SCOTT SNYDER RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE



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ON THE EDGGE



JAY CANTOR

is the author of three previous novels, The Death of Che Guevara, Krazy Kat, and Great Neck as well as two books of essays, The Space Between: Literature and Politics and On Giving Birth to One's Own Mother. A MacArthur Prize Fellow, Cantor teaches at Tufts University and lives in Cambridge, Macrachwarette with big wile. Molinda

BY JAY CANTOR

The morning the planes slammed into the Towers, I was already watching TV. TV is a pal I like to waste a little time with some mornings before (I swear) I walk to my study to work on my novels. That morning, though, the images stopped time, stopped thought. It was fury that got *my mind* moving again—except that it didn't feel much like my mind anymore. I wanted to gouge out the eyes of the bastards who'd done this. I was on the ledge all right, and I longed to leap down at their throats.

I turned away from the screen, made coffee, asked some questions, because having questions made me feel more like myself. What could transform men into death-machines? What could turn *me* into a man who wanted to torture? I felt there were forces at work as strong as the potions and spells in fairy tales or comic books, powers that can turn men into meat puppets.

I began to dream the story of **AARON AND AHMED.** I already knew it would also be about love, because when you know that forces can take over your mind, I think you also pray that there might be one small thing that belongs to you alone-your choice of who to love. Supposing even that belongs to you.

I tried, but I couldn't find a way to tell the story in words. I put it aside. Years later, Pornsak Pichetshote called from Vertigo to ask if I wanted to try writing a graphic novel. I found myself eager to take up **AARON AND AHMED** again—to tell the story not just with words, like my novels, but with pictures, too. Maybe that was because it was pictures on the TV that had driven me mad that morning. I'd bet when the terrorists had dreamt of those images, they knew they'd change us in just that way. Then they could say to the world, *look, our American enemies are monsters*. I'd bet, too, they'd known that images could take over our minds because—along with the powerful words of old-time religion—some phantasmagoria was at the heart of what had made them murderers in the first place.

My faith was that the poison could also be the cure. The antidote for the pictures and words that program us would be *the right* pictures–like those of James Romberger–linked to (I hope) the right words. Maybe that could introduce some questions into the mix, get the mind working again, help bring us back from the ledge. The result of my hopes is **AARON AND AHMED**: A Love Story.

Marble, and their daughter, Grace.

IN MEMORIAM

DWAYNE McDUFFIE FEBRUARY 20, 1962 – FEBRUARY 21, 2011

We remember him for his groundbreaking work at Milestone Media, for the powerful characters he created and their resonant stories, and for writing about race and ethnic diversity in a way that has been inspirational to us all.

The world of comics has lost a true and influential talent. Our deepest sympathies to his family, friends and fans.

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art by Denys Cowan







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I не толькі мне аднаму. Усім, хто знаходзіўся ў лодцы ў тую раніцу. Ніхто з нас не заўважыў надыходзячага... Пяцёра з нас былі часткай тайны, часткай таемнай арганізацыі, якая называецца Слугі ранішняй зоркі.

> Нашай мэтай было даследваць магчымую актыўнасць вампіраў на востраве Тайпан і знішчыць іх да прахода асноўнай часткі войскаў.

> > Мы былі салдатамі ў таемнай вайне. Вайне супраць зла… І ў тую раніцу, перш чым мы пазналі праўду, гэта было ўсё, што мы бачылі… і магу з упэўненасцю сказаць, што кожны з нас быў гатовы да бою.

> > > Я лічыў, пляж будзе ачэплены!





Як і я! Пэўна, вораг распачаў нечаканы напад!

Самы час!

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Ва ўзводзе нас было пяцёра. Я ведаў і іншых людзей на караблі, які адплываў на Ганалулу. Але варта заўважыць, што ніхто з іх не быў гаварлівым. Капітан Ян Міра, ён жа «Пастар», быў лідэрам нашай групы і адным з чальцоў Слуг. З самага пачатку ён быў незадаволены мною.

> Мы павінны дабрацца да ўсходняй хованкі! Наперад, наперад, наперад!

Старэйшы сяржант Кельвін Пул, 27 гадоў, наш таксанаміст. Трохі разбяраўся ў вампірах і, што самае галоўнае, трымаўся са мной па-сяброўску.



