

THE FEMPIROR CHRONICLES

A TEPISH IS BORN

A Short

by

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EXT. BACKSTREETS OF LONDON - NIGHT

SUPER: March 1902

A WELL-DRESSED MAN of around 25 walks down the street in the middle of the night. He wears a top hat and overcoat, carries straight cane with a decorative handle, and has a dark, trim beard and shifty eyes.

Three HOODLUMS hide behind a building, following him. They are ERECH (20), GERALD (14), and JOHN (13). Erech is clearly in charge.

ERECH

Right, this one looks easy. No need to be subtle. I'll take him down, and you two just grab what looks like money. K?

The other two nod their agreements. Nonchalantly, they move from behind the building and approach the man from behind.

He continues walking easily, as if unaware of the danger. They grow closer. His eyes shift behind him. A smile creeps onto his face. He holds his head high and continues walking easily.

The hoodlums near within a few yards.

ERECH

Now!

They rush the man. Erech jumps on his back, but the man doesn't go down. The man swings his cane, and the others avoid it. Erech jumps away and moves around the man to go for his legs.

The man grabs Erech by the collar and lifts him off the ground. John and Gerald try to help, but the man hits Gerald, throwing him clean across the street. He crashes onto the side of the building. He crumples to the ground.

John tries tugging on the man's hand. The man throws John down the street. He rolls to a stop. Erech continues to struggle.

ERECH

Let me go.

MAN

Why? Shouldn't I take you to the police?

ERECH

Go to hell.

MAN

I like you. You've got a lot of fire in you.

ERECH

It's all I have.

MAN

You want more?

ERECH

Sure. Like what?

The man removes the head of his cane. Descending from the decorative head in a NILROF (a two pronged syringe) filled with a dark red liquid.

MAN

Here.

The man plunges the needles into Erech's neck and uses a lever on the side of the Nilrof that sits near flush with the design to push the liquid in. He drops Erech to the ground.

MAN

Welcome to the family.

He returns the Nilrof to his cane and walks calmly away. Erech lets out a blood-curtling scream and collapses.

Gerald and John struggle to their feet. They walk over to where Erech is lying.

GERALD

Erech? Hey, you ok?

John shakes him.

JOHN

I don't think he's ok.

GERALD

Come on. Let's get him back.

John and Gerald lift Erech and carry him away.

INT. HOODLUM HIDEOUT - ERECH'S ROOM - DAY

Erech lies in one of many beds in the shadows of a room. Threads of light stream across the room, but do not touch his bed. Erech groans and sits up.

He looks around the room. He reaches up to his neck and feels two small wounds where the Nilrof made its marks. He looks confused. He shakes his head and stands.

Casually, he walks across the room, crossing a beam of light. He yells and shrinks back, falling on the bed. More confusion crosses his face.

Carefully, he stands and walks to a light beam streaming in. He puts his hand in front of it. Instantly, a sunburn appears on his hand. He jerks his hand back with a gasp. He looks at the burn.

The door to his room opens. MR. YODER, a skinny aged man in his 40's, strides in. He looks at Erech.

MR. YODER

You cost me a night of work.

ERECH

Mr. Yoder, I don't know what-

MR. YODER

John and Gerald tell me you let an old man get the better of you.

ERECH

He wasn't much older than-

MR. YODER

I don't want excuses, Erech!
I don't put you up here for
nothing. You will work for
your keep!

ERECH

I've always been-

MR. YODER

Your employment is day to day.
If you stop serving me one
day, then you are out. What
do you say to that.

ERECH

I can still serve you.

MR. YODER

Well, prove it! Get out there
and bring me something.

Erech takes a few steps forward. The sunbeams threaten. He looks at Mr. Yoder. Yoder glares at him, hands on his hips.

MR. YODER

Get moving!

Erech looks at the beams again. He turns his back to the window and runs past the light. Yoder looks at him odd.

MR. YODER

What was that all about?

