



Danger Trail #10
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Published: 2008

Categorie(s): Fiction, Fan Fiction

Tag(s): Comics DC2 mystery adventure "pulp fiction" "Speed Saunders"
"Argent St. Cloud" "King Faraday" Midnight "Enemy Ace" Rima

Outside of Brasov, Transylvania

The year 1627

A dull yellow moon did its best to hide behind the dark clouds, as if refusing to observe the events far below. Winter winds whipped through the valley, over fields of frozen snow and rattled the belfry tower. The church stood cold and alone in the dark, harboring a woman who felt cold and alone in the dark, the ground far below her as the wind sliced and howled at her.

"It's taken nearly twenty years." Some of that howling wind turned into a malicious voice, and part of that slicing wind whirled into the form of an elegant woman with ivory skin and deep dark eyes, long red tresses flowing around her slim shoulders. "You have led me on a good hunt, Katherine Dee. You should be proud of yourself." The woman grinned, a wicked hungry grin that bared elongated canines.

"I am," Katherine Dee pridefully retorted. She leaned heavily against a column, looking weak, looking tired, but her green eyes defiant. "It was good of you to heed the trail I left, Mary Seward."

"You chose this encounter?" The Queen of Blood gave a barking laugh at the thought. "You wanted me here, in this place? You think this church can spare you?" She took a step forward, a wisp of smoke rising from her footprint, seared into the wood. "The years have maddened you. This church can't save you, and this cold hinders only you. If you could just see how your skin and lips go blue in the winter wind." She laughed louder, taunting her enemy.

"It's time to bring this to an end," Katherine replied, stepping up to face the vampire.

"Tell me where the diary is, Katherine," Mary said in a suddenly softer voice. "You should let this end. Spare your family, spare yourself. Hand over Andrew's diary, give me your father's notes therein, and cease this foolish struggle, this desperate flight across the continents."

Katherine merely shook her head slowly. "The diary is safe. Far away from here, and with my sons, and my daughters, or perhaps a trusted cousin. Either way, you'll never see it, and my family will oppose you for

as long as it takes."

Mary snarled like a vicious beast and a tremendously fast sweep of her hand gripped Katherine at the nape of her neck, gripping the short hairs tightly. "Stupid woman. I'll drain you dry and make you one of mine and then you'll be unable to stop babbling your secrets to me! Tell me where the diary is, and you can walk away from here! Deny me one more time and I'll tear what I want from your life's blood and then set you on your own kin!"

Katherine tilted her head, offering more of her blue-tinged neck to her old enemy. "You'll never get the answers from me."

Mary screamed and drove her fangs deep into the flesh and tore into the pounding jugular, feeling the hot blood splash into her mouth, and down her throat. She giggled as she lapped at Katherine's wound, giddiness sweeping her foul heart. But the giddiness stopped too suddenly and Mary staggered back, swiping at her own lips with the back of her gloved hand, spitting and screaming. "It burns! How... what? It hurts!" She staggered to a knee and stared at Katherine.

Katherine, who was now struggling to stay alive just long enough to explain matters, pulled a silver coin from a small pouch and held it out. She gave a weak, bloody smile, and said, "Not blue... from the cold. King's... well, Qu-queen's... silver. Father's gift from... Elizabeth..." She collapsed and coughed as blood pooled around her neck.

"Blessed silver! You... you..." Mary coughed and gagged as her fingers clutched her wounded, blackened mouth.

"My family uses this time to flee... and you can... do nothing but sit there... and watch your answers... die in front... of you." Katherine let herself lay down on the wood, a satisfied smile on her face. "I win... bitch."

Mary tried to move, tried to turn to mist and flee the holiness of the church, but her limbs felt like metal, unable to respond. All she could do was roar in fury and swear vengeance on Katherine's brood.

The Danger Trail!

Issue #10: "The Stolen Myth Affair, Part One of Three"

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*The Black Forest,
September, 1935*

The evenings are coming earlier, the days are growing cooler. I face another autumn, and this time, the season seems to match my probable fate. I move as quickly and quietly as I can through these woods that have always been my refuge of thought. Ahead I see my faithful friend, on his own diligent hunt, his fur thickening for the coming winter. The wolf who is kindred spirit to me, his line having lived parallel to my line, his father having been at my side when I was tortured by the Great War. Now he stands at my side, the only one who understands me as I face a new war, a darker war. And the snapping breeze of autumn just reminds me that my days grow shorter as well.

As the Hammer from Hell, men fear me. Women are driven to investigate and understand me, only to flee when they fail to grasp the truth. I can not seem to make that connection that other men do, to camaraderie, to love, to companionship. Just moments, here and there. Only out here, in the woods, with my one true friend, is there any connection. And it only grows darker, more complex. The Chancellor's man, he knows what I have. He knows what I know. He wants what I know. My reputation, my station and prestige, slowly this... savage guides the Chancellor to strip these things away so that I am left vulnerable. And my only friend is here, in the woods.

And he's stopped and is sniffing the air. Something comes. Someone comes? Who, and why here and now?

"Hans Von Hammer." The figure appears from the shadows, tall and regal looking, offering a welcoming pat to my friend's head.

"Lord Andrew Bennett."

"You seem unsurprised to see me here." The ancient nobleman bows to me, and I return it, cautious, wary, but respectfully.

