ISSUE 23

VAMPIRELLA

A NEW HALLOWEEN LEGEND ARRIVES...

JOLLY JACK-O

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ISSUE #23
THE LEGEND OF JOLLY JACK-O

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HALLOWEEN WASN'T ALWAYS "HAPPY."

FEAR GARDEN

KEEP OUT!

FOR CENTURIES, THE *POWER OF FEAR* RULED THE SEASON.

JOLLY JACK-O

WITCHES AND THOSE WITH *BAD INTENTIONS* LEARNED TO HARVEST FEAR ENERGY THROUGH ROOT MAGIC, STORING IT IN VEGETABLES PULLED FROM THE DARKNESS OF THE EARTH.

FEAR GARDEN

TERROR TURNIP

Dread beets

THE VEIL BETWEEN THE HERE AND GONE IS THIN THIS TIME OF YEAR, THIN ENOUGH FOR GHOSTS TO SLIP THROUGH, AND NOT ALL OF THEM COME BACK FRIENDLY.

RIP

JEDEDIAH LOSERSON

EDWARD PINSKY

ONE FRIGHTENED WHISPER BECAME TEN. TEN BECAME A HUNDRED. AND SOON, THE WHOLE TOWN BELONGED TO FEAR.

NO ONE KNOWS EXACTLY HOW IT HAPPENED. BUT ONE AUTUMN NIGHT, JOLLY JACK-O WAS BORN, AND THE OL' CURSE OF FEAR BEGAN TO CRACK.

THEIR FEAR MAGIC NO LONGER WORKED IN THE PRESENCE OF THIS JOLLY PUMPKIN.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

NO! THAT'S *NOT* WHAT WAS SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN!

NOW, WHEN THE VEIL GREW THIN, IT WAS NOT TERROR THAT CROSSED OVER, BUT LOVE, JOY, AND THE ONES WE MISSED MOST.

HA HA HA

WOO-HOO!

DOORS ONCE LOCKED IN FEAR NOW OPENED WITH LAUGHTER, CANDY, COSTUMES, AND THE MAGIC WORDS THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING...

BOO!

TRICK OR TREAT!!!

AND THAT'S HOW JOLLY JACK-O PUT THE *HAPPY* IN HAPPY HALLOWEEN.

AND THE WITCHES *HATED* HIM FOR IT!

WE HAVE TO STOP THIS MONSTER!

THE FEAR WITCHES VOWED TO DESTROY THE PUMPKIN BOY AND BRING BACK *FEAR* TO THE SEASON...

BUT THEIR MAGIC HAD ALSO *CHANGED* IT SEEMED...

THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE POISON BUT IT SMELLS LIKE A LOVE POTION!?

MY BUCKET OF CURSES HAS TURNED TO POTPOURRI!

THAT ACTUALLY SMELLS KIND OF NICE, HILDA.

WE'VE BEEN TRICKED!!!

AND SO EVERY YEAR SINCE, ON OCTOBER 1ST, JOLLY JACK-O POPS UP!

WOO-HOO! IT'S PUMPKIN SEASON, *YET AGAIN!*

LOTS TO DO! BETTER GET TO WORK!

THROUGH THE MONTH YOU'LL FIND HIM DECORATING PEOPLE'S PORCHES...

Boo!

AND WHEN ANYTHING SEEMS TOO SCARY, YOU CAN COUNT ON JACK-O TO MAKE IT MORE JOLLY!

eyes

CAN'T GO WRONG WITH *GOOGLY EYES!*

IF YOU'RE LUCKY, HE MAY EVEN HELP YOU LEVEL UP YOUR COSTUME!

WHAT IF YOU WERE A *SKELETON KNIGHT* INSTEAD? JUST WEAR THIS!

GREAT IDEA!

I'M FULL OF 'EM!

IF YOU CAN'T FIND FULL SIZE CANDY BARS IN OCTOBER, JACK-O IS PROBABLY EATING THEM ALL.

CAN CONFIRM!

CHOCO-O

CRISP

AW, NUTS

KERUNK!

ON MANY OCTOBER NIGHTS, IF YOU SEE A FLICKERING LIGHT OUT IN THE DARKNESS, DON'T WORRY! IT'S JUST JACK-O DOING WHAT HE DOES.

NEED A LIGHT, FELLAS?

JOLLY ONLY HAS *ONE* KNOWN WEAKNESS...

HUH? WHAT'S THAT NOW?

A RANDOM TRAIL OF *CANDY?!*

NO WAY!

