

FROM THE PAGES OF  
MARY MORGAN'S JOURNAL.



APNO XZNON, ...  
MUST DESTROY ... LEWAY TO  
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A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O  
P Q R S T U V W X Y Z  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

# THE CAUTIONER'S TALE



WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED  
BY R. M. WILBURN  
AUTHOR OF THE  
BUGGY CRENSHAW BOOKS

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WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY  
R. M. WILBURN



Harry J. Horvath

Paul & Bob



**The Cautioner's Tale**  
written and illustrated by R. M. Wilburn

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Tacoma, Washington  
USA

<https://www.iamrmwilburn.com>

Author's Note: Several years back when I was writing the Buggy Crenshaw adventures, I met a character named Mary Morgan. In the first Buggy book (Buggy Crenshaw and the Bungler's Paradox), Mary was a very old woman who had a mysteriously adventurous past. I didn't know at the time that she would also have a future I'd find intriguing. Oddly enough, I realized I liked Mary because of all the things I didn't yet know about her, particularly her penchant for traveling through time. Her experiences have landed her in many various locations and at oft-critical times, past as well as future.

During the past few years while I set about learning the wonders of Photoshop, Mary kept me company. This story is a result of our collaboration.

Thanks for joining us.

R. M. Wilburn  
20170105



This is a work of fiction which means I made the whole thing up (except for the parts about magic, of course). Any resemblance to real persons or places is an absolute fluke and is to be disregarded as a product of an over-active imagination operating under the effects of far too much caffeine and scads of gummy worms. (Afterall, who doesn't love a good gummy worm?)

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written & illustrated by R. M. Wilburn

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Anyhoooooo, this author would greatly appreciate it if none of the work herein is copied or reproduced in any manner whatsoever by anyone, human or other, biological or mechanical, without prior written permission. Thanks bunches!



"Be not discouraged, and do not let your task overwhelm you. It takes but one loose nut to begin to dismantle the mightiest machine."

--Halting Paux, Xaverian Monk and Headmaster, School of Steam Mechanics & Aeronautical Endeavors

# THE CAUTIONER'S TALE

Gabsy Pork & Side Diner  
& Salvage Yard  
#6.5 D... Alley  
Old York... on Sq.  
678.XU... 311

Order#: 31  
Date: 3/15/47 7:82 PM  
Server: GP

Table 2

#21 Beef Surprise w/ green	\$5.37
Starch	\$0.32
Water	\$6.23
Dessert-Pearange	\$11.14
	\$29.14
Subtotal:	\$5.59
Service Tax:	\$3.39
Cleaning Tax:	\$4.93
Gen. Public Tax:	\$51.73
<b>TOTAL OWED:</b>	<b>\$40.00</b>
<b>Magistrate's Fee:</b>	

PLEASE COME AGAIN.

The Dying Man  
Ours is a story of a world gone awry  
Where paper and pens are in short supply  
Where all is coated w/ an oil sheen  
From the big metal monsters that run on steam

The air is thick w/ low, hot clouds  
And the streets are burdened w/ starving crowds  
Our needs are many, but our choices are few  
The jobs we were promised are overdue

Nothing is great as we were promised back then  
The world's a disaster, but praying's a sin.  
There's no time to ponder in dazed reflection  
How we were bamboozled by a rigged election.

What can be done by the dying man?  
Is there no longer hope for healing the land?  
Are we doomed by God to die this way?  
Or is there a hero who can show us the way?

--Anonymous Perin  
2046 AD



Saturday, April 1, 2045

## "Parsimonious" Creed, Head of World Leadership Council, Dead at 29

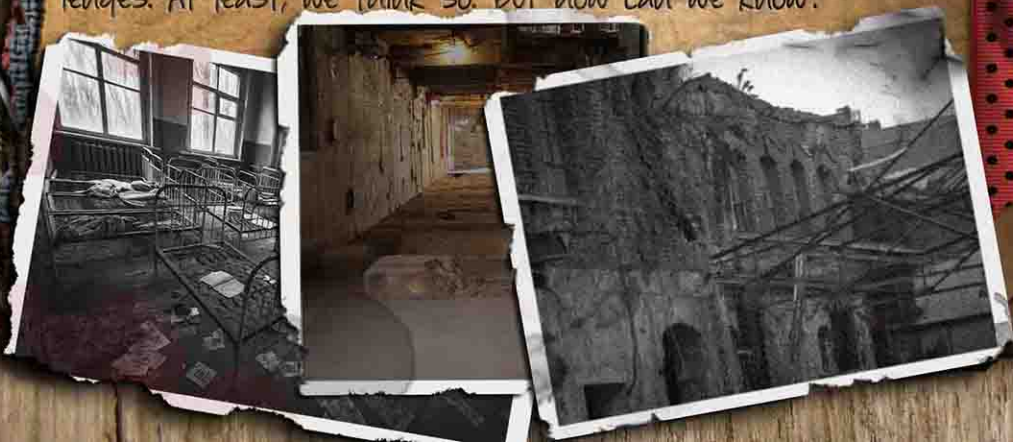
Dr. Creed found dead at home amidst evidence of a struggle  
Police suspect foul play!