Лейтынант Сэм Лантс, 32 гады, наш эксперт па зброі і правая рука Пастара. Калісьці служыў у паліцыі Сан-Францыска ў раёне Чайнатаўна.

Беражыцеся мін на пляжы! Каб ты ведаў, Джоні, гэта белыя сферы ў пяску!



Мабыць, яно так і добра, я лічу… Добра, што ўсе мы былі засяроджаны на нашай задачы той раніцай.

Прайшоў час, калі была магчымасць адыйсці і ўбачыць усё становішча таго, дзе мы аказаліся.

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«...Што адбываецца?»

Згодна паведамленням, вёска павінна быць за ўзгоркам.

Я лічу, што гэта дарэмна згублены час. Не будуць вампіры сяліцца на такім кавалку лайна, як гэты востраў. Яны, хутчэй за ўсё, падзяліліся і здохлі ад голада шмат гадоў назад. Рабяты, паглядзіце…

Блізка не падыходзім. Магчыма, пастка.

Ня ведаю, за час вайны я ніколі не бачыў, каб абарончы танэль пакідалі адкрытым вось так. А вы?





Мабыць, табе проста трэба быць шыбчэй, шэраговец Прэстан.

> Ну прабач, я не ведаў, што прыйдзецца абараняцца ад уласнага чортавага атрада.

> > Генры...

Я ня ведаю, што ў цябе за праблемы са мной, «Пастар», ды і пляваць мне. Але я, на хвіліну, хачу захаваць усе свае канечнасці, зразумела? Даволі зразумела, шэраговец Прэстан. Але калі ты будзеш спасылацца на маю руку… гэта ня быў няшчасны выпадак. Я сам яе адрэзаў.

> Цяпер супакойваемся... і ўсё будзе... як вы там, амерыканцы, кажаце... «хакей».

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omic.

Не, мужык. Прамовай. Разумееш, каб уступіць у нашы шэрагі, ты павінен памерці. Пакінуць тое жыццё... Як мінімум на паперы... Ты павінен знікнуць.

> Хобс як раз зараз сцірае запісы пра мяне. Ён ужо хаваў раней мяне і маю жану.

Ты мяне не слухаеш. Справа не ў тым, каб схаваць цябе і тваю дзяўчынку, Генры.

Уступіўшы… Па-сапраўднаму ўступіўшы ў нашыя шэрагі, ты перасякаеш гэтую рысу… I для ўсяго астатняга света Генры Прэстан павінен загінуць.

> Ніколі не звяртацца да сям'і. Не сустракацца з сябрамі. Ніякіх тэлефонных званкоў маме. Ні паштовак. Нічога.

Каб быць сапраўдным салдатам у гэтай вайне, у цябе нічога не павінна быць па другі яе бок. Пастар, Сэм, Джоні і я служылі ў ВМС… Загінулі і былі пахаваны.

Бо, павер мне, калі ты ўступіш у гэтую бітву, на самой справе ўступіш, калі ў цябе ёсць хтосьці, каго ты кахаеш, сям'я ці сябры… Вампіры знайдуць іх. Знайдуць і заб'юць.





Не. Я ўсё страціў з-за вампіраў. Маю жану. Маё жыццё. Я быў школьным настаўнікам, калі зможаш у гэта паверыць.



Так здарылася з большасцю з нас. З Джоні. Сэмам. Пастарам.





Калі вампіры забіраюць усё, што ты шанаваў, што ж, выбар лёгкі.

Але хопіць пра нас. Як наконт цябе, сяржант Прэстан? Як вампіры патрапілі ў тваё жыццё?



Стаяць!



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Я сустрэў яго на караблі, які плыў сюды. Яго клічуць Пайк, так?

Так... Біл Пайк. Я... Я адбіўся ад свайго ўзвода. Яны наляцелі з ніадкуль.





.











Дамы выглядаюць закінутымі. Лічу, мы ў бяспецы. Можам засесці ў адным з дамоў. Джоні, як лічыш, зможам знайсці сігнал?

Джон?

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Джон, не!



Такога не было ў кнігах! Ніколі такіх не бачыў!