YEP, IT'S CANDY!

SOMEONE MUST HAVE DROPPED IT!

FINDERS KEEPERS! HAHA!

THIS MUST BE MY LUCKY DAY!

FWOOOSH!

WEE! THAT WAS FUN!

FREE CANDY AND A FUN RIDE?

CAN THIS DAY GET ANY *BETTER?!*

I GOT YA!

FINALLY, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS!

I KNEW YOU WERE REAL! I'VE BEEN HUNTING FOR YOU!

OH?! LIKE HIDE & SEEK?! FUN!

HEY, CAN YOU SWING ME? C'MON, GIVE ME A LITTLE PUSH!

WHAT? NO!

WE HAVE OTHER PLANS FOR YOU, MONSTER!

IS THAT A HAUNTED CABIN?! COOL!

CAN WE GO THERE?

OKAY! THIS WORKS TOO! SORTA LIKE A SLEIGH RIDE!

SHUT UP! THAT'S MY HOME.

YOU LIVE IN A HAUNTED CABIN? SWEET!

AWH, THIS PLACE AIN'T SO SCARY AFTER ALL! COULD USE SOME TIDYING UP.

OH, ARE THOSE CHECKERS? I LOVE CHECKERS! CAN WE PLAY?

WE'RE NOT HERE TO PLAY GAMES!

OLD HALLOWEEN

STRANGE SIGHTINGS

REAL OR :HOAX?

I ONLY NEED TO KEEP YOU HERE ALIVE UNTIL HALLOWEEN NIGHT--

OCTOBER

HAMMONTON BANK

PUMPKIN CREATURE IN PINE BARRENS?

DO NOT OPEN!

bug PARTS

WHAT ARE WE HERE FOR, THEN?

AND THEN WHAT HAPPENS?!

THEN THE WITCHES SAID THEY'D--

DANG IT!!! I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO TALK TO YOU!

THAT'S SILLY! SAYS WHO?

THE WITCHES--

GAH!

GOT ME AGAIN! WHY AM I SO STUPID?!

STUPID, STUPID!

HEY! DON'T BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF! YOU'RE NOT STUPID! YOU CAUGHT ME! THAT'S NOT EASY TO DO!

YOU MADE A DEAL WITH WITCHES?

YOU CAN'T TRUST WITCHES, MISTER!

LA-LA-LAH, LA, LAHH.

I KNOW YOU CAN STILL HEAR ME! THOSE EAR MUFFS ARE JUST WARM, NOT SOUND CANCELLING!

YOU'RE NOT TRICKING ME!

GRRRR-OH!

GOT YA! I KNEW YOU COULD HEAR ME, MISTER!

SAY, WHAT'S YOUR NAME? I'M JOLLY JACK-O!

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE! YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW MY NAME!

AND YOU CAN'T CHARM ME WITH YOUR CHATTER! THE WITCHES WARNED ME NOT TO TALK TO YOU!

GROWL

UH-OH!

CHIK-CHAK!

WHAT'S THAT GROWLING? YOU TURNING INTO A MONSTER? I'LL BLAST YA TO BITS!

NO, NO! IT'S JUST MY STOMACH! CAN YOU FEED ME SOME CANDY?

YOUR STOMACH?!

YEAH, IF YOU DON'T FEED ME CANDY, I'LL SURELY DIE!

YOU NEED TO KEEP ME ALIVE. I NEED CANDY.

I PROMISE TO STAY UNTIL HALLOWEEN IF YOU FEED ME. DEAL?

HURM...THAT SOUNDS LIKE A REASONABLE ENOUGH ARGUMENT.

WE HAVE A DEAL, JACK-O!

THE DAYS WENT BY, AND THE DEAL THE HUNTER MADE WITH THE JOLLY JACK-O CARRIED ON.

THE HUNTER PROVIDED ALL THE CANDY THAT JACK-O COULD EAT, AND JOLLY STAYED PUT.

LITTLE DID THE HUNTER KNOW THAT NOT ONLY WAS HE KEEPING JOLLY ALIVE...

...JACK-O WAS BECOMING MORE POWERFUL.

AND THE CLOSER IT GOT TO HALLOWEEN, THE HARDER IT WAS FOR JOLLY TO CONTAIN HIMSELF.

THEN ONE NIGHT...

HEY! HOW DID YOU GET OUT OF THE CAGE?!

DO NOT OPEN!

PRETTY EASILY!