ERECH

Nothing.

Erech exits the room.

INT. HOODLUM HIDEOUT - MAIN ROOM - DAY

The main room has some places to sit, a small rack of books next to a fireplace, a single pot bellied stove, a large table, some mismatched dishes, and a sink. The windows are covered here as well with small beams of light violating the darkness.

Several other hoodlums sit around the room. Gerald and John sit at the table eating some sort of white goopy substance with others. They look up as Erech enters.

GERALD

There you are. I told you he was all right.

JOHN

He didn't feel all right. He felt dead.

GERALD

It was just cold out last night. Isn't that right, Erech?

ERECH

Colder than it is this morning. It got warm fast didn't it?

Gerald and John look at each other, confused.

GERALD

Warm?

Mr. Yoder enters.

MR. YODER

Shut up and eat. You've got a lot of making up to do.

Erech walks over to the pot of gruel. He picks up a wooden spoon, gasps, and drops it. Some of the hoodlums look at him.

JOHN

What are you doing?

ERECH

Nothing.

Erech doesn't touch the spoon. He dips his bowl into the pot and takes some gruel. He picks up a metal spoon and walks to the table.

He sits and dips his spoon into the bowl for a bite. Gerald and John stop eating and look at him. Erech puts the bite in his mouth.

He opens his mouth as if the gruel is remarkably hot. He spits it out. It splats on the floor. He pants, sweating.

ERECH

Oh, my God! How can you eat it
this hot?

JOHN

Hot? It's been sitting there
for hours. The stuff is stone
cold.

MR. YODER

Breakfast is over! Get out
there.

ERECH

I wasn't able to eat.

MR. YODER

You don't deserve it anyway.

INT. HOODLUM HIDEOUT - ENTRYWAY - DAY

Several hoodlums exit the building. John and Gerald exit, but in the shadows just inside the door, Erech stops. Five other hoodlums stop behind him, watching. Gerald and John turn to him.

GERALD

Hey, Erech. What are you
doing?

JOHN

Come on. Mr. Yoder sure will
be upset if you don't come
out. Especially after last
night.

ERECH

I can't.

GERALD

Why not?

ERECH

Look.

Erech holds out his hand just short of breaking the line of light showing his burn. Gerald and John look at it.

GERALD

What is it?

ERECH

I burned myself in the sunlight coming into the bed room.

JOHN

How?

ERECH

I don't know.

MR. YODER

Why are you still here?

ERECH

Mr. Yoder, something is wrong with me. I burned myself in the sun. I can't go out there.

MR. YODER

Look here, boys. We've got ourselves someone who doesn't want to earn his keep.

ERECH

You don't understand.

MR. YODER

No excuses!

Mr. Yoder pushes Erech out the door. Erech screams in the sunlight and runs to the shadows of the building. His face and hands are burned. He hyperventilates. Gerald and John run to him.

GERALD

Good heavens!

JOHN

Why is that happening to you?

Mr. Yoder walks around to watch. The five hoodlums from within the hideout follow him.

ERECH

I don't know. I have to find that man from last night. He did something to me.

MR. YODER

Are you refusing to work? All I've done for you, and this is how you repay me?

ERECH

Mr. Yoder, you don't underst-

Mr. Yoder reels back and decks Erech.

MR. YODER

Are you going out there or not?

Erech struggles to his feet.

ERECH

The sunlight is hurting m-

Mr. Yoder decks him again. Erech falls against the wall. He reels back himself and punches Yoder. Yoder flies several yards from the force of Erech's blow. Erech looks at his fist.

Yoder comes to his feet.

MR. YODER

Get him, boys.

Erech is attacked by the five hoodlums. They punch and kick. Erech blocks some of the blows and takes others. Finally, he hits back throwing the hoodlums away from him, one at a time.

Yoder blind sides Erech, tossing him into the sunlight again. Erech reels from the light. His skin boils under the sun rays before he covers his exposed skin.

