

CARNIVAL
ISSUE 1
"ANY OTHER DAY"

Script by Geoff Scaplehorn
To be drawn by Chris Ralls

Story note: page one, chronologically, is the end of the story. At this point, CARNIVAL has completed his job and has been shot and left for dead. This probably will not be an unusual state of affairs. Thankfully, he's a resilient guy, so he's not about to actually die, but his status as the former Grim Reaper means that the new ANGEL OF DEATH is unable to tell exactly when CARNIVAL'S end will come. Which means that every time CARNIVAL comes close to dying, DEATH turns up just in case.

1 PAGE ONE - (4 PANELS)

1

2 PANEL ONE

2

View of CARNIVAL slumped on the ground against a wall. He is lying in an alley: the wall behind him is brick, the concrete around him damp and dirty. His left hand rests on his stomach - he has been shot, and blood trickles through his fingers. Blood coats his legs, which are spread-eagled in front of him. He is in a bad way.

CARNIVAL'S right hand rests on the ground next to him. Underneath the hand, we can make out his revolver. As always, CARNIVAL is wearing sunglasses to cover his hollow eyes.

It is night-time. The alleyway is lit by a lamp, and CARNIVAL is not completely in the light. His face, in particular, is not illuminated; it is heavily shadowed, so that we can't make out his features.

DEATH (OP)

LOOK AT YOU.

3 PANEL TWO

3

View of CARNIVAL from a higher perspective. He is now trying to get up, his right hand (with revolver) on the ground to steady him, his knees now closer to his body as he moves his back up against the wall. His left hand, as before, is at the wound in his waist. His head is dipped so that was still can't see his face.

DEATH (OP)

SCRABBLING IN THE DIRT LIKE AN
ANIMAL.

4 PANEL THREE

4

CARNIVAL has slumped forwards. We are looking from the front and to the side, at pretty much the same vertical level as his head.

CARNIVAL

...UGH...

DEATH (OP)

HOW FAR YOU HAVE FALLEN.

5 PANEL FOUR

5

Wide view of the ANGEL OF DEATH. The shot is from a lowered angle; the same angle as CARNIVAL'S POV, although we are not looking through CARNIVAL'S eyes. Rather, we have a slightly off-to-the-side view, so that DEATH is not looking directly at us. We can see CARNIVAL'S silhouette in the foreground, on one knee now. We probably can't make out his left hand, which is still at his side, but we can certainly see his right hand: the revolver is raised.

DEATH

TELL ME, CARNIVAL...

DEATH

...IS IT FINALLY TIME FOR YOU TO DIE?

CARNIVAL (CAP)

SO, TODAY STARTED THE SAME AS ANY OTHER DAY.

6 PAGE TWO - (6 PANELS)

6

7 PANEL ONE

7

Wide view of CARNIVAL'S office, as if we'd just walked in through the door. In the background, against the opposite wall, we can see his desk, his chair on the other side of it. On his desk, we might be able to make out the following objects: a phone, a set of scales, his Spirit Level and his revolver.

The rest of the room is pretty barren. There should be a filing cabinet and a chest of drawers, both of which are dirty and largely unused. There should a bookcase, overflowing with books; some of them should be piled up on the floor. On the right wall, there is a door that leads to what passes for CARNIVAL'S living quarters.

The only decoration in the room is a tapestry poster hanging behind the desk. It has the Chinese symbol for balance on it. The poster is ripped and grubby. Cleanliness is not CARNIVAL'S strong suit; he has no time for such mortal concerns.

Near the foreground of the shot, we can see a mouse poking its head out of a hole in the wall.

The phone is ringing.

SFX (CAP)
...BRIING...BRIING...

CARNIVAL (CAP)
IT STARTED, AS THESE THINGS TEND
TO, WITH A PHONE CALL.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
THE CALLER HAD RECEIVED A LARGE
SUM OF MONEY IN THE POST...

8 PANEL TWO

8

Close-up of the mouse, now out of the hole but still near the wall. It is looking around.

In the background, which is relatively quite a distance away due to us focussing on a mouse, we can see CARNIVAL - his head cut off by the top of the panel - next to his desk, putting his hand on the phone.

The phone is still ringing.

SFX (CAP)
...BRIING...BRIING...

(CONTINUED)

8 Panel (cont.

8

CARNIVAL (CAP)
...AND HAD DECIDED TO TALK TO ME.

9 PANEL THREE

9

The mouse, which we're still focussing on, is scampering across the room.