Upper Quadrant, New London - After an anonymous tip, police found Magistrate "Parsimonious" Creed dead in his New London

In case something happens to me, let it be known for the record: my name is Mary Morgan and this is my journal. Everything that follows is true, or is a safe assertion based on many truths. I've included evidence when possible, and changed names when necessary.

I have some catching up to do. I think Dr. Creed's death (over two years ago) may be where it began. This current predicament, I mean. It's hard to say, though, since there are so many factors that led us to where we are now. Even so, I'll start here with the death of my friend and colleague Dr. Parsimonious Creed.

PC was a scholar elected by the people to lead our world into an uncertain future. We were twenty years past the Last Great War, but with little advancement to show for it. It made sense to promote Dr. Creed whose passion and endless rhetoric centered on discovering our world's past so we could learn from our previous glories as well as our mistakes. Even though we lost most of our population to the war, and all major cities fell, possibly our greatest loss was our history. We are now a new world with new challenges. At least, we think so. But how can we know?



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**NOTE:** Most of us—myself included—were born after the Last Great War, to a generation called "Warriors." Scholars say we are a good sign that Mankind will survive. But many who were born before the war did not survive it, and those who did rarely talk about their "other" (pre-war) lives. It's possible they don't remember, but most likely, they just want to forget. There are, however, a rare few who insist on recovering our past. My friend and mentor Juggler Vein (twenty years my senior) was one and was the reason I worked for Parsimonious Creed, a like-minded colleague.

The three of us, along with a handful of others, were investigators searching for a past that could help us find our way forward. Ours was not an easy task, particularly for Dr. Creed, but also for Juggler Vein. (More on JV later.)

**ATTN: MAIL BOY**

I can already see that one of my greatest challenges in writing this for the record will be how well I can piece things together, so to speak. So much has happened that putting it all on paper in its correct order could be more difficult than I first thought.

My best hope is that you'll bear with me. It's critical this story is told and I know of no others willing to do it. Why bother? they wonder. I bother because I've seen firsthand the damage done by not knowing our past. Even if it's all for nothing, an account of our existence, a "history," must begin somewhere even if it's just in my journal.



Some of our past is blatantly obvious: there are ruins of great cities, and ribbons of roads that lead from one gray dust heap to the next, but for the most part, any structure that could be destroyed by fire, was.

Of course, this made Dr. Creed's job exceedingly difficult, but he was never one to complain. Instead, he put together a coalition whose sole purpose was to investigate the "magic" that led up to the Last Great War and use it to avoid such catastrophes in the future. (The word "magic," in this case, describes anything inexplicable, including pre-war technology that most no longer understand.)

Having worked alongside Dr. Creed for much of my time as a public servant, I was devastated by his death. But I also understood it to mean one thing: he was close to learning the truth of what really happened all those years ago.

My reasoning was based not only on the evidence of a struggle at the scene of his death, but also on the number of files missing from a secret chamber inside his home...

home where he lived with his seven guinea pigs and a vampire bat. His body was retrieved from beneath an overturned chair where an empty keybox was found. The key itself had apparently been used to open a secret room inside the doctor's home where it was evident he had stored files police can only assume were related to his investigations into Mankind's past. Based on the many near-empty file cabinets and debris littered about the room, one can only assume that most files were removed, likely by the murderous trespasser.

I was the only other person to know of this chamber's existence where PC stored evidence pertaining to the case he was building against a wealthy businessman. His theory was that this particular billionaire or one of his surrogates may have played a pivotal role in our past, but too many questions remained unanswered for the investigator to act.

It's possible I may not have been able to figure it all out after my friend's death had it not been for what took place immediately after the news became public...

The world was not destroyed by the Last Great War, but its history was.

We are now a new world with new challenges. Or at least, we think so. But how can we know?

-Mary Morgan  
Spring 2047



When Dr. Parsimonious Creed, head of the World Leadership Council, is murdered, his home ransacked, and important files stolen, billionaire Herr Bigly Rump graciously volunteers to take over the world in his absence. Contenders for the position are either murdered or jailed, leaving only Herr Rump in the running until Dr. Creed's assistant, a young investigator named Mary Morgan who is suspicious of the Rump's motivations, enters the race to stop him.

Mysterious circumstances lead to a shocking victory for the Rump, granting his wish for world domination. His first act is to ban the notion of history and all investigations into the past, calling them "witch hunts." But knowing Mary may have information that could lead to his downfall, the Rump immediately declares her a criminal for having run against him and he sends out the hounds to find her.

Out of a job and on the run, Mary does her best to remain in the shadows, but when she begins receiving letters from citizens around the world to help get rid of the tyrannical Rump, she has little choice but to act.

As the bodies of her allies begin to pile up, Mary devises a plan to oust the Rump from power. But, little does she know how eager her enemies are to be rid of him as well. Could she be making matters worse?



(BAR CODE)