AMERICAN VAMPIRE#14

Hello, guys and gals,

It's late on a rainy Monday, things are quiet in the halls of Vertigo, time to dip into the mailbag...

It has almost been a year since I took a chance on a little comic book written by Stephen King and some other dude named Scott Snyder. It has almost been a year since my life was changed forever.

That little comic book written by Stephen King and some other dude named Scott Snyder became "That AWESOME comic book by Scott Freaking Snyder!" Now I impatiently wait for the calendar to flip each month so I can get my hands on the new issue.

Scott Snyder is pure genius, and Rafael Albuquerque makes carnage look oh, so beautiful.

I love how the world of AMERICAN VAMPIRE seems to just get bigger and bigger with each new story arc. I truly hope this series has the same immortality that a vampire has, and goes on forever! Well... the immortality of a vampire that DOESN'T cross Skinner or Pearl.

Thanks for starting up the letter pages so I could get a chance to write a love letter to AMERICAN VAMPIRE and all who are involved in making AMERICAN VAMPIRE happen each month!

Thanks!

Aron White Maize, KS Just wanted to drop a quick note to say that AMERICAN VAM-PIRE has become one of my favorite comics in YEARS! Great art, writing, coloring. It's got it all. The stories are fantastic, and each issue continues to be better and better! Here's to Many, Many More!!

> Darth Davis New Brockton, AL

DYLE EDITOR

Thanks, Darth! And might I say that I'm a big fan of YOUR work, sir! I love Sith Lords! Never liked that namby-pamby rebel alliance. I mean, how do you get behind a guy who's always whining about "power converters"? Give me a dude who's dressed in black and kicking ass any day! Guess that's why I ended up here at Vertigo...

Seriously though, thanks for writing. I think I recognize your name from the DC Message boards. Thanks for sticking by us!

Dear Mark,

AMERICAN VAMPIRE was my favorite discovery of 2010. Initially intrigued by the participation of Stephen King, it is Snyder and Albuquerque's storytelling that won me over and keeps the book on my list of favorite comics. The vampire is a wellestablished literary creature that has evolved over centuries of storytelling, and Snyder's skillful exploration of that evolution and changing mythology alone would make AMERICAN VAMPIRE an interesting read. But even more compelling are the characters that he and Albuquerque bring to life - Skinner, Pearl, Henry, Hattie, Chief McCogan, the Book family - all of them are fascinating characters that you think about well after you finish reading the book. Also, Snyder's use of history in AMERICAN VAMPIRE is an invitation to further research; the time periods that he showcases (whether 1920s Hollywood or 1930s Las Vegas) are so realistic and fascinating that I found myself researching those periods online and at the local library.

Thanks for writing, Aron. One of our first letters was also a snail mail letter! We don't get much old-timey mail 'round these here parts, so thanks for that! And thanks for reading, man. You're right, the world just gets bigger and bigger, and trust me, we're just getting started...

AMERICAN VAMPIRE is a truly riveting series and has some of the best comics writing I've read in a long time. I was especially engrossed in the second story arc starring Cashel Mc-Cogan and company. Absolutely brilliant story and masterfully crafted storytelling. Since then, AMERICAN VAMPIRE's become one of only two titles I currently follow (the other being THE FLASH.) Keep up the vamptastic work on the series, 'cause I'm looking forward to finding out where the journey will lead Pearl and Henry, Hattie, and all the other undead characters that people these pages with excitement, gore, and horrifyingly good artwork.

> John T. Trigonis Jersey City, NJ

Thanks, John. We ALSO loved Cash McCogan. That's why we decided to continue his story in our spinoff miniseries called "AMERICAN VAMPIRE: SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST" in stores this June with incredible art by Sean Murphy! I would also like to praise the work of colorist Dave McCaig. His colors complement Albuquerque's fantastic art and help create the mood of the book. AMERICAN VAMPIRE has the best combination of art and story of any comic book currently being published, and I look forward to reading future issues.

> Reed Beebe Kansas City, MO

Thanks, Reed. That's really exciting that we drove you to research. Best compliment you can give us. Learn anything cool? Let us know!

