

Seasonal
From “*Dreams, Death & Deception*”
By Albert Holl

Worthless bunch of bums, Abner thought as he watched a disheveled, dirty man approach his car with a squirt bottle and a squeegee. He rolled the window down slightly.

“Why don’t you get a real job, you lazy bum,” he shouted angrily. “And stop messing up my car windows with your filthy water.”

In reply the man squirted the water through the window.

“Why you...” Abner yelled and stepped on the accelerator, turning the car toward the bum at the same time. As the car sped away, the man jumped backward to avoid being hit. He fell to the ground.

“Serves you right,” Abner said gleefully as he looked in the rearview mirror. He wished more drivers would do the same.

It was mid-morning, the streets were already crowded, and as Abner walked from the parking lot to the theater, a passerby occasionally jostled him.

“Why don’t you watch where you’re going!” he yelled, but the person paid him no heed. Christmas was still two months away, but the rush was already on.

“Good morning, Mr. Morely,” the security guard greeted Abner as he entered the stage door. “Looks like there’s going to be a good size audience for today’s matinee. Everyone wants to get in the Christmas mood.”

A barely discernible, “humph” was the only answer Abner could manage. He wished he could land more challenging acting roles, but they were few and far between, and the competition was stiff. At least with this Christmas show, he was guaranteed two months of steady work. That, in addition to his salary from his Christmas commercials, allowed him a comfortable living.

So what if people stared at him because of his looks. He might look out of season during the rest of the year, but not during the Christmas season.

He studied his face as he sat in front of the mirror in the dressing room.

“Abner old boy,” he said, “at the rate you’re going you won’t have to put powder in your hair for too much longer. But as the old saying goes... it’s not the color that counts, it’s the quantity that counts.”

“Yes,” he shouted in answer to a knock on the door.

“It’s Agnes,” the wardroom lady answered. “Your costume is cleaned.”

“Bring it in, woman,” he ordered. It’s not doing me much good out in the hall, you stupid girl.

Agnes made a hasty entrance and exit, all the time wishing she had been earlier to work. Good actor that he was, he was still the most disagreeable man she knew.

“Fifteen minutes to curtain,” a voice announced down the hall.

Abner put the white powder to one side and dressed in the costume Agnes had so hastily deposited. He gave a final look in the mirror, and satisfied with his appearance, made his way onto the stage with the rest of the cast.

“I’ve seen many versions of *A Christmas Carol*,” another actor said as they waited for the curtain to rise, “but you are by far the best Scrooge that ever set foot on the stage!”