"If I did not know what I know, what I have read, I would be more unsettled."

"No one is fooled by the events of the spring," he states the obvious. I nod to encourage him to speak further. "I know you have a copy of my diary. And our enemy knows you've copied the book."

I nod again. "I have it someplace safe. He won't find it here, even when the Chancellor strips away the last of my lawful protections."

"He doesn't need the book, if he can get you. He has had centuries to perfect his techniques. He'll acquire the knowledge from you directly, if he needs to. I let you walk away from that rally two years ago because I knew you could keep the diary safe from Mary, and because I felt, even then, you were a noble man who would make a proper ally."

His words flatter me. I look into his dark eyes, and see sadness there. Alienation. Isolation. The weight of lonely years, made more painful by what I know from his own words when he breathed over three centuries hence. He knew love, he knew friends with the Dee family and others. And here he was, in these lonely woods, with myself and my friend. Three lonely figures, separated from all the world. A rueful snicker escapes my lips as I think that it might be a dead man who would be my first... friend.

"You sound like you have a plan. Where I only have a last stand. I'm willing to give your idea a try first." This time it is Bennett who nods and I reach down and stroke my friend's head. "I'll return, my friend. We'll hunt again, I promise. Here or when we meet beyond this world." I can't ask him to leave his woods again. He did it the once, I can't ask it of him again. The two of us march from the wood and to my castle and let him watch us from the tree-line, before sinking back into his own home.

*Washington, D.C.,
Also in September, 1935*

King Faraday moved quickly through the halls of power. He moved purposefully up to a specific door. A quick glance, no sign of others around, and he quickly picked the lock to the office door and slipped inside. He closed the door behind him and quickly pulled out a sheet of black cloth that he taped over the window of the office door.

Faraday clicked on a light at the desk and started to work through the files in the room. It had taken him two weeks to follow lead after lead, trail after trail and reach this place. This small, out of the way office of procurement nestled into the rear of the his own Treasury Department. Money disbursed from this office, through various channels, to pay for all manner of chemicals, lab equipment, vehicles, office space, and all of this connected only by something called a West Formula.

And every one of those leads had brought him to someone who stopped him and said, "This is classified above your station." That was no longer sufficient after both the anonymous Doctor Zero and now this Rue Morgue had turned up with elements of this formula.

"What's this?" Faraday murmured to himself as he opened up a file labeled 'West, Herbert'. He read a report on a medical student who claimed to have found a formula for restarting a deceased body. Apparently dying in the destruction of his lab, his surviving notes, chemical formulae and equations were in the folder. He read of other efforts to rebuild the formula by military agencies, until it was taken out of their hands and turned over to civilian government authorities.

Investigation by Bureau of Investigation has uncovered West's original benefactor, a man named Ernst Maximillian, but with no further leads to the man dated more recently than 1931. West's lone companion in this research into the formula reported a description of Maximillian—

Faraday flipped the folder closed and stared blankly, angrily ahead, his fist smacking the desktop. "The Blood Red Moon." He reached over and plucked a nameplate up off the desk and studied it. *Thomas Flynn, you and I are having a long talk about all of this, very, very soon. Count on it.*

He returned the folder, turned out the light, yanked down the black cloth and carefully marched back out into the hall with a new destination in mind.

*New York City,
two days later*

Harriet Cooper was rapidly packing up her things, haphazardly, carelessly even. They were leaving this city today at last, and she was relieved to be going. Despite all the research they had dug up in various college and city libraries and in used book stores, along with questioning what must have been a dozen different 'scholars of antiquity', the events of two weeks past preyed on her mind. No one had been asking her questions, but she could see them on the faces of dear old Speed, and their new friends Michael and Argent. They never asked, but *she* could see them.

A rhythmic patter of knocks on her hotel door made her jump and she looked over as it opened slowly. "Heya, doll," Speed called out in that jaunty voice of his. "Just checking in to see how it's going."

"Just about done, Cyril," Harriet replied as she threw on a cheery grin and let her eyes get wide with excitement. "I can't believe how close we are. After all these years, I'm finally on the right track." She slammed her suitcase shut with a slap, then hopped over to the young adventurer and hugged him tight. "And so much of it is thanks to you!"

Speed Saunders wrapped his arms around her and drew her in close, letting his lips press against hers as his face lit up in surprise at the display. "My pleasure. I mean that, completely." He winked at her as she blushed and stepped back to grab her luggage. "Ah! None of that," Speed said as he snatched it up in his hand for her. "We might be on the right path, but we might have quite a ways to go still though, so don't get carried away."

Harriet nodded as the pair walked out of the room and headed down to the lobby. There they were greeted by tall, broad-shouldered Michael Gallant, all fair-haired and All-American, and at his side stood the sultry

and voluptuous Argent St. Cloud, and both of them greeted their friends with hearty handshakes or polite and discreet hugs.

"You're sure you want to come along?" Harriet asked as the foursome headed out of the main doors.

"Well, my business is done," Argent said with that sweet smile and 'proper' British accent. "Paperwork went in a few days back, and I've no reason to stay around. Since you're both headed to my bailiwick, I don't see any reason not to help."

"And I'm not needed here now that we've got that Murder, Inc. business wrapped up," Michael added as the men started to store the luggage away in the car. "Lord knows I'm not sitting here idle while you guys go out having all the fun."