CARNIVAL has lifted the receiver. Because of this, the phone sound effect from the previous two panels cuts off here.

SFX (CAP)
...BRIING...BRII-

CARNIVAL (CAP)
I KNEW SHE WOULD.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
PEOPLE ARE VERY PREDICTABLE, AS A
RULE.

10 PANEL FOUR

10

The mouse has now stopped, and is sniffing at the air. CARNIVAL is speaking on the phone. We should still not be able to see his face.

CARNIVAL
THE GALA.

CARNIVAL
YEAH, I KNOW IT.

CARNIVAL
I'LL BE THERE.

CARNIVAL
ENJOY TAHITI.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
OF COURSE, NOTHING IS AS EASY AS
IT SHOULD BE...

11 PANEL FIVE

11

Top down-ish view of CARNIVAL, who is by his desk but about to move away. He's looking towards the mouse. He has put the phone down, but is now checking his revolver. We can't see his face properly due to the angle.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
...SO I ALWAYS MAKE SURE I COME
PREPARED.

(CONTINUED)

11 Panel (cont.

11

CARNIVAL
I'M FINISHING THE LANDIS CASE,
BOO...

CARNIVAL
...LOOK AFTER THE OFFICE FOR ME.

12 PANEL SIX

12

The mouse is dead. This is due to THE PRINCE OF SOULS, a cat, who is curled up in the shot, one paw lazily extended, claws out. Skewered under these claws is the body of the mouse. There is blood, but not much.

In the background, we can make out CARNIVAL'S legs, walking towards us.

THE PRINCE OF SOULS
YOU SAY SO, CEE.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
SOME THINGS YOU CAN NEVER PREDICT.

13 PAGE THREE - (5 PANELS)

13

The first three panels are taken through CARNIVAL'S camera. He is sat outside the Gala Hotel, where his target - a politician called LANDIS - has been staying. In order to give it the camera look, we should put some kind of crosshair on each of the individual panels; this will also give the idea that LANDIS is a target for something more than a photograph.

LANDIS is a City lawyer. He is slightly overweight, mid-fifties, but otherwise quite plain. He is well-moneyed, and his suit should reflect this. Even so, he is not ostentatious; no flashy jewelry or bling.

The hotel is expensive - think of the archetypical Ritz. It has doormen and big, flashy cars parked outside. LANDIS' car is something akin to a Rolls Royce, which - of course - is driven for him. To get from the door to his car, LANDIS must walk down some steps.

14 PANEL ONE

14

The first panel should be a wide angle shot, taking in the entire scene. Each of the three subsequent panels should be closer in than the last; the final panel should be reasonably close in to LANDIS' head, so we can see the man CARNIVAL is tracking.

LANDIS is walking out of the front door of the hotel. The doors are held open for him by one of the doormen. He is talking to a businessman on his way down the steps. The idea is that we're not sure which one is LANDIS until the final panel, when we are centred on LANDIS' head.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
I ALMOST FELT SORRY FOR LANDIS.

15 PANEL TWO

15

This panel is slightly closer in. LANDIS walking down the steps with the businessman. They are flanked by LANDIS' bodyguards: Fed wannabes, complete with sunglasses, earpieces and chiselled jaws. LANDIS and the businessman are talking to each other; LANDIS' head should be turned towards the businessman to reflect this.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
WELL CONNECTED, WEALTHY,
SUCCESSFUL...

16 PANEL THREE

16

Close-up of LANDIS. We might be able to see the businessman too, but he's just on the edge of the shot.

(CONTINUED)

16 Panel (cont.

16

LANDIS is in the process of turning round to get in the car, so we have a pretty good view of his face.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
...IT WAS EASY GETTING HIS FRIENDS
TO BETRAY HIM.

17 PANEL FOUR

17

View of the car on which CARNIVAL is leaning. It should be modelled on a Studebaker and painted black. Like most of CARNIVAL'S possessions, it has seen better days.

CARNIVAL'S face is obscured by the oversized camera he is wielding. It's a long lens apparatus, the kind often seen in films being used by journalists and PIs. He's still taking photos of LANDIS across the street.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
A MAN LIKE THAT HAS A LONG WAY TO
FALL.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
I SHOULD KNOW.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
I WASN'T ALWAYS SCRABBLING IN THE
DIRT.

18 PANEL FIVE

18

The back of CARNIVAL'S car. It is moving now, following LANDIS. The car, already black, should be mostly silhouette, with movement lines around it (it is obviously moving away from us) and dust clouds and water splashes being thrown up by the wheels.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
I USED TO BE BETTER THAN THIS...

