

Weird Tales



THE UNIQUE MAGAZINE
Spring 1993

ISSN 0898-5073
Art by Nicholas Jainschigg

FICTION

THE PULSE OF THE MACHINE Nina Kiriki Hoffman 10

FOUR BY LORD DUNSANY:
THE RATIONS OF MURDOCH FINUCAN, A MODERN PORTRAIT,
ECHOING DREAM, & HELPING THE FAIRIES . . . Lord Dunsany 21

A SÉANCE Nina Kiriki Hoffman 29

RIDI BOBO Robert Deveraux 32

ROGUE WAVE Gary David Johnson 38

WHERE THE SUN STAYS FOR WINTER Nina Kiriki Hoffman 41

VALENTINES Nina Kiriki Hoffman 43

CECILEY AT THE SUPERMARKET Nina Kiriki Hoffman 44

SKINNED Jimm Gordon 46

BUCK, GLORY RAE,
& THE THREE LITTLE PIGS John Gregory Betancourt 52

ANTONIUS BEQUEATHED Tanith Lee 54

THE SWITCH-BACK R. Chetwynd-Hayes 65

VERSE

THE SPIRIT'S LAMENT by John S. Davis: 20. THE DEVIL AND THE
MODERN MAN by Darrell Schweitzer: 28. THE DANCE OF THE CORPSES
by Jason J. Marchi: 37. THE SHARK by Margo Skinner: 43. WHATEVER IT
IS by Stanley McNail: 51. PRISONERS OF THE ROYAL WEATHER by
Bruce Boston: 82.

FEATURES

THE EYRIE 4

THE DEN Gahan Wilson 8

WEIRDISM: NECROMANCY Jason Van Hollander 27

WEIRD TALES TALKS WITH
NINA KIRIKI HOFFMAN Darrell Schweitzer 60

Weird Tales® is published 4 times a year by Terminus Publishing Co., Inc., PO Box 13418, Philadelphia PA 19101-3418 (4426 Larchwood Ave., Philadelphia PA 19104-3916). 2nd Class Postage paid at Philadelphia PA & additional mailing offices. Single copies, \$4.95. Subscriptions: 4 issues (one year) \$16.00 in U.S.A. & possessions; \$22.00 elsewhere, in U.S. funds. Postmaster: send address changes to *Weird Tales*®, PO Box 13418, Philadelphia PA 19101-3418. Copyright © 1993 by Terminus Publishing Co., Inc.; all rights reserved; reproduction prohibited without prior permission. Typeset, printed, & bound in the United States of America. *Weird Tales*® is a registered trademark owned by Weird Tales, Limited.

FOUR BY LORD DUNSANY

THE RATIONS OF MURDOCH FINUCAN

Sergeant Macinery walked up to the whitewashed porch of Mick Heraghty's house and knocked, and Mrs. Heraghty came to the door. It was an ordinary enough Irish farm-house in front, with a kitchen to the left as you entered and a little parlour to the right, with a large mahogany table in the middle, and a photograph on the wall of Mr. and Mrs. Heraghty on their wedding-day, and a holy picture and a print of one by Landseer. But leading out of the kitchen was a door that opened upon a spiral staircase of stone that wound up a tower many centuries old, that was all covered with ivy. There was only one room in the tower, now used as a store-room. There had been three other towers once, it was said, but this was the only one that remained of a castle of bygone days, whose story was still remembered, a story that, true or not, was somewhat bloodcurdling. The tower rose up behind the house and loomed strangely above it.

"I was wondering, Mam," said Sergeant Macinery, "would himself be indoors at present."

"Sure, he's after coming in," said Mrs. Heraghty. "Didn't you see him?"

"Sure, I saw somebody entering," said the sergeant. "But I couldn't be sure it was Mr. Heraghty."

"It was so," said Mrs. Heraghty. "Won't you come in?"

"Ah, it's very kind of you," said Macinery. "Sure, I will, if it's not troubling you."