I COULD'VE GOT OUT ANY TIME, BUT I MADE YOU A DEAL! YA NEVER SAID I HAD TO STAY IN THERE. I DIDN'T RUN AWAY.

I AM A PUMPKIN OF MY WORD!

HMM, GOOD POINT, I GUESS.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

TRICK OR TREAT!

AND I FIGURED I'D SPRUCE UP THE PLACE! GET IT TRICK-OR-TREAT READY!

WHATYA THINK?

ACTUALLY, I DON'T HATE IT.

TRUTH BE TOLD, THE HUNTER STARTED TO ENJOY HAVING COMPANY.

FOR THE FIRST TIME, IN A VERY LONG TIME, HE DIDN'T FEEL SO ALONE AND BITTER.

HE HADN'T CRACKED A SMILE SINCE 1980!

THEIR DAYS TOGETHER STARTED TO FLY BY.

14 15 16 17 18 19 20

STRANGERS HAD BECOME ACQUAINTANCES.

AND ACQUAINTANCES BECAME *FRIENDS.*

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS ONE?!

WOW, IT'S REALLY GOOD!

BUT WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF ROOM IN HERE, JACK-O.

USUALLY, I'D BE DISTRIBUTING THEM MYSELF ALL AROUND TOWN.

BUT SINCE I MADE A DEAL NOT TO LEAVE HERE, MAYBE YOU COULD GO AND PASS THEM OUT FOR ME?

WHAT STARTED AS A FAVOR FOR HIS NEW FRIEND, BECAME A DAILY EXERCISE.

HE ENJOYED THE PROCESS, AND THE SMILE HADN'T LEFT HIS FACE.

HE QUICKLY BECAME KNOWN AS...

TAKE A PUMPKIN FREE!

THE PUMPKIN MAN! IT'S THE PUMPKIN MAN!

THE HUNTER BECAME FOND OF JOLLY, AND HE FELT BAD FOR NOT BEING HONEST WITH HIS NEW FRIEND.

JOLLY, MY NAME IS LINUS DINKLE, AND I OWE YOU AN APOLOGY.

OH, I ALREADY KNEW THAT, IT'S ON YOUR MAIL!

WHEN I WAS A KID, NOBODY WANTED TO BE MY FRIEND.

THE OTHER KIDS MADE FUN OF MY EARS, AND IT MADE ME SELF CONSCIOUS.

I HATED HALLOWEEN, BECAUSE I HAD NOBODY TO TRICK OR TREAT WITH.

I HAD WISHED I WASN'T SO DANG UGLY. I'D DO ANYTHING! AND THAT'S WHEN I MET THE WITCHES.

THEY TOLD ME THEY COULD COOK UP A POTION THAT WOULD MAKE ME HANDSOME AND UNRESISTABLE.

BUT THEY NEEDED A VERY SPECIAL INGREDIENT TO DO IT. A MONSTER'S HEART.

AND THAT MONSTER WAS...YOU!

"SO I MADE A DEAL, AND THERE WAS ONLY A LIMITED TIME TO FIND YOU...OCTOBER."

"I BECAME OBSESSED. FOR YEARS I HUNTED YOU, TRACKED THE SIGHTINGS, AND LEGENDS. EVERY YEAR, I CAME UP SHORT."

"YEARS WENT BY. DECADES. I GREW OLDER, UGLIER. I BLAMED YOU."

"THE WITCHES KEPT ME GOING, PROMISING THAT IF I FOUND YOU, THE POTION WOULD ALSO MAKE ME YOUNG AGAIN."

BUT, NOW THAT I KNOW YOU, I KNOW YOU'RE NO MONSTER AT ALL.

AND SO FOR THAT, I'M TRULY SORRY.

THIS PAST MONTH HAS FELT REALLY GOOD. IT'S LIKE IT BROKE ME OUT OF A SPELL I WAS UNDER.

I THINK THAT'S WHY THEY DIDN'T WANT ME TO TALK TO YOU.

BECAUSE WE'D BECOME FRIENDS.

OF COURSE! I TOLD YA, YOU CAN'T BE TRUSTING NO WITCHES!

I'M HAPPY YOU FOUND ME, AND EVEN HAPPIER TO BE YOUR FRIEND.

JOLLY, YOU HAVE TO GO NOW!!

BUT--I PROMISED I'D STAY UNTIL--

IT'S HALLOWEEN, JACK-O! YOU'RE FREE TO GO!