MR. YODER

Get out of here, you freak.
I never want to see your face
again.

ERECH

Mr. Yoder, I've been with you
since I was-

MR. YODER

I don't care. Get! I won't be
beaten by one of my workers.

Erech runs to the other side of the street and into the shadows again. He breathes heavily. Gerald and John walk over to him. Some of the skin on his face and hands is blackened.

ERECH

What do you want?

GERALD

Mr. Yoder's right, you know.

ERECH

What?

GERALD

We all have to work to stay
there, and frankly, it wouldn't
be right of you to just stay
without pulling your weight.

JOHN

Yeah.

ERECH

Sure. You're a fine lot, aren't
you. I support you for years,
and one problem comes up, and
you turn me on my ear. There's
loyalty.

GERALD

We don't do loyalty. We do results.

ERECH

Sod off, Gerald.

Erech uses his coat to cover his head. He tucks his hands in the sleeves and ventures out into the sunlight until he disappears into the crowds.

EXT. BACKSTREETS OF LONDON - NIGHT

Erech sits on a set of stairs leading up to an apartment. His burned skin is bright red in some places, and scorched black in others.

A MAN and a WOMAN pass around the corner. They are calm and well-dressed and appear to be around 25. They are WILLIAM and KAREN.

Erech stands as they approach.

WILLIAM

Well?

ERECH

Well what?

WILLIAM

Did you get transmuted last night?

ERECH

What?

Karen reaches up and touches Erech's neck. He cringes.

ERECH

Your hands aren't hot.

KAREN

No, they wouldn't be.

(to William)

He's the one.

WILLIAM

(to Erech)

We thought you might come back here. Everyone looks for us eventually.

ERECH

Why?

KAREN

Because they get rejected.

WILLIAM

Because they have no where to go.

ERECH

Yeah, I got kicked out. Couldn't do my job anymore, so I couldn't live there anymore.

KAREN

We were driven from our home.

ERECH

Really? How long ago has it been? You're what? Five or six years older than me?

WILLIAM

It was thirty-nine years ago.

ERECH

What?

KAREN

You say that a lot.

WILLIAM

What would you like to do?

ERECH

Wait a minute. You got changed thirty-nine years ago? How old are you?

WILLIAM

Sixty.

KAREN

About the same.

WILLIAM

She's older than I am.

KAREN

William, quit it. A lady
does not reveal her age.

WILLIAM

(whispered, to Erech)

Sixty-one.

Karen smacks William on the arm. He laughs.

ERECH

Why did you come? What happened
to the guy from last night?

WILLIAM

Lorinkis likes to change people.
He thought you might want us to
handle something for you.

ERECH

Handle?

KAREN

Call it a final qualifying
test. You see, you and we are
no longer normal people. People
don't care about us anymore, so
we don't care about them. So
if you want to be a part of us,
all you need to do is destroy
those who rejected you.

ERECH

How would I destroy them?

WILLIAM

You're sure you want to?

ERECH

Absolutely. I'll teach them to
throw me out.

WILLIAM

Very well, then. Here.

William detaches a sheath from his waist and hands it over to Erech. Erech takes it and pulls out a generic-looking, two-handed longsword.

KAREN

Do you know how to use one?

ERECH

I'll learn.

WILLIAM

We will go with you.

EXT. HOODLUM'S HIDEOUT - NIGHT

Erech stops outside the door. The sheath is now attached to his waist. He holds the longsword in his hand. William and Karen stand behind him.

WILLIAM

Total destruction. No one lives.
You understand?

ERECH

Yes.

KAREN

After this, you are one of us
for life. No one leaves.

ERECH

I understand.

WILLIAM

Then go for it.

William and Karen draw their swords, both ornate, curved sabers. Erech kicks in the door.

INT. HOODLUM'S HIDEOUT - NIGHT

Seven hoodlums sit in the main room, resting. They look up to see Erech barging in followed by William and Karen.