"Sure, it's no trouble at all," said Mrs. Heraghty.

So the sergeant went in, and there was Mick Heraghty sitting by the big fireplace in the kitchen. They shook hands. "Won't you sit down?" said Heraghty.

"It's very kind of you," said the sergeant.

"Was there anything you were wanting?" asked Heraghty.

"Ah, nothing at all," said the sergeant; "sure, nothing at all. There was only one thing I wanted, but it will do any time."

"And what was that?" asked Heraghty.

"It was only that I wanted to see Murdoch Finucan, to speak a few words with him about his ration-card."

"Sure, you can do that any time," replied Heraghty, "any time that he comes to my old tower."

"I know," said the sergeant, "I know. But maybe, as it's only a little formality about his ration-card that they were asking about in Dublin, I might have a word with him before that."

"Sure, you might," said the farmer. "I'd go and call him for you now, if I knew where he was."

"I know you would," said Sergeant Macinery. "But maybe you could tell me about it yourself, without putting Mr. Finucan to any trouble."

"I'd be glad to help you," said Heraghty. "What was

it you wanted to know?"

"Hasn't Murdoch Finucan been dead three hundred years?" asked the sergeant.

"He's been *buried* three hundred years," corrected Heraghty.

"Isn't it the same thing?" asked the sergeant.

"Not in the case of Murdoch Finucan," replied Heraghty.

"Maybe not," said the sergeant, "and I'm not saying it is. But what I was getting at is — does a man want a ration-card when he's been buried all that time?"

"Sure, I got the card for him from Sergeant O'Phelan before you came here," said Heraghty.

"Maybe you did," said Macinery. "But Sergeant O'Phelan has left the Force, and he was too easy-going any way."

"Sure, it was only for the tea and sugar I wanted it. I wouldn't give a damn for the rest," said the farmer.

"I know," said Sergeant Macinery. "But the point I was making was — what good would that be to a man who's been dead three hundred years?"

"Buried," said Heraghty.

"Well, buried, then," said the sergeant.

"Ah, would you grudge a cup of tea to a ghost?" complained Heraghty.

"They might in Dublin," said Sergeant Macinery.

"Ah, what do they know in Dublin of the way things should be done?" asked Heraghty. "Or in any town, for that matter. Sure, they're out of touch with things there. They know nothing."

"Maybe," said the sergeant. "But they're very sharp with us if we don't keep to their rules. And what they are asking now is — Who signed Murdoch Finucan's ration-card?"

"Sure, he signed it by proxy," said Heraghty.

"I understand all that," said the sergeant. "But there's ways and ways of signing by proxy. And did he do it in a way that would satisfy them in Dublin?"

"Maybe he didn't," said Heraghty. "But wasn't Murdoch Finucan a terrible man anyway?"

"Sure, he was, by all accounts," said the sergeant.

"Was he the sort of man you're wishing to pick a quarrel with?" asked Heraghty.

"Maybe one mightn't believe in him at all," said the sergeant.

"Don't the people believe in him?" asked Heraghty.

"Sure, they do, seemingly," said the sergeant.

"And are you going to set yourself against the people?" said Heraghty. "Sure, you'll never go down here if that's what you do."

"I only wanted to see Murdoch Finucan," said the sergeant, "and to ask him about his ration-card."

"Then you may come to my old tower at the full of the

WEIRD TALES

moon," said Heraghty, "and you may say to his face the things that you have been saying to me about him. And tell him to his face, his white face in the moonlight, that you grudge him a cup of tea. And you may tell the people what you've done."

"Ah, sure, I wouldn't go to those lengths," said the

sergeant. "Sure I don't want to annoy you. I'll tell them in Dublin that Murdoch Finucan signed by proxy; and that he'll look in on them and verify it the next time that he is in Dublin. Won't that be the best way?"

"Sure, that will do grand," said Heraghty.

Ω