NOW, YOU STILL GOT TIME TO GO TRICK OR TREAT AND HAVE SOME FUN OUT THERE...

ONLY IF YOU COME WITH ME, PAL!

I'M TOO OLD TO--

TRICK OR TREAT!

OH BOY! I'LL GET THE CANDY!

NO, DON'T OPEN THE DOOR--

UH-OH!

GREAT WORK, LINUS!
IT'S TIME TO FINISH OUR DEAL.
THE DEAL'S OFF! YOU'RE NOT WELCOME HERE!
UHH... BUT A DEAL'S A DEAL!
LOOK! WE HAVE YOUR POTION HERE, ALMOST READY!
ALL WE NEED TO FINISH IT IS THE MONSTER'S HEART!
I SAID THE DEAL IS OFF!
SWAT!
STAY AWAY FROM ME AND *MY FRIEND!*
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
LINUS THINKS HE'S A HERO!

YOU'RE NO HERO!

YOU'RE JUST A HELPLESS HUNTER!

FFOOOOOOO...

GAK!

ACK

HE MUST HAVE SPOKEN TO THE CREATURE! SUCCUMB TO ITS CHARM!

WE WARNED HIM!

GRAB IT! BEFORE IT GETS AWAY!

COME HERE, YOU!

HEY! HE WAS A NICE GUY! YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO KILL HIM!

SWING ME! C'MON! YOU WITCHES ARE NO FUN!

NO, HANG HIM ABOVE THE CAULDRON! LET'S BEGIN THE RITUAL!

OH, BOY! ARE WE GOING TO CARVE SOME PUMPKINS?!

EMPTY HIM!!

HEY! HA-HA, THAT TICKLES!

IT'S FULL OF... CANDY!???

HAHAHAHA!!

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT, I GUESS!

WHAT IS THIS?!

HOLD ON! I THINK I FEEL IT! YESSS--

THE HEART OF THE MONSTER!

MMMMM~ HOW SWEET!

NOW, EVERYTHING INTO THE POT! *ALL* OF THE INGREDIENTS. LET US BEGIN THE INCANTATION!

UHHHH... I DON'T FEEL... SO...JOLLY...

STIR FASTER! FASTER!

TWO TERROR TURNIPS, BLACK WITH ROT!

FIVE FEAR CARROTS, FRESHLY CHOPPED!

ONE DREAD BEET, FROM DEEP DOWN BELOW!

BANISH THIS JOLLY ONE, AND REAP WHAT WE SOW!

THERE IT IS!

THE OLD FEAR...

...IT *GROWS* AGAIN!

SEASON OF FEAR- RISE AND GROW!!!

LOOK!

TRICK OR TREAT! GIVE ME SOMETHING GOOD TO EAT!

OH, GREAT SPIRIT OF FEAR...

WE HAVE BROUGHT YOU BACK!

WE'RE HERE TO DO YOUR BIDDING!

I AM...SO... HUNGRY!

THEN FEAST!

FEAST UPON THE HUNTER!

CHIK-CHAK!

NOT TODAY, WITCHES!

KABLOOM!

NO! YOU BROKE THE SPELL!

IT'S RUINED!

WHAT--WHAT'S HAPPENING?

GAAH! IT'S ALL OVER ME! GET IT OFF!

IT'S GOT ME! HOW DO I GET IT OFF!!!

RUN!!! OUTSIDE! INTO THE MOONLIGHT!

DON'T LEAVE ME! HELP!

IT'S EVERY WITCH FOR HERSELF!!!

NO SOLICITIN'

AHHH! I'M TRAPPED!

I CAN'T MOVE!

RRAGGGHHHHHH!

HEY BUDDY... WAKE UP!

YOU'RE NOT DEAD YET!

YA CAN'T TRICK ME! YOU'RE STILL BREATHIN'!

HERE, HAVE A BITE OF THIS!

UHHH... WHA?

WHEW! THAT WAS A CLOSE ONE!

THANKS FOR SAVING ME, FRIEND!

JACK-O, YOU'RE ALIVE-- BUT HOW? THE WITCHES, THEY--

TURNED INTO TREES! I KNOW! THAT WAS WILD, RIGHT?!

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, YOU NOT ONLY SAVED ME--

--YOU SAVED HALLOWEEN!

NOW, C'MON! WE STILL HAVE TIME FOR TRICK OR TREAT!

OH, JOLLY. I'M TOO OLD. AND I DON'T HAVE A COSTUME. YOU GO AHEAD!

BAH!!! YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD TO TRICK OR TREAT!

