



BLACK RIDER PRESENTS... THE DIAMOND & THE THIEF

Black Rider presents *The Diamond & the Thief* 21

...and now on to edition 21 of our minizine. After 20 monthly editions *The Diamond & the Thief* will now publish when you're least expecting it - like a thief in the night.

In this edition Jill Jones is the original bootleg, Eric Dando grapples with blame and Joran CA Monteiro makes great haste.

Look homeward, angels!

Jeremy
The Black Rider

I REMEMBER PART

By Jill Jones

I REMEMBER PART of my bootleg
something boiling over
but someone still had
an eye on the game
the still, small television
I was original mono
someone was singing
like milk happening
psychedelic ball pock bang
the dogs were touching
things with changelings
charged with damages
emptying the fire extinguisher
into the ash tray
I'm taking notes
then must sing them
expedition to a place
where I can think
the end being the apex
hypnotic sound from
someone's hands on
the vox turned low
I remember being
pulled down a road
I had to stop miming
my watch though
time keeps going
begins to end static
wires tubes and batteries
only present crackles
within the harmonium
and sublime's shaky hands
I was original bootleg
vox hypno and charge

The Concrete Man

By Eric Dando



We're pouring the slab on Gaille's new bungalow. The concrete truck has blown a tyre and The Concrete Man swears and smokes cigarettes. It is amazing how he can still roll cigarettes when he is covered in concrete. He pours the cement into the wheelbarrow and I wheel it into a nail and now the wheelbarrow has blown a tyre.

The Concrete Man looks at his watch and swears and says that there's no way you can push a wheelbarrow of cement with a flat tyre. But it is the only wheelbarrow we have and I am so enthusiastic.

Gaille comes out with cups of coffee, and she watches me trying to mount the wheelbarrow and The Concrete Man drinks his coffee snorting, spitting phlegm. And even though he told me not to even bother, The Concrete Man came and helped me push it. Calls me an idiot. I don't even know how The Concrete Man can move he is so covered in concrete, if he tried to smile his face would crack.

So The Concrete Man goes off looking for wheelbarrows. He takes one from his mate around the corner and he takes one from Gaille's neighbour across the road. We pour the slab and I wash out the wheelbarrows.

Then The Concrete Man tells me I had better take the neighbours' wheelbarrow back to them. He says, 'Gaille, I took your neighbours' wheelbarrow, they weren't home. I hope they're friends of yours.'

And Gaille says, 'Well, not really. No.'

So The Concrete Man says I had better get moving before they come home.

'You're probably a bit late for that,' says Gaille, looking at her watch.

So I get behind the wheelbarrow and trundle up their driveway. It's a long driveway, the house is hidden away in the bush a bit. The wheelbarrow has a metal wheel which scrapes the road and sounds like a tiny tram. They would have heard me a mile away.

A man comes out of the house to see what the noise is. I say, 'I 'spose you're wondering what I'm doing with your wheelbarrow?' 'No.' he says, 'It's not my wheelbarrow.'

'Oh no. But you are missing a wheelbarrow?'

He doesn't know, he has to have a look in the shed. 'Um yeah,' he calls out, 'it's not here, but I think our one had a tyre.'

'Well. I've brought back the wrong one. I'll go and get the other one.' I wanted to tell him about The Concrete Man. All I had done was punctured the tyre of Gaille's wheelbarrow. It was The Concrete Man that had come and taken the wheelbarrow without permission. It was him.

I felt like a bloody tool.

age saves you from nothing

By Joran CA Monteiro

The older man and the younger man sat around the table made of logs on the chairs made of logs in the cabin made of logs. The older, paunchy, drank straight gin and smoked. The younger, dressed black, stubbled face, drank water.

In this log cabin in the woods, the older and the younger were not comfortable. The older had been out of the city before, but never surrounded by this much nature. The younger had spent time in the countryside before, at the state-farm.

It was a thick, temperate forest . The trees had grown dense. They could have seen anyone coming if they'd sat outside on the porch. But instead they sat around the table.

In silence the men sat at the table. The older finished his drink. Finished his cigarette. The younger left his water. Not thirsty. The older rasped his throat. A half-cough. Preparing to say something.

Before he could the younger said: 'Do you think they will come tomorrow?'

'I don't know,' the older answered, lighting another cigarette.

'What will we do?'

'I don't know. Wait I guess.'

'They might be coming for us right now. We have to assume they are. What is our next step? What should we do?'

'I don't know, kid,' the older man sighs. 'I don't know.'

The officer stood at the door of the log cabin. Behind him were two more men in dark-brown suits with silver skull pins on their lapels. The pins reflected the sunlight turning them into little bright stars on the dark-brown. The door was made of thick planks. He took a step back and with one kick managed to break

in the door. Like it was cheap ply-wood. He kicked in the door and stepped into the cabin. The room smelled of unwashed men. He walked over to the table made of logs and picked up a cigarette butt from the ashtray. It was still warm. Apart from cigarette butts and two used glasses on the table there were no signs of life.

'Were they here?' one of the men asked.