CARNIVAL (CAP)
...A LONG TIME AGO.

19 PAGE FOUR - (5 PANELS) 19
 20 PANEL ONE 20

CARNIVAL has reached his destination. Half of this panel is taken up by a view of LANDIS' car; we're looking at it front-on, from a lowered perspective. We can only see maybe half of the grille and a headlight. The license plate - what we can see of it - reads 'L4ND15 1'.

The car is parked in a car park, perpendicular to the front of the motel LANDIS has entered. We can see the motel in the background. It's a seedy establishment at best; the sort of place that charges by the hour. A broken neon sign reads, 'NITESIDE MOTEL'.

Midway between the motel and the car, we can see CARNIVAL'S back. He is walking towards the motel.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
 BUT THINGS CHANGE. THE WORLD
 CHANGES.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
 CAN'T TURN DOWN THE KARMA FROM A
 JOB LIKE THIS...

21 PANEL TWO 21

The front lobby. We have a front view of a skinny, old, bored-looking CLERK half asleep at the front desk. He is protected by a cracked glass screen with a grille to speak through. He is smoking a well-chewed cigar; probably not a Cuban.

In the foreground, CARNIVAL is passing by; we can make out his torso, but not his head. We might not be able to see it at the moment, but the camera is held by a strap round his neck.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
 ...NOT WHEN THERE'S A BALANCE TO
 MAINTAIN.

CARNIVAL
 I'M LOOKING FOR LANDIS.

CLERK
 ROOM 10...

CLERK
 ...DON'T MAKE A MESS, CEE.

22 PANEL THREE

22

The next three panels are basically the same view, but zooming in each time.

We're looking down a long, narrow corridor. At the other end, LANDIS' room door is on the left. His two bodyguards flank it, standing straight, their arms crossed. Despite the bleakness of the wall opposite them, they look straight ahead.

We can see CARNIVAL'S shadow on the floor ahead of us, stretching down the corridor.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
FOR ME, BALANCE IS THE BOTTOM
LINE.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
I HAVE NO DESIRE FOR MATERIAL
WEALTH...

CARNIVAL (CAP)
...SO I BRIBE WELL.

23 PANEL FOUR

23

Same corridor, same scene (more or less). We're closer to the bodyguards and the room now. One of the bodyguards is looking our way, but his pose is otherwise the same.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
THE DESK CLERK...

CARNIVAL (CAP)
...LANDIS' DRIVER...

CARNIVAL (CAP)
...HIS PERSONAL ASSISTANT...

CARNIVAL (CAP)
...THE WHORE IN HIS MOTEL ROOM.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
I KNEW LANDIS WAS COMING HERE
BEFORE HE DID.

24 PANEL FIVE

24

Again, same corridor, closer to the bodyguards. They are both now facing us. One is communicating on his radio (again, hand to the ear, talking to his wrist). The other is reaching inside his jacket, where he has a gun.

(CONTINUED)

24 Panel (cont.

24

CARNIVAL (CAP)
OF COURSE, BRIBES MAY MAKE MY
LIFE EASIER...

CARNIVAL (CAP)
...BUT THEY ONLY GO SO FAR.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
SOONER OR LATER...

25 PAGE FIVE - (3 PANELS) 25

26 PANEL ONE 26

The other side of LANDIS' door, seen from near ground level on the right side. One of the bodyguards is coming through the door - literally; the door has not been opened. He has just been thrown by CARNIVAL, and is probably already dead.

Lots of splintering wood, movement lines, the works.

SFX (CAP)

CRASH!

CARNIVAL (CAP)

...YOU'VE GOT TO GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY.

27 PANEL TWO 27

View from the other side of the room. Silhouetted in the foreground, we can see the naked form of LANDIS, lying on his back but trying to sit up in reaction to CARNIVAL'S entrance. He is held down, however, by a naked prostitute sitting on him. The key word here is 'silhouetted'! Both of them are looking towards the broken door in the background.

CARNIVAL is taking pictures through the doorframe. We can't really see him, but we can see his camera flash going off.

SFX (CAP)

SNAP SNAP SNAP

28 PANEL THREE 28

CARNIVAL has stepped through, his camera in his hands. We can see him perfectly.

CARNIVAL

HELLO, LANDIS. MY NAME IS CARNIVAL.

CARNIVAL

I HAVE A MESSAGE - YOU KNOW WHO FROM.