PUT THIS ON!

I HAVE A MAP OF ALL THE HOUSES WITH FULL SIZE CANDY BARS! WE'LL HIT THOSE FIRST!

FULL SIZE?! LET'S GO!!!

ANOTHER HALLOWEEN HAS COME TO AN END,

AND JOLLY WENT HOME WITH A BRAND-NEW FRIEND.

SO KEEP YOUR PUMPKINS GLOWING AND YOUR CANDY NEAR...

...JOLLY JACK-O WILL SEE YOU AGAIN NEXT YEAR! 🎃

A NEW UNIVERSE OF STORIES.

ONE CHARACTER AT A TIME.



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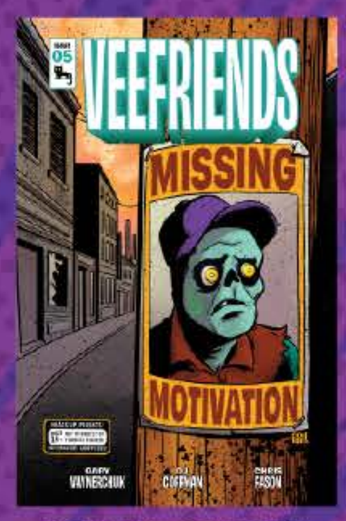
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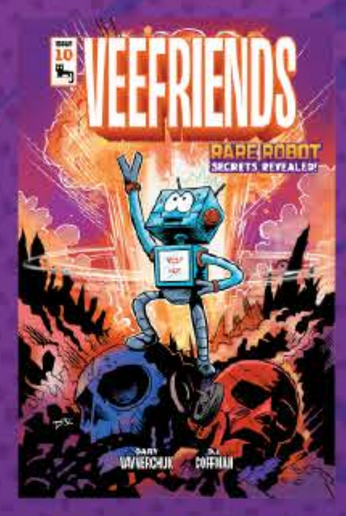
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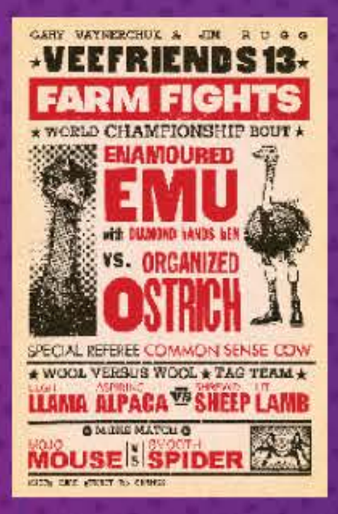
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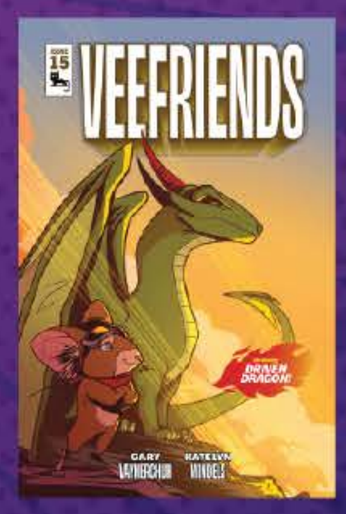
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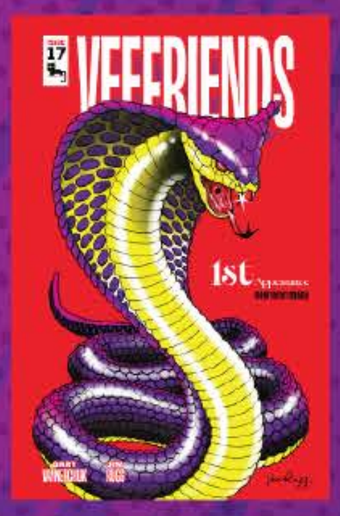
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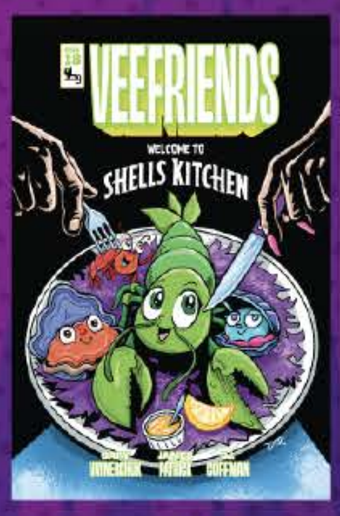
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