I'm really excited for Sean Gordon Murphy's AMERICAN VAM-PIRE mini. I am a big fan of his work. I love JOE THE BARBAR-IAN and I loved his Oni Press book "Off Road." I would really like him to work with creators like Brian Wood. I also want to acknowledge Scott Snyder for his work on AMERICAN VAM-PIRE and his current arc of DETECTIVE COMICS. I met them both at the New York Comic Con and they were the nicest people I've met along with others. I am so excited to see them collaborate. Thanks for reading the letter!

> Joshua Wielgosz Holyoke, MA

Whoa! Look at that! I mention the miniseries at the beginning of the letters column and people are already buzzing about it at the end of the column! Crazy how fast word is spreading ... what's that, Joe? Ladies and Gentlemen, let me introduce our new, awesome AMERICAN VAMPIRE Assistant Editor Joe Hughes! <applause> Now what's this you're saying, Joe ...? Letters columns don't work like Twitter? Really? That sucks. So why the hell are we doing this again ...?

I'm kidding, folks! (Except about Joe. He is awesome. And if you write a letter addressed to him, I'm sure he'd love to hear from you!)

And that's exactly why we're doing this! So we can connect with you the fans in more than 140 characters. So send us your thoughtful praise or criticism. Tell us about an awesome horror novel you just read, or a great, scary new flick. Tell us about the first vampire story you ever read. Hell, send us your hate mail! I don't care, just sit down and write. We love hearing from you!

That's it, folks. Now it's VERY late on a Monday, time for me to punch out. Next Month! More Letters! And more awesome vampire action!

---Mark

To submit a letter to the editor go to: www.dcletterspage.com Letters may be sent by regular mail to this address: Letters to the Editor **DC Comics** 1700 Broadway New York, NY 10019 ATTN: VERTIGO

Please include your full name, address, and telephone number for confirmation purposes. Letters should be no longer than 500 words and should not include attachments. Letters may be edited for length or clarity and may be published in any medium. Letters become the property of DC Comics. Unpublished letters will not be returned or

THE HOTLIST



STRANGE ADVENTURES #1

From the far reaches of space to the not so distant future, it's a collection of short stories by the very arbiters of strange. Featuring some of the greatest comic book writers and artists of our time including Peter Milligan, Brian Azzarello, Denys Cowan, Jill Thompson, Scott Snyder, and Jeff Lemire! Exciting new talents make their Vertigo debut in this 80-pager. Plus: the Eisner Award-winning team of 100 BULLETS, Brian Azzarello and Eduardo Risso, reunite to bring you the first chapter of their upcoming new series SPACEMAN! Cover by Paul Pope with a variant cover by FABLES artist Mark Buckingham.

SWEET TOOTH #20

NEW STORYLINE! Gus reluctantly joins Jepperd on a hunt for the missing girls, but the tension between the two continues to grow. Meanwhile, Singh and Johnny come face-to-face with a deadly new threat, and Lucy and the girls meet Walter Fish, an enigmatic survivor who may have more to offer than meets the eye. Don't miss snowmobile gangs, yetis and more as the new story arc "Endangered Species" kicks off with a bang!



acknowledged. Published letters may identify the writer by first name, hometown, state or country.

AMERICAN VAMPIRE

SUBMIT YOUR LETTERS TO: WWW.DCLETTERSPAGE.COM

HOUSE OF MYSTERY #36

NEW STORYLINE! "Desolation" starts here, with a short story epic of outer space romance and adventure illustrated by the one and only Darwyn Cooke!

AARON AND AHMED AMERICAN VAMPIRE #14 AREA 10 CINDERELLA: FABLES ARE FOREVER #3 (OF 6) DMZ #64 FABLES #104 FABLES VOL 15: ROSE RED HELLBLAZER #278 HOUSE OF MYSTERY #36 ZOMBIE #12 THE NEW YORK FIVE #4 (OF 4) **NORTHLANDERS #39** OTHER LIVES THE SANDMAN VOL. 5: A GAME OF YOU-NEW EDITION SCALPED #48 SWEET TOOTH #20 TRANSMETROPOLITAN VOL. 9: THE CURE-NEW EDITION **THE UNWRITTEN #24** VERTIGO RESURRECTED: HELLBLAZER-BAD BLOOD Y: THE LAST MAN DELUXE EDITION BOOK 5

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