"What sort of fun are we having anyway, Harriet?" Argent asked as they settled into the backseat. "Speed mentioned I'd be helpful opening some doors; which doors would those be exactly?"

"I'm looking for something called the Symbol of Seven, a hand-sized artifact, in the shape of a disc, marked in red and black in a kind of cross. On the back of this is something I believe to be a cipher key to at least one, if not more, of the strange languages I've stumbled across in my work," Harriet explained as Michael slid into the driver's seat and Speed joined in the passenger seat.

As the car pulled away, Speed turned around and added, "Seems there's other books like the one we picked up some time back, called the Inef-fable Libram—" He paused as Michael snickered. "Hey, buddy, I didn't name it. Harriet managed to decode what she could, but there's parts of it that she can't figure out."

"Then there's the Voynich Manuscript, which was discovered back in 1912," Harriet continued to explain. "Not a single word of it has been translated. No one can figure it out. I had a professor who thought these languages might predate human languages, and I think the Symbol of Seven can decipher them."

"Predate human languages?" Argent looked confused and let the phrase

roll around in her head before glancing up at the two men.

"Whoa. That's nuts!" Michael replied. "That'd mean cavemen came up with it?"

"Or something earlier," Speed offered in response as he sank into his seat. "Most recently, the Symbol was spotted in safe keeping at something called the Rose Chapel, in Norfolk."

"Raynham Hall," Argent said softly and looked back to Harriet. "You want to see the Brown Lady?" When Harriet gave a mischievous smile, Argent chuckled and shook her head in disbelief. "Oh yes. Yes, I'm definitely staying on this ride."

*The Museum of History, Science and Art,
Los Angeles, September, 1935*

"Tell me again why we're here?" the man called Midnight asked as the two people crept up to the rear of the stately, marbled building.

"Our enemies are here," Trin Dee replied as she pointed to the opened loading-dock door. She smiled triumphantly, almond-face filled with eagerness for what was to come.

"Right. Okay, so that little pocket watch of yours was on the money," Midnight retorted as he tugged his gloves tighter onto his hands. "I still prefer old-fashioned detective work to magic jiggery-pokery."

"Whatever works for each person," Trin replied as she laid a reassuring hand on his shoulder. "I have no idea what has lured the Blood Red Moon to this place, nor the numbers involved. My token only leads me to my foes, nothing more. Are you sure you wish to go in with me?"

Midnight gave a devil-may-care grin and ran thumb and forefinger over the brim of his fedora. "You bet. Though I might suggest souping up your little toy in the future to tell you those things."

The pair dashed into the building, and then very quietly crept through the majestic halls of the museum. Ancient relics, antique armors, pieces

of pottery and the past, all surrounded and watched them as they moved further into the building, led unerringly by the Blood Red Coin of Trin Dee. Neither of them were prepared to stop at a traveling exhibit of Classical Era Greek artifacts.

"You said those vampires would be here? What the hell do they have to do with ancient Greece?" Midnight hissed as they watched from the shadows.

Trin could only shrug helplessly, but they both went silent and watched four figures appearing around a towering chunk of Corinthian column. Two of them carried a wooden box, perhaps four feet on a side but no more than a foot thick. Midnight balled his hands up and Trin grew taut and prepared to leap when mist flowed in from a far entryway and materialized into two more people.

One of the newcomers, tall and lean, pointed out to the quartet and shouted, "Leave it and depart with your lives!" Both sets of newly-arrived eyes began to gleam red in the half-light, hungry and vicious.

"What the hell?" Midnight was confused. Two different groups of robbers. He glanced over at his partner, but found only empty space where she had crouched.

"Do not interfere in the Master's operations," responded one of the quartet of thieves, one who didn't hold the box. He drew a large pistol from inside his jacket. "Leave this place, and remind your Queen who she works for!"

A sharp battle-cry pierced the argument as Trin Dee leaped out from the darkness behind a statue adorned in battered bronzed armor. She bounced off a far wall and spun around, landing an expert flying kick to the head of one of the vampires. As she landed, she immediately sprang back up and over the second vampire, drawing an ornate pair of gleaming butterfly swords from the depths of her leather jacket as she landed behind her foe.

"Oh man, I think I'm in love," Midnight muttered at the sight and then with a roar, charged the first group of thieves. He jumped, not nearly as elegant, and not nearly as far, but he reached the center of the odd box

and forced it to the floor. This disoriented the group, giving him the distraction he needed to punch the two who had been carrying the box, sending them reeling.

"Midnight!" The man with the pistol dropped back a few steps and fired at the masked man.

"You recognize me? I'm flattered," Midnight replied as he jumped for the third man, feeling splinters of wood from the shot that nearly struck him. He tackled the criminal to the ground and quickly rolled him up for protection from the gunman, while delivering a powerful roundhouse punch.

"Do not be; to be recognized by the Master is to be marked for death," the gunman replied as he fired again, gunning down his fellow criminal to try and get at the mystery man. "You have been marked since your encounter with the Hammer from Hell. Now you have sealed your fate!"

Trin Dee heard the raucous melee at the other end of the exhibit hall, but kept her focus solely on the vampires she battled. She lashed out in a spinning cyclone of blades that forced the tall, lean vampire to retreat after one slice of a silvered edge forced a painful hiss from him.

