stay alive as their Grave Tokens accumulate. Of course, no matter what, some other child will be thrilled to have an already-loved doll for the holidays.



"The Yuletide Monster"

*An installment seed for 1-3 PCs
by Cynthia Celeste Miller*

Story Frame: Consequences

Primary Character Background:

- **Orville Wakefield:** An experienced yet poor scientist whose destitute son died many years ago due to Barnabas Whittercock's lack of compassion during the holiday season.
- **Reubin Ashdown:** The former business partner of Barnabas Whittercock. Reubin parted ways with him due to his lack of scruples. Reubin is one of the wealthiest men in London.
- **Ella Chattoway:** As the niece of Barnabas Whittercock, few people have seen the cruelty of the old man as thoroughly as she has.

If you have less than three players in your group, use the extra PCs as SCs with an SC rating of 2.

Story Notes:

- The story takes place in London during the mid-1800s. The PCs decide to forcibly perform a scientific experiment on Barnabas Whittercock, a miserable but wealthy old coot who deplores Christmas with a burning passion. The goal of the experiment is to alter his personality, thus making him a good human



being with plenty of holiday cheer. The experiment is Orville's brainchild, Reubin funded it and Ella helped lure Barnabas into the trap. Orville has a lab assistant named Hinsdale who is secretly jealous of his mentor and seeks to one-up him at every turn. Hinsdale is a black-haired man in his thirties with piercing dark eyes and a slightly hooked nose.

- The game should begin down in a basement-level secret laboratory, where the PCs have Barnabas strapped down to a table. All manner of old-timey science equipment should be present. Have fun describing it! Announce that they just finished injecting the serum into their subject's brain and that they must now wait an hour before reviving him. What they don't know is that Hinsdale (the assistant!) has created his own formula and will inject it as well. He thinks his will work better than the serum that Orville concocted. He slips it in whenever the PCs leave the laboratory to wait the hour. If they don't leave, he'll make an excuse to get close to Barnabas and quickly inject his liquid.

- There could be a showdown with Hinsdale if they figure out what he has done. He may even gloat about it afterward. It's up to you. Hinsdale has an SC rating of 0. After the scene ends, Barnabas begins to scream in agony. His body grows in size, transforming into a brutish beast of a man with green skin! Instead of reducing Barnabas' hatred and vitriol, Hinsdale adding his formula to the mix actually enhanced it! Now, he has be-



come a rage monster who loathes Christmas more than ever. The monster snaps the bonds easily and escapes. His stats are now as follows: F5, B0, T0, G2.

- Fueled by his increased hatred of all things Christmas, the monster goes on a rampage, attacking anything related to the holiday and anyone who is celebrating it. It's up to the PCs to come up with a way to stop the carnage... and by all means, describe the carnage! He will leave a trail of twisted and broken bodies wherever he goes (not to mention countless broken and torn-down decorations, figures, Christmas trees, lots of destroyed goods...).



- How can the beast be stopped? There are some options you can choose from. **OPTION ONE** is fire: any Intention that involves attacking him with fire will count as a Benefit of 5, which essentially offsets his Flesh of 5. They might find out about this weakness by reading Hinsdale's notes. **OPTION TWO** is for the PCs to somehow show him the kindness that one would expect during the holidays... but it will have to be the greatest kindness known to humankind; an Intention versus the monster's Guts may be in order. **OPTION THREE** is reserved for a case in which the PCs come up with a method that feels creative and in the spirit of the story. (If that third option seems more suspenseful and entertaining to you than the other two, just go with that.)

- So, is Barnabas gone forever? Hopefully not, but it depends on the method in which the PCs defeated the monster (assuming they defeat it at all). If the monster is slain or just defeated, you have a choice whether or not to have it transform back into Barnabas... and if so, whether he remains a vile curmudgeon or becomes a person of joy and holiday spirit. It's all about the tone you wish the installment to have.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM EVERYONE AT SPECTRUM GAMES!

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