HOODLUM

Erech, you better not let Mr.
Yoder see-

Erech runs him through. William and Karen remain at the door. The others in the room go on the defensive. Erech decapitates another one.

One hoodlum tries to take on Erech while the remaining four run for the door, only to be stopped by William and Karen. One tries to go around William, but William cuts him down.

The one against Erech tries to trip Erech. Erech makes several swipes and misses. The hoodlum goes for Erech's arm, but Erech makes an upward swipe, cutting off one of the hoodlum's arms.

Taking advantage of the hoodlum's pained pause, Erech slices him in half, spilling his blood everywhere.

Erech attacks the remaining three near William and Karen. Mr. Yoder bursts out of his private quarters.

MR. YODER

What's going on here?

He watches as Erech slices the legs from one before removing his head, slicing another across the middle, and finishing the last hoodlum in the room by running him through.

Yoder's mouth drops open as the last hoodlum slides off Erech's sword in a heap on the ground. Yoder looks to Erech.

MR. YODER

You...you shouldn't have done
that.

ERECH

I've been waiting a long time
for this.

Erech raises his sword.

MR. YODER

I will turn you into the police.
I may be a thief, but they'll
take a murderer any day.

Mr. Yoder gets under Erech's swing and grabs his hands, stopping the blow.

MR. YODER

I'll beat you for this again.

Erech grabs Mr. Yoder by the shirt and throws him across the room, breaking the wall with his body. Mr. Yoder collapses to the floor. He struggles to his knees.

Erech walks over to him and places the edge of the sword under his neck. Yoder gasps.

ERECH

Tell me how sorry you are for
mistreating me.

MR. YODER

I'm sorry. Very sorry.

ERECH

Beg for your life.

MR. YODER

Come on. Why kill me?

ERECH

Because I want to.

Erech drags the sword across Mr. Yoder's throat, slicing it open. Blood flows freely. Mr. Yoder falls to the floor.

WILLIAM

Very good.

Erech turns to the bedroom. He charges through the door. Six more hoodlums rest in bed. They look up as he enters. Gerald and John are there.

Erech zips through the room, stabbing through the bedclothes to the first two who lie still and running through two more who try to run until he comes down to Gerald and John.

William and Karen walk to the doorway and see Erech approaching the remaining boys.

Erech looks between the two of them.

JOHN

Why are you doing this?

GERALD

We're your friends. What about loyalty and all that?

ERECH

Oh, but Gerald, we don't do loyalty, do we? We do results. Right John? Give me a big "yeah."

Their eyes grow wide and Erech swings the sword across their throats, killing them.

Behind him, clapping begins from a single person. Erech turns to find the man who changed him the night before. With a yell, Erech raises his sword and charges the man.

The man, LORINKIS, quickly draws an ornate longsword of his own and blocks Erech's blow. Lorinkis pushes Erech down with his foot and sheathes his sword.

LORINKIS

Excellent. You have the anger. Kneel before me.

Erech raises to his knees.

LORINKIS

William. His sword.

William picks Erech's sword off the floor and hands it to Lorinkis. Lorinkis holds the sword before Erech.

LORINKIS

Grab the blade.

Erech grabs the blade and squeezes. Blood drips from his closed hand.

LORINKIS

And now, Erech, you are forever pledged to the Order of Tepish. As the world has rejected you, so now shall you also reject the world, either by death or by transmutation, you pledge to carry the Tepish ideals to destroy humanity until your own death should find you. Will you do this?

ERECH

I will do it.

LORINKIS

Again.

ERECH

I will do it.

LORINKIS

Louder!

ERECH

I WILL DO IT!

LORINKIS

Yes!

Erech rises and takes his sword from Lorinkis.

LORINKIS

I think you'll work out perfectly.

EXT. STREETS OF LONDON - NIGHT

Lorinkis exits the hideout followed by Erech and then William and Karen. They disappear into the darkness of the night.

THE END