"Coward!" cried the second vampire, a vision of alabaster loveliness, dressed to maximize her slender but exquisite features. "Do you not recognize this woman? Who we fight? Who threatens us?" She approached Trin from the flank, forcing the warrior to split her attention, and caught Dee's gaze. "This powerful warrior, of the family that hunts us and makes us feel fear like any mortal?" She reached out a slim hand to touch Trin's cheek. "I am Rowan, dear, and I am no threat to you, am I?" Her eyes kept Trin Dee's captive as Rowan's partner silently swept up to the target, offering such sweet smells to his sharpened senses. "You can protect me, guard me and aid me in my revenge on my sister's killer, can't you? And that one you brought, can bring us to this evil Germanic warrior, can he not?"

Rowan smiled wide, and hungry, fangs lengthened and glistening, her sensuous trap coiling around Trin Dee, the world around these three seeming to slow into hours-long seconds. Stretched out long and taut like a band of rubber... that suddenly snapped when the tall lean

vampire screamed in agony.

"I prefer men, seductress, and I prefer them alive," Trin Dee said without altering the expressionless face as Rowan watched her partner stagger away, one silver sword thrust through his chest until he collapsed into dust.

Then it was Rowan's turn to scream in pain as the hand on Trin's cheek flew far from the both with a sweep of the other silvered sword. "Noooo!" She clutched the stump and staggered back as Trin leaped forward, to no avail. The warrior slammed into the stone floor, scattering the flowing mist that retreated from the battle.

At the other end of the exhibit hall, Midnight gripped the dead man tight and continued to use him for cover as the gunman fired again. "You killed your own guy?! What kind of screwball do you work for?" he called out in shock.

"You could never understand the master!" the remaining criminal insisted as he heard the screams and grew more desperate with his shots.

"Enough with the gun!" Midnight insisted in frustration as he made his way to the wall and plucked an antique discus off the wall. He gave it a mighty heave and heard it crash into the gunman's hand with a satisfying thud and an accompanying grunt of pain.

"Now then, who is this master and what does he want?" Midnight asked as he slowly marched toward the remaining criminal, Trin Dee doing the same with her foes dispatched.

"No!" the man cried and turned, throwing himself through a large, heavy window. He screamed in pain as shards of glass sliced through him and he fell to the ground below.

Midnight and Trin Dee raced to the broken window and leaned over the sill carefully to see the man, laying below tattered and bent. "Wow. This master gets his money's worth out of these guys," Midnight commented. "What were they stealing for him?"

Trin quickly dashed to the box and pulled the lid up, revealing a pile of

straw and that was all. She glanced up at Midnight, who looked furious and started to run down the hall where these men had come from. Trin dashed after him, and the two of them paused when they reached the end of the exhibit. The door was open, but no one was in sight. Trin then continued to run to the open door and search for the stealthy criminal as Midnight looked around the hall itself.

His eyes fell on the empty case and he read the brass plate beneath it, shaking his head angrily. Trin returned to his side, as she slid her swords back into the hidden depths of her jacket. "Another trick you have to show me," Midnight tried to joke. He pointed to the exhibit tag.

'This brilliantly polished shield matches the one mentioned in the legends of Perseus, granted to him by Athena to aid him in slaying Medusa. Found ten months ago in a valley excavation just outside of Athens, known as Mycenae.'

"None of those guys are going to tell us who their master is, are they? Any idea how to pick up this guy's trail?" Midnight asked as he scratched his forehead.

"There might be one chance, but it won't be easy," Trin said. "I know a trail we can follow. Not like any trail you might think of though. This one travels much differently around this world. But you must believe me, it does exist."

Midnight sighed, a long and surrendering sigh of defeat. "Not the Danger Trail again!"

***Gran Chaco Boreal,
September, 1935***

Peace had finally started to settle back into this part of the world, after several years of brutal fighting and sweltering death from this dry, heat-blasted part of the South American continent. When Rima had uncovered men moving powerful weapons through her woods in a long and slow route to this place, she became determined she would not allow them to reignite the bloodshed.

She had worked long and hard, harassing the group at every turn,

setting up deadfalls, maneuvering them into broken valleys, depriving them of supplies, forcing injuries and accidents. Still they pressed on, and she grew more frustrated at their obstinate determination. Nothing would stop these people, it would seem; nothing but direct confrontation, which she hated and they held the upper hand in. But time was growing shorter and shorter.

She gathered intelligence from her birds, and she gained encouragement and help from the rest of the wildlife. The men suffered broken bones, heat exhaustion, concussions, but still the force moved on.

And now they were here, and she was no closer to stopping them, and no closer to understanding the crazed fervor that clearly propelled them along their course.

I have no choice, she thought to herself as she watched them move to a level area and establish a camp. Tonight, I must strike directly. And hope my efforts have weakened them enough.

She prepared to rest up in a nearby tree, sleeping the early evening to conserve her strength and prepare her for the fighting to come; a thought that made her shudder in disgust. Instead, she was shocked from her bitter reverie by the sounds of gunfire, by the cries of the injured, and by a powerful war cry that split the jungle. Her heart pounding, adrenaline coursing through her petite, hard body, she raced toward the camp, unsure of what she'd find. Her heart was in her mouth as she slowed down and then crept up to the camp.

