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NICKEL HEROES COMIX & STORIES
SOMETHING WICKED FOR THE SEASON
A Short Story by
JAMES DIANGELO

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

One Story — Two Ways to Tell It

In this special presentation from Nickel Heroes Comix & Stories, we offer something a little different.

Something Wicked for the Season, written by James DiAngelo, is presented first in its original short story form, followed by an eight-page black-and-white comic adaptation illustrated by Cool Hand.

We thought our readers might enjoy experiencing the same tale through two different storytelling mediums.

Which version works best?

We'll leave that for you to decide.

Enjoy!

The Editor

SOMETHING WICKED FOR THE SEASON

By James DiAngelo

Something wicked for the season, it thought, as it pushed deeper beneath the house.

The soil under the foundation was cold and damp, packed tight from years of weather and weight. Roots snapped and curled away as it passed, dragging its bulk forward in short, forceful motions. Above it, the house rested, unaware, pressing down with all it owned—furniture, walls, memories, sleep.

The first sound was small. A dull crack, like ice breaking far away. Then another. The cement floor of the basement bowed, hairline fractures racing outward before giving in with a heavy, choking collapse. Dust bloomed upward, filling the air. The thing rose through it, bits of concrete clinging to its wet hide.

Pots rattled in their hooks. A glass jar tipped from a shelf and shattered. Wooden boards groaned as if adjusting themselves, as if the house were trying to settle back into place.

Upstairs, the people turned in their bed.

In the basement, the thing moved without pause. It scraped along the walls, knocking aside stacked boxes, old clothes, and forgotten tools. It did not slow to examine them. It pushed on, following a corridor it did not need to see to know, drawn by a familiar, sour promise.

It reached the kitchen wall and broke through plaster and studs with a careless swing of its weight. Splinters flew. A framed picture slipped loose and struck the floor face-down. The thing entered the kitchen fully then, breathing in the room.

It went first to the trash.

The bin tipped easily, spilling its contents across the tile. The smell pleased it—milk gone thick and sharp, food scraped from plates days before, things wrapped and rewrapped and forgotten. It ate greedily, tearing open bags with a wet tearing sound, chewing through plastic and paper alike. Cans clanged and rolled as it crushed them between its teeth, swallowing everything without sorting or pause.

It dragged itself to the refrigerator next.

With a grunt of effort, it pulled the appliance forward and let it fall. The door sprang open. Cold spilled out along with shelves and drawers. The thing retched once, expelling part of what it had already eaten across the mess, coating the white interior in gray and brown, before bending down again to feed.

Butter disappeared in slick yellow chunks. The ground beef followed, still in its thin wrapping. It cracked the egg carton open against the floor and swallowed the eggs whole, shells and all, leaving only a few pale fragments clinging to its tongue.

Upstairs, the man slept with his mouth slightly open, one hand resting on the sheet as if waiting for something to be placed there.

In his dream, the air trembled with sound. Engines roared low and constant, a mechanical breathing that filled the sky. Steam rose from pistons and valves, hissing white against the blue. The ground was far below him, reduced to shapes and colors that no longer mattered.

He sat in an open cockpit beside a woman dressed in leather and goggles. Her scarf snapped in the wind. She smiled without looking at him, her mouth painted red, her expression amused by something just out of reach.

"Put it on for me," she said, handing him a tube of lipstick.

He dragged the color across her legs in careless streaks. You make me laugh, she said, touching his wrist.

Then her smile slipped.

She turned toward the empty seat behind them and cried out for someone else. Her voice broke. The plane dipped. The engines roared louder, shaking his bones. She laughed suddenly, wiping her face, as if nothing had happened.

The noise swelled and became something else entirely—metal tearing, wood splitting—but he did not recognize it. He only smiled, drifting deeper into the dream.

Beside him, the woman slept on her side, her back turned.

She dreamed of heat. Of sun pressing down on her bare shoulders as she stood barefoot in the yard. The mower roared steadily as Paul pushed it back and forth, his movements confident and strong.