CARNIVAL

HE SAYS YOU SHOULD LEAVE TOWN.

CARNIVAL

I SUGGEST YOU DO.

29 PAGE SIX - (5 PANELS) 29

30 PANEL ONE 30

Front view of CARNIVAL. We can see his whole body. His hands are planted firmly in his pockets, his head is down. He is walking down a long, dark alley. It's the same alley we started with in this issue. Both walls are tall, brick, dirty. The moon is up behind him, bright and full.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
HERE'S THE DEAL...

CARNIVAL (CAP)
...THE MORTALS AREN'T ALONE.

31 PANEL TWO 31

Same view, but closer in. This time, we can only see his torso and head.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
THEY EXIST ALONGSIDE FORCES THEY
CANNOT UNDERSTAND.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
FORCES LIKE ME.

32 PANEL THREE 32

Just CARNIVAL'S head and shoulders now. His head is still dipped.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
THERE IS NO GOOD OR EVIL...

CARNIVAL (CAP)
...ONLY CHAOS AND ORDER.

33 PANEL FOUR 33

The same shot as PANEL 3, but now his head is not dipped. It is slightly turned; he has sensed something behind him. He does not look afraid; maybe a little suspicious, or wary. He knows what is about to happen, and pretty much accepts it as part of the job.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
I OFFER NO ALLEGIANCES...

CARNIVAL (CAP)
...I WORK ONLY TO KEEP A BALANCE...

34 PANEL FIVE

34

View over CARNIVAL'S shoulder. We can see the side of CARNIVAL'S head in shot, just out of focus. Behind him stands LANDIS. The man is still wearing his suit, but it is crumpled; his tie is undone, his thinning hair ruffled. He has lost everything he worked for. LANDIS holds a pistol, which he is pointing at CARNIVAL (and at us).

LANDIS
HELLO, CARNIVAL...

LANDIS
...I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU BEFORE
I LEFT.

CARNIVAL (CAP)
...ALTHOUGH SOMETIMES THE MORTALS
GET THIS CONFUSED.

35 PAGE SEVEN - (4 PANELS) 35

We're now back where we started, in the alley with DEATH and CARNIVAL.

36 PANEL ONE 36

This is a wide angle view, side-on, of CARNIVAL and DEATH in the alley. CARNIVAL has sat back down while he tells his story. DEATH still stands in front of him, looking down at the broken mortal.

CARNIVAL
WHICH PRETTY MUCH BRINGS US UP TO
DATE.

37 PANEL TWO 37

View of DEATH'S head, such as it is, and shoulders.

DEATH
THE HUMAN SHOT YOU?

38 PANEL THREE 38

Front view of CARNIVAL in all his spread-eagled glory. His lips are in a half-smile.

CARNIVAL
IN MY DEFENSE...

CARNIVAL
...I DID SHOOT HIM BACK.

39 PANEL FOUR 39

View of LANDIS' corpse, in the distance. DEATH and CARNIVAL, in the foreground, are looking at it.

DEATH
I KNOW.

DEATH
I HAVE ALREADY DISCHARGED HIS
SOUL.

40 PAGE EIGHT - (4 PANELS) 40

41 PANEL ONE 41

Front view of CARNIVAL, who is now back on one knee, trying to stand up.

CARNIVAL

HUH.

CARNIVAL

ONE MORE SOUL FOR CHAOS.

42 PANEL TWO 42

View of DEATH'S head and shoulders again.

DEATH

YOU DID NOT ANSWER ME BEFORE.

43 PANEL THREE 43

Side view of CARNIVAL and DEATH. CARNIVAL is lifting himself to his feet, using the wall for support.

CARNIVAL

YOU MEAN, AM I READY TO DIE?

CARNIVAL

I THINK I'LL LIVE.

DEATH

THEN I AM NOT NEEDED HERE.

DEATH

YOUR FATE IS, AS EVER, A MYSTERY TO ME...

DEATH

...AS YOU ARE WELL AWARE.

44 PANEL FOUR 44

In the foreground, the body of LANDIS is strewn on the ground. CARNIVAL shot him in the head, so there is a lot of blood.

In the background, DEATH watches as CARNIVAL walks away. His right hand still carries his revolver; his left is at the wound in his side.

CARNIVAL

OF COURSE I'M AWARE.

(CONTINUED)

44 Panel (cont.

44

CARNIVAL
AFTER ALL...

CARNIVAL
...I USED TO HAVE YOUR JOB.

END OF SCRIPT