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**HARLAN
ELLISON**
reunites his most
famous characters,
a boy and his dog,
for a bizarre and
shattering encounter
written especially
for PREVUE—to be
published later this
year by Ace Books
as part of the novel
BLOOD'S A ROVER.

This section of the novel *Blood's a Rover* follows immediately in time and location with the ending of the previously-published novel *Boy and His Dog*. In the preceding novel, Vic and Blood, after escaping the city of Topeka, Fellini's roverpak holds sway, have been separated when Vic follows Quilla June to the downunder city of Topeka. Finally reunited with her, Vic returns to find Blood—his link with survival—starving and wounded. Making the only decision he can, Vic kills Blood and uses the meat to save Blood's life.

World War III lasted from 25 June 1951 to the Republic of Korea was invaded by screaming North Korean troops spearheaded by something in excess of one hundred Russian-built tanks. . . . to January 1993 when the Vatican Entente Cordiale was signed between the Eastern and Western blocs. World War III, hot and cold—lasted forty-three years, and nobody seemed smart enough to realize that it was all one continuing conflict. But as the New Year dawned in 1993 it was all over; peace and tranquility reigned, la-de-da.

For two years and six months and three weeks World War IV broke out on American Independence Day, 4 July 1995. World War IV lasted five days; until the few remaining missiles had jammed in their release phase cleared various silos beneath the Painted Desert, the Urals and the Gobi Altay; but by the time it was over wasn't much of anything left to fight over for many days.

Then what was left belonged to anybody who wanted it; anybody with a taste for rubble and rubble. But it was a very different world that the survivors claimed. The "good folks" said they had built caisson cities, their sterile downunder cities in the earth. And the snaggle-toothed remnants of the aboveground were abandoned to new masters of desolation: vicious roving bands of parentless young boys. . . . and their vicious dogs.

From the History of the World, as Blood

We kept going west and I'd have tried to get Freud to cheer him up, but it doesn't pertain. Too cerebral with a fifteen-year-old boy who has done something he can't live with.

"It's mostly my fault," I said one day, a week later. He looked miserable. He was sleeping much, and when he did sleep he hummed and moaned. I didn't mind the humming as much as the moaning: an eerie, monotonous tone without apparent break for breath. How he did it I don't know. It worried me because he was losing his edge.

He didn't stop walking, and he didn't stop looking at me.

"It is not unappreciated," I said.

Answer came there none.

I hustled to keep up with him, even though he wasn't going at that trail pace he called for an hour or two at a time when we're trying to get past some long danger zone. It was doing a zombie walk, actually: without any spring, without any bounce. But it was moving, just one foot in front of the other, through mud, through ash, sometimes through blood. Just one foot in front of the other, hour after hour.