It was in ruins, men battered into unconsciousness, broken and scattered like leaves before a hurricane. Weapons were sliced neatly in half, and the moans of the injured who remained awake lay over the scene like a shroud. Rima quickly spotted a solitary figure in the center, sword in hand. She was tall and powerful; she was a strong woman. Full-figured, armored breast plate and leather skirting over strong, thick thighs. She was a warrior; Rima could see her martial prowess in the way she stood, conquering in the center of the devastation, and still regal at the same time, as long flowing black hair matched the bronzed skin.

Rima stepped forward cautiously and eyed the woman up and down. She was beauty and she was power and she was majesty, and Rima

couldn't help but admire her. She nodded to the woman. "Rima," the jungle woman said as a way of introduction.

The woman turned to Rima and gave a nod of her head. "I have heard some tales of you. I hope I might have your help in these lands. I search for a madman who would loot my heritage, and use it to endanger everyone on this world." She stepped forward and offered a hand in greeting. "I am Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons."

Georgetown, Washington, D.C.

September 1935

Thomas Flynn hastily snuck up to the rear of his own house, a beautiful building of brick, surrounded by a lovingly-tended yard of hedges and flowers. Flynn held his hat down tight, the collar of his coat turned up to hide his face in the shadows cast by the night sky, his other hand clutching his briefcase as if it contained his life.

In a way, it did, and he knew that very well. He inserted his key into the back door and opened it slowly; even the slightest scrape of metal making him think it was a gunshot alerting everyone on his street.

But it all remained dark and quiet and he slipped into his pantry and closed the door, leaning heavily on it as he sighed heavily in relief. Without taking off his jacket, or his hat, he quickly moved to his study, to make his phone call, to finish this wretched exchange and move on with whatever the next phase of his life would bring.

"Good evening, Mr. Flynn. It took me much longer to track you down than it should have, so really, you should have had the courtesy to be here when I came to talk to you."

"Oh God," Thomas wailed plaintively as he heard the door of his study close behind him. He watched as King Faraday got up from Flynn's own desk and walked around to him.

"Agent Faraday, Secret Service, actually. You and I, we're going to talk, and I hope you give me some answers, because I've had just about enough of this investigating my own country." He took the briefcase

from Flynn's limp hand and popped it open. "Well." He was stunned to see the Ineffable Libram inside and he looked back up at Flynn. "I'll admit it. This is *not* what I expected to find." He maneuvered Flynn into a plush armchair and then walked over to pour each of them a glass of Scotch. "I wanted to know about the West Formula, and Doctor Zero and all of that."

"It... " Flynn coughed on the word, his throat dry. He took the Scotch and gulped the burning liquid down his throat and gasped slightly. He stared up at Faraday and sank into the overstuffed chair, nearly sobbing with relief. "It's connected. All of it. Sort of."

"Sort of?" Faraday sipped at the liquor and leaned on Flynn's desk. "Talk to me. If you're in trouble, let me help you out of it. You don't have much choice at this point; you've got to know that."

Flynn nodded and greedily drank down more Scotch. "If you're here, you know I set up the appropriations channels for Project M. They're the ones with the West Formula. They're the ones that invented Doctor Zero to test out some of their stuff on criminals."

"Why? That makes no sense."

Flynn shrugged his scrawny shoulders, still hidden beneath his coat. "I don't understand any of it. Project M is supposed to be government, but... I don't think anyone really knows what they're up to; I really don't think there's any oversight."

"Why are you stealing the book? Does that go back to West's patron?" Faraday sipped some more and picked the book up out of the case, tucking it under a strong arm.

"Yeah. Yeah, I... I was West's assistant... partner. The guy they mention in the report, but don't name. That's because of Maximillian's boss," Flynn said shakily.

"Seward," Faraday stated smugly, wanting to keep Flynn unnerved by what he already knew.

"Seward?" Flynn shook his head. "No. I don't know any Seward."

"Seward ran the Cult of the Blood Red Moon," Faraday explained as he watched Flynn's face carefully now, seeing more confusion on it. "A group of vampires. With what you and West invented, that can't sound all that crazy to hear."

"Not at all but... but no. No, Maximillian wasn't a vampire, not when he was funding West."

Faraday frowned now and stood up slowly. "He wasn't?" Maximillian disappeared from the report in 1931. *Was that the year he was turned?* "Then who... ?"

"The Master. That's what all his operatives are to call him."

Faraday put the book on the desk and then reached down to yank Flynn to his feet, hands curled tightly into the small man's collar. "Who?"

"H-he calls h-himself... Vandal Savage."

*Somewhere else,
somewhere dark and hidden*

The mists poured in through the opened window, spilling into the ancient stone room high in the ancient stone tower that looked over some quiet, green land. The mist piled up as it spilled onto the floor, slowly assuming the form of Mary Seward, Queen of Blood. She looked gaunt and sickly, thick red hair hanging limp and clumping from her head, eyes sunk into her face, her lips thin and drawn. If she could have, she would have wept, for she had at last, after a long and arduous journey, arrived home.

"Beloved!"

Mary turned to see the exquisite porcelain features of the Dragon Queen as she rose from her chair in the study perched in this ancient stone tower. She moved quickly, but retained her elegance; no mad dash for such women of grace and majesty. "You have returned to me at last!" The Dragon Queen reached the vampire queen and threw her arms around

her tightly, kissing her long and hard. "You said you would, but I... I was growing fearful." Her eyes glistened with tears threatening to spill out over smooth cheeks.