The man almost asked again before the officer pre-empted him.

'They were here.'

He stepped out of the cabin and looked into the forest. As if he heard something. But he didn't see anything. Probably a bird.

Like the older man and the younger man, the officer was not comfortable in this environment. One of the men picked up a bottle from a crate and gave the back of his superior's head a knowing look. The officer turned around and stepped back into the cabin.

'Rack 'm up,' he said.

Outside it was dusk.

The older man and the younger man ran. Darkness was setting in and there were no stars coming out.

'We are far enough now,' the older said.

His heart was pounding out of his chest. His heartbeat pulsed through his temples like warm waves. Warm wave after warm wave.

'We have to be far enough now.'

The older needed a break. He stopped and bent over. Nearly spewed up the gin. Braced himself against an oak. Tried to catch his breath. The pounding continued.

'It's getting too dark anyway. Let's wait here till morning.'

The younger gave in. No use going further. He couldn't carry the older. No chance.

He sat down on a fallen tree-trunk. No stars had come out, and there was only a sickle of a moon, somewhere behind the clouds. It appeared and threw a faint blue-white light onto the canopy above. A trickle made it through to the men below. Enough for the younger to see the older puke up his guts.

The officer drank half the bottle, the men a quarter each. They were warm again. The men were proud to serve under him. One of them was almost as big as their leader. Reminded people of a ferret, despite his size. The other was athletic. His face was hurt. Scarred by fire. They were proud to be where they were.

'Let's find them,' their officer said.

The three walked outside to the van. From the back of the van came whining. Scar opened the back of the van. In the two cages in the truck was a Doberman each. The dogs were let out of the van and put on long leashes. Officer held a blanket from the used cot in the cabin for them to smell. The dogs were off with a loud sharp bark from each of them. Ferret was holding the leads. The dogs led.

The older man finished a second vomit and heard the dogs.

'Hunters?' he asked.

'No, not at night.'

How far had they run from the cabin? Neither knew. They heard the dogs getting closer. The older and the younger looked at each other. As one they bolted in the direction away from the dogs.

Flushed like fowl from the woods the men emerged. They sprinted in the sparse moonlight. On grassland. It had been mowed recently. Even though they were out of the forest now they ran slower.

The older felt warm wave after warm wave.

Warm waves became a warm buzz.

The younger didn't see the stream until he was knee-deep. The change in density from air to water toppled him. First thoughts of panic, then a yelp and flailing arms. Found footing again. On the edge of the stream. The current tugged his trousers. The moon gave a short appearance. He saw that the stream was not that big. Maybe twenty-five metres across. The current in the middle would do more than just tug at pants.

The older caught up.

'Let's do it,' the older said between laboured breaths.

'Are you sure?'

'I said let's do it.'

The younger started. The water got deeper. Up to his crotch. Above his hips. Up to his chest. Until only his head was above water. And he stood on his toes. He only barely kept his footing while the current took him downstream. Slowly he re-emerged. The water was below his chest. Below his hips. Below his crotch. Only up to his knees. He was on the other side. Only up to his ankles. The bank was steep.

There he laid and saw the older in the river lose his footing. Washed downstream fast.

He heard the dogs clearly. On the field. The only thing to do was to keep up with the older dragged by the river.

The older struggled in the water. He could swim, but not well. A rock hit his right shoulder turning him backwards in the water. He clung to the rock.

The dogs were very close now. Very close. They were on the bank surely. The older clung to the rock. He felt heavy.

'Maybe I'll close my eyes for a moment.'

Eyes closed, chin dropped into the water and he almost lost grip when he heard the younger whisper, 'Wake up old bastard.'

The whisper made it sound serpentine. He saw the younger in the pale moonlight on the river bank a couple of metres away. The younger reached for the older man with a branch. The older grabbed it. The dogs sounded further away.

'That was close,' the older said.

'It still is. They will find a place to cross the river and the dogs will find our trail again. We must go.'

'All right kid. All right.'

Clothes were heavy. The younger undressed and wrung water from them. The older followed suit. They looked at their surroundings. More grass.

'There,' the younger said.

Something in the distance. A light.

They had hoped for a house. It was a man night-fishing.

'What happened to you?' the fisherman asks.

The fisherman took the older man and the younger man to his house downstream by boat. In the fisherman's house, a log-fire. The younger thanks God for their providence.

That night they slept on the floor on old blankets in front of the fire.

The dawn had barely cracked when the older and the younger departed. The fisherman had drawn a map. With the map they could make it.

The black van pulled up to the house of the fisherman. Three men got out and walked into the house uninvited. They asked questions but they did not get responses. The fisherman and his wife

knew nothing.

Had they seen anyone? No, they had not seen anyone.

'Why are there four plates on the table?'

The fisherman and his wife were too late with answering.

The three men, back in the black van, drove after the older and the younger man.

The fisherman and his wife were still in the house. The fisherman hung from a support beam on the end of rope. His wife draped over the kitchen table. Empty eyes stare.

The fisherman slowly turned south, then north.

BLACK RIDER PRESS

We publish like thieves in the night