

WIMBLEDON GREEN COLLECTOR

OF ALL THE MARVELOUS FINDS IN MY RICH CAREER, NOTHING HAS EVER COME CLOSE TO ECLIPSING THAT MOMENT.



I SPEAK, OF COURSE, OF THE MOMENT WHEN I REALIZED WHAT WAS IN THOSE SUITCASES.



WEBB WAS A TIMID MAN. RETICENT AND STAND-OFFISH.



DURING HIS INITIAL PHONE CALL HE HAD CLEARLY STATED THAT HE POSSESSED MANY OLD COMICS THAT HE WISHED TO SELL...



BUT I WAS UNPREPARED FOR WHAT AWAITED ME IN THAT CRAMPED BACKROOM APARTMENT.



UPON FIRST ARRIVING HE SHOWED ME AN UNAPPETIZING STACK OF MID-'60S GOLD KEYS AND CHARLTONS.



THIS SET MY EXPECTATIONS QUITE LOW.



I POKED AROUND THE OVER-CROWDED APARTMENT WITH LITTLE ENTHUSIASM...



UNTIL HE DIRECTED ME TO THE SUITCASES.



THEY WERE IN A SMALL STOREROOM. IT WAS UTTERLY FILLED WITH PILES OF OLD PRINTED MATTER.



DUST WAS EVERYWHERE AND I HAD TO SHIFT PILES OUT OF THE WAY TO GET AT THE SUITCASES WHICH WERE STACKED IN A CORNER.



EVERY DETAIL OF THE EXPERIENCE IS FROZEN IN MY MIND.



THERE WAS A DIFFUSED QUALITY TO THE LIGHT-- ALMOST AS THOUGH THE AIR ITSELF WERE DUSTY.



A SINGLE SHAFT OF SUN-LIGHT SHONE THROUGH A TINY WINDOW AND PASSED OVER MY HAND AS I REACHED FOR THE SUITCASE.



THE LOW HUM OF A MOTOR DRONED UP FROM JUST BELOW THE FLOORBOARDS.



AND I COULD HEAR THE FAINT SOUND OF A CAR RADIO.



I KNEW THAT THE STREETS OUTSIDE WERE BUSY BUT HERE, IN THIS TIMELESS ROOM, I FELT ODDLY DETACHED.



I SNAPPED OPEN THE LOCKS ON THE FIRST SUITCASE.



THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER GREAT "FINDS" IN MY CAREER.



AT EACH OF THEM I WAS SHAKING LIKE A LEAF WITH ANTICIPATION AND COLLECTOR'S AVARICE.



THIS WAS NOT SO ON THAT REMARKABLE DAY.



DUST FLEW AS I RAISED THE LID.



INSIDE I SAW THREE CAREFUL STACKS.



EACH STACK WAS ABOUT 30 COMICS DEEP.



INSTANTLY I IDENTIFIED THE COMICS SITTING ATOP EACH STACK. ON THE LEFT, THE ULTRA RARE "POW" #2



IN THE MIDDLE, THE TENTH ISSUE OF "TIN-PAN TEDDY."



AND ON THE RIGHT, THE NEVER BEFORE SEEN 1ST ISSUE OF "LIBERTY LASS!"



I FELT AN UNNATURAL CALM.



IT WAS AS IF I WERE WATCHING THE EVENT FROM A FAR REMOVED DISTANCE.



I GENTLY LEAFED THROUGH THE PILES--HOLDING ONE PERFECTLY MINT GOLDEN AGE COMIC BOOK AFTER ANOTHER.



COOLY, I DETERMINED THAT JUST BEYOND ME WERE 8 MORE SUITCASES.



I KNEW IN THAT MOMENT THAT MY LIFE HAD CHANGED FOREVER!



I HAD JUST STUMBLED UPON THE LOST ENTRANCE TO EL DORADO.



And so,
we close
the door on
the Wilbur
R. Webb
Collection

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