"I am weak, I am tired, but I am here, my sweet," Mary said softly as she let the ruler of the Black Dragon Society guide her to a divan. "I do hope we have someone in need of punishment?" she chuckled softly and the Dragon Queen nodded and laughed as well. She sat next to her vampire lover and held her close. "My dear, while returning here, I've heard things, and learned things, and... and I have to confess to you something."

"What is it?" the Dragon Queen asked as she wrapped an arm around Mary and held her close, the redhead resting on the Asian woman's shoulder.

"My cult was small when it started, and I struggled to evade and survive Andrew for many years, and struggled to evade and survive that wretched Dee family for many years," Mary explained in a soft voice, eyes staring out ahead of her, vacant as they stared into her past. "A man helped me. Gave me money, gave me lairs and offered me minions to turn. He helped me to make the Blood Red Moon as powerful as it has become. Now he draws his strings tight, to force his puppets to perform his show. He is a true puppet master, and I can feel him tugging at my strings, and it burns at me."

"Shush, my love. Never fear."

"His is a name feared for centuries. He is powerful, he is cunning. He is Vandal Savage, and I haven't the strength to match and resist him, my sweet." She gave a choked sob.

"I know this man, Mary. He is everything you say he is. A brutal, dangerous, cunning man of great resource and vast learning." She turned Mary's head and held it gently in both of her hands, and smiled sweetly at her. "But he is just a man. And we all know the female is the more dangerous of the species. With your knowledge, my people, and our power, we will snatch his victory and make it ours."

Mary smiled in return and licked her lips and nodded. "We will, won't

we? Together."

"Together."

To Be Continued...

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Danger Trail #2 (2007)

Danger Trail: The Blood and Dragon Affair, Part 2 (of 3).

Ninjas and vampires and diabolical plots, oh my! King Faraday, Speed Saunders and the Enemy Ace are joined by a masked crime-fighter as they face two secret societies with a monstrous agenda! Pulp action at its finest as we seek out...the Danger Trail!

Danger Trail #3 (2007)

Danger Trail: The Blood and Dragon Affair, Part 3 (of 3).

Learn the mission of the Blood Red Moon! Uncover the mastermind behind the Black Dragon Society! Watch our heroes try and work together when some can't trust others, and one has no clue that there's cavalry coming to the rescue! Who would have thought marital strife could be so much danger for the heroes, or so entertaining for the readers! It's the conclusion to "The Blood and Dragon Affair!"

Danger Trail #4 (2007)

Danger Trail: The Verdant Darkness Affair, Part 1 (of 2)

Mightiest Mortals #1 (2007)

Mightiest Mortals: With a Stroke of Lightning!

Mightiest Mortals #2 (2007)

Mightiest Mortals: In a Crash of Thunder

Mightiest Mortals #3 (2007)

Captain Marvel: Under a Seal of Six Gods!

Justice League #8 (2007)

Justice League: Lucky Number 7.

What are the chances that a rash of good fortune across the globe could be the League's next case? Pretty good when this luck starts rewriting the laws of the universe and threatening the existence of

ages-old mystic defenses keeping ancient, primordial forces at bay!

Justice League #9 (2007)

Justice League: To See Tomorrow.

Why are there hawk soldiers of Thanagar on Earth? Who are the strange new superhumans appearing around the globe, testing and probing local governments? What exactly is the Justice League facing when a quartet of self-proclaimed heroes declares Earth "their last stand?" It's the beginning of an epic threat wrapped inside two strange mysteries that will leave the Justice League hoping that Earth survives "To See Tomorrow!"

Justice League #10 (2007)

Justice League: To See Tomorrow, Part Two (of Four).

"To See Tomorrow" continues as the stakes only get higher and secrets slowly start to unravel. Hawkman and the Martian Manhunter are caught between the Thanagarian invaders and their own satellite! The rest of the League is caught between Mon-El and Wandjina! And in the big picture, it's all symbolic of the Earth being caught between the enigmatic Overmaster and a still-hidden mastermind with dreadful intent!

Danger Trail #5 (2008)

Danger Trail: The Verdant Darkness Affair, Part 2 (of 2).

What connection lies between la Llorona's kidnapped children and Nyola's captured heroine Rima? What is drawing the natives of Central America and Mexico together? Speed Saunders, King Faraday and Midnight are joined by Doctor Occult to learn the truth before an Empire of Blood washes over the land!

Weird Western Quarterly #11 (2008)

Johnny Thunder: Steel Heart Iron Soul.

As Johnny Thunder, John Tane has evaded the deathbed oath to his mother never to do violence, and become Mesa City's great protector. Now he's about to be challenged on a whole new level when a powerful land baron makes a grab for greater wealth and glory, and the enigmatic renegade, Madame .44, has Johnny Thunder's heart in her sights! What might be his most dangerous

mission yet will also be the first chapter in a ballad of love and gunslinging like the Wild West has yet to see!

Danger Trail #6 (2008)

Danger Trail: The Man in Stitches Affair, Part 1 (of 2)

Danger Trail #7 (2008)

Danger Trail: The Man in Stitches Affair, Part 2 (of 2).