She ran her hands along his back. He did not notice. She undressed and stepped into his path. Paul smiled and revved the engine louder.

The sound softened into water.

She lay in a dark pool, a strange man standing nearby. Don't worry, he told her. You don't have to worry about him anymore.

"He's cheating on me," she said. "With a female pilot."

"I don't care what he knows," she added, sinking deeper, letting the sound fade.

In the kitchen below, the thing crashed through chairs and cabinets. Wood split. Plates broke. Drawers tore free. It took an hour to destroy the furniture, paintings, carpet, and drapes. The house filled with noise like a storm passing through.

Upstairs, the people slept on, their dreams thickened and shaped by the sound.

When the thing was finished, it climbed the stairs and stood at the foot of the bed. It watched the sleeping couple and smiled, showing black teeth and a yellow tongue with flecks of eggshell clinging to it.

Morning came without ceremony.

Light crept through the blinds in thin stripes. The house was still. Nothing appeared broken. Everything was where it belonged.

The man kissed the woman lightly. *I hate her,* he thought.

She stared at the ceiling. *Cheating bastard,* she almost said aloud.

They ate breakfast in silence. The woman drank her coffee and thought of Paul and his mower. The man smiled faintly, wondering why a woman would want lipstick spread on her legs.

They kissed at the door. The man left for work.

The woman looked around the beautiful house the man she suddenly hated had provided her. *If not for the house and money, I would leave him.*

Miles away, the man pounded his dashboard. *If not for the house and money, I would leave her.*

Before leaving, the woman noticed the full trash bin. *The bastard can't even empty the trash,* she thought.

Far from the house now, the thing plodded toward its next nightmare.


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SOMETHING WICKED FOR THE SEASON
Something wicked for the season, it thought, as it pushed deeper beneath the house.
Above it, the house rested, unaware, pressing down with all it owned— furniture, walls, memories, sleep.
Written by
JAMES DIANGELO
Art by
COOL HAND


The first sound was small.
CRACK!
Then the basement floor broke through—
KRRRASH!
Upstairs, the people turned in their bed.
The thing made its way up from the basement—
A framed picture slipped loose and the wall cracked.
It entered the kitchen fully then, breathing in the room.


It went first to the trash.
It tore into the refuse, stuffing foul bits into its mouth.
CRUNCH!
Then it gripped the refrigerator—
—and toppled it, spilling its contents across the kitchen.
WHAM!
BUTTER
BUTTER
Having eaten its fill, the thing retched once, expelling part of what it had already taken in…
…then it swallowed the eggs whole, leaving only a few pale fragments clinging to its tongue.


Upstairs, the man slept, a faint smile touching his lips.
In his dream, the air trembled with sound—steam engines, wings, and distant craft crowding the sky.
Put it on for me.
You make me laugh.
My navigator...!
She stopped crying and laughed again, her voice lost in the roar of the wind—
—a sound that swelled and became something else entirely—metal tearing, wood splintering—but he did not recognize it.


Beside him, the woman slept, her dreams taking a different path.
She dreamed of heat... and Paul, the neighbor, mowing his lawn in the summer sun.
She ran her hands across his back. He stopped, the mower idling, its engine a low growl.
The sound softened into water...
Don't worry. You don't have to worry about him anymore.
He's cheating on me. With a female pilot.
I don't care what he knows.


It took an hour to destroy the furniture, paintings, carpet and drapes.
Then it climbed the stairs—
—and stood in the bedroom, looking down at the sleeping man and woman.
The people slept on, their dreams thickened and shaped by the sound.


Morning came without ceremony.
I hate her.
Cheating bastard.
Why would a woman want lipstick spread on her legs?
Paul...




If not for the house and money, I would leave him.


If not for the house and money, I would leave her.


The bastard can't even empty the trash.


Far from the house now, the thing plodded toward its next nightmare.
THE END