The Revenant Program proceeds apace as Saunders and Midnight must struggle with former ally King Faraday to find the evidence that can shut down Doctor Zero for good! Maybe, just maybe, newcomer Argent St. Cloud can help out!

Speeding Bullet #4 (2008)

Bulletman: The Birth of Bulletman, Part 4 (of 4): Man Made Gods. This is it! The mystery is revealed and the gloves come off as Bulletman duking it out with the Murder Prophet and his god of murder, the Nihilist! Can he come through his baptism of fire and blood intact? And even if he wins, does the Prophet truly get the last laugh?

Danger Trail #9 (2008)

Danger Trail: The Nation of Murder Affair, Part 2 (of 2).

As Speed Saunders and King Faraday join Argent St. Cloud to search for Michael Gallant, a wave of murders leaves the city of New York reeling as the heat rises, tempers flare, and Rue Morgue revels in the bloodbath!

Danger Trail #8 (2008)

Danger Trail: The Nation of Murder Affair, Part 1 (of 2).

Gangsters want Thomas Dewey dead at all costs, bringing Michael Gallant onto the case, Argent St. Cloud at his side! But when Murder, Inc. steps up to the challenge, can even he call on enough reinforcements to save the day?

Danger Trail #11 (2008)

Danger Trail: The Stolen Myth Affair, Part 2 (of 3).

Things heat up for our heroes as the Dragon Queen and the Queen of Blood unite to betray Vandal Savage; Savage raids Washington, D.C. to acquire the Ineffable Libram; and King Faraday and Speed

Saunders face off with Queen Hippolyta and Rima the Jungle Woman! Things couldn't get any worse than this, could they?

Danger Trail Annual #1 (2008)

Danger Trail: The Savage Sins Affair.

As the Stolen Myth Affair heats up, as a covert war rages on the Danger Trail, take a peek inside the history of the man who has set this all into motion...Vandal Savage! Balloon Buster Steven Savage is doing just that as he uncovers threads and connections surrounding the many figures of the age that all lead back to this diabolical mastermind, some stretching back centuries! If the truth about him can't be unraveled soon, those threads will choke the present day and continue into the future!

Danger Trail #12 (2008)

Danger Trail: The Stolen Myth Affair, Part 3 (of 3).

Vandal Savage begins his plan to bring the world into his control! King Faraday, Speed Saunders and Midnight, along with their assembled allies, make their bid to stop him, but there are three queens in this game, and each one has their own vision for how the endgame should play out! It's the end of the first year on the Danger Trail...is it also just the end?

Speeding Bullet #1 (2008)

Speeding Bullet, Part 1 (of 4): Modern Gods.

James Barr has developed a special device that allows him tremendous powers! Now he steps into a new world of masked men and heroic deeds, but is he really ready to take his place among the world's newest gods? Will the Murder Prophet usher in an age of blood first?

Speeding Bullet #2 (2008)

Speeding Bullet: The Birth of Bulletman, Part 2 (of 4): Deepest Secrets.

James Barr steps into costume for the first time, and Bulletman is on the case of the Obermyer murders. But so is another person...the actual killer, a mysterious being called the Murder Prophet, who is paving the way for his master, and the police and the rookie hero struggle to catch up and stop him!

Speeding Bullet #3 (2008)

Speeding Bullet: The Birth of Bulletman, Part 3 (of 4): Bleeding Truths.

The race is on to uncover the real killer as Detectives Farley and Doherty try to dig through the murder mystery, Martin Obermyer meets the killer and Bulletman stumbles in a critical way, leaving him to face the fury of his wife!

Mightiest Mortals #4 (2008)

Mightiest Mortals: Wielding Fists of Virtue.

Captain Marvel is caught between a throwdown with Ibac and Sivana launching an all-out assault on our hero and the Fawcett itself! As bad as that is, though, it gets worse for Kit Freeman...much worse! Meet Sabbac!

Mightiest Mortals #5 (2008)

Mightiest Mortals: Scenes of a Day

Mightiest Mortals #6 (2008)

Mightiest Mortals: Between Opposing Forces.

Freddy finds himself having the most startlingly worst day of anyone's life! Can it be worse than losing a close relative? What about the dark secret within another relative? Or the secrets being held by his best friend? It all comes crashing down on him in a terrible avalanche of revelations! All this while the city moves on without him!

Mightiest Mortals #7 (2008)

Mightiest Mortals: From the Shadows of Twisted Minds.

Get ready for action and excitement! Freddy buries his cousin, Christopher Freeman, and has another showdown with his step-brother Tim Karnes. And we discover just how fiendish Sivana can be when he pushes Captain Marvel's every attribute in an issue in which the World's Wickedest Scientist...doesn't even appear! All this, and the fate of Beautia!

Mightiest Mortals #8 (2008)

Mightiest Mortals: To the Truth of the Matter.

Billy and Freddy have their confrontations on secrets kept, power hoarded and relations hidden, all the while the forces of the law

struggle to keep Lady Justice apart from her new champion and Miss Minerva asserts her innocence!

Mightiest Mortals #9 (2008)

Mightiest Mortals: The Abyss of Blood Relations

Fawcett City goes on despite the gang war, despite the debut of new heroes, despite it all, Fawcett City goes on. Come and see how it does, as Chief Kitchens deals with the presence of Captain Marvel and what it means for his police force! And has Miss Minerva over-played her hand?

Mightiest Mortals #11 (2008)

Mightiest Mortals: The Tide of Heroism.

The beginning of the stunning two-part finale to Captain Marvel's first year! Sabbac has gone on a rampage, and Ibac is taking advantage of the chaos! Bulletman struggles to intervene, but everyone wants to know where Captain Marvel is! All this and more (and boy, do I really mean it this time)!

Mightiest Mortals #10 (2008)

Mightiest Mortals: The Punishment of Good Deeds.

Amazing origins issue as we discover the secret behind the magic words, and the history of Sabbac and Ibac! Freddy walks into a deathtrap, Victor Craize starts to feel the power of the people, and the police make a startling discovery about Miss Minerva!

Mightiest Mortals #12 (2008)

Mightiest Mortals: By an Act of Love.

This is it! Sabbac is on a rampage! Ibac sends his men out against the leaderless forces of his gangland opponent! Into the middle of this stands Captain Marvel and his allies! When the smoke clears, who will stand triumphant?

Nightwing #30 (2008)

Nightwing: The Riddle of the Sphinx.

Just when you'd think Dick's got enough trouble juggling Titans duties as Nightwing, solo duties as the Batman, and mentoring duties with Tim, things get harder. There's a new villain hitting the streets, one with a dangerous delusion, and Dick's not happy

to see that Nightwing is apparently on the case, without Dick's permission! Come and join us for "The Riddle of the Sphinx!"

Nightwing #31 (2008)

Nightwing: Riddle of the Sphinx, Part 2 (of 2)

Dick must try to get to the bottom of the crazed King Tut and foil his rampages, but he also needs to figure out how to deal with the new Nightwing! As he digs up more information on both, all three men spiral into a collision course of tragic proportions, and Professor McElroy might just be the ultimate victim in all of this!

Justice League #11 (2008)

Justice League: To See Tomorrow, Part Three (of Four).

Things are falling into place at a rapid pace now... for the villains! With the League stretched thin across the globe, friends come racing to the rescue and the action only heats up! Watch Hawkgirl lead the storming of the JL satellite; witness Superman confront Mon-El over his mysterious mission; and thrill to the throwdown between Wonder Woman and the Persuader, as the master villain behind it all draws closer to his goal! All this and more!

Danger Trail Vol. 1 (2009)

This volume collects Danger Trail #1-12 as well as Danger Trail Annual #1. This is the complete first story arc in which our pulp heroes confront the treachery of the Blood Queen, the Dragon Queen and their mysterious backer. Stay tuned for Danger Trail #13 coming soon!

Danger Trail #13 (2009)

Danger Trail: The Brown Lady Affair, Part 1.

In the wake of the battle with Vandal Savage, Speed Saunders has set his sights on finding the Sigil of Seven; that quest being his only remaining link to the missing (and treacherous) Harriet Cooper! His friends Argent St. Cloud and Michael Gallant, along with ally Doctor Occult, want to know what his intentions are, but first they must untangle a dark scheme involving the ghosts of Great Britain!

Mightiest Mortals #13 (2009)

Mightiest Mortals: Opening Passages.

As Fawcett City recovers from the fall of Ibac and Sabbac, our heroes find more things to be worried about. Susan Barr must prosecute the bloodthirsty Tim Karnes while reassessing her stance on costumed crime-fighters; Dudley must wrestle with what he should reveal to Billy, and Billy must deal with the fact that Freddy refuses to return to his crippled body!

Danger Trail #14 (2009)

Danger Trail: The Brown Lady Affair, Part 2 (of 2).

Speed Saunders must deal with the fact that the artifact Harriet had been searching for, the Sigil of Seven, is Doctor Occult's primary weapon against supernatural evil! In the wake of her treachery, what can that mean? And none of our heroes can take the time to figure it out now, as they struggle to save Michael Gallant from the Dagger of Koth!

Danger Trail #15 (2009)

Danger Trail: The Falkenstein Affair.

Once rivals of the air and enemies at war, now the Enemy Ace and the Balloon Buster must work together to penetrate the secrets of Castle Falkenstein and the strange mad scientist ready to bring two worlds together to fuel his rise to power!

Danger Trail #16 (2009)

Danger Trail: The Blood of Templars Affair.

Danger Trail #17 (2009)

Danger Trail: The Blood of Templars Affair, Part Two.

Things heat up for our heroes as they head into an ancient Knights Templar castle as one of three groups desperate to unlock its secrets and find a powerful relic that will decide the victor in the opening battles of a far greater war, one that has the attention of the enigmatic Sanguine Father! A far greater war that echoes across the decades!

Danger Trail #18 (2009)

Danger Trail: Affairs of Blood and Fate, Part Two: The Angel of Death!

The strangest crossover of all times continues here, as Rose Psychic, Eel O'Brien, Speed Saunders, Midnight, Trin Dee and Andrew

Bennett find themselves caught in a holy war between the forces of the Order of St. Dumas and the Sanguine Father, who offers a glimpse into a terrifying future for the world!

Danger Trail #20 (2010)

Danger Trail: Affairs of Blood and State, Part 6 (of 6).

Danger Trail #19 (2010)

Danger Trail: Affairs of Blood and State, Part 4.

Weird Western Quarterly #18 (2010)

Weird Western Quarterly: Lust Faith Love Treachery.



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