

27 strange and mysterious tales by masters of fantasy from Lord Dunsany to Ray Bradbury

Stories from the world of unreality, peopled by . . . a purple-harred angel with a decided preference for Scotch a surister black parrot kept as a household pet
a tny, bandy-legged little man with a stupendous new project
a vampire who falls in love with a beautiful young victim a straght-laced curate who is haunted by a faun a homeless boy who turns into a wild beast
a psychic consultant whose best friends are ghosts
a mountan girl who has married a tree

## T几F §OPER

# MATORAL READER 

## GROFF CONKLIN

COLLIER BOOKS
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## Confenis

Copyright Acknowledgments ..... 4
Introduction ..... 9
1 Herb Paul
The Angel with Purple Harr ..... 18
2 F Marion Crawford
For the Blood Is the Life ..... 33
3 Ruchard Hughes

- The Stranger ..... 49

4. Stephen Grendon
Mrs Manifold ..... 57
5 A E Coppard Pifingcap ..... 70
. 6 Theodore Sturgeon
Shottle Bop ..... 81
7 H H Munro ("Saka")
Gabriel-Ernest ..... 109
8 Fitz-James O'Brien
The Lost Room ..... 116
-9 James S Hart
The Trattor ..... 133
jo Charles R Tanner
Angus MacAuliffe and the Gowden Tooch ..... 148
${ }_{11} 1$ Babette Rosmond And Leonard M Lake Are You Run-Down, Tired- ..... 168
'12 May Sunclar
The Nature of the Evidence ..... 175
13 Mary Elizabeth Counselman The Tree's Wife ..... 187
14 E Nesbit
The Pavilion ..... 199
${ }^{-15}$ Edgar Pangborn Pick-up for Olympus ..... 216
$f^{16} \mathrm{H}$ F Heard
The Swap ..... 219
'17 Ray Bradbury
The Tombling Day ..... 237
18 Nigel Kneale
Minuke ..... 245
19 John Collier
Bird of Prey ..... 257
20 David H. Keller
The Thing in the Cellar ..... 266
21 Will Jenkins
Devil's Henchman ..... 273
22 M R. James
Lost Hearts ..... 288
23 Lord Dunsany
Thirteen at Table ..... 299
24 Phllip Fisher
Lights ..... 308
25 Harold Lawlor
The Silver Highway ..... 319
26 Ambrose Bierce
The Moonlt Road ..... 335
27 E. M. Forster
The Curate's Friend ..... 345

## Infroduction

If the reader of this book occasionally feels a slight shiver rippling down his spine, or if his hair stuffens suddenly and he is afraid to look over his shoulder, he need not be embarrassed about ft . For in thes he shares mankind's innermost and oldest feelings-fear of the supernatural coupled with a tormenting curiosity that leads one on to seek its clammy touch, preferably not first-hand, of course, but rather through the proxy of a well-told tale

The tale of unearthly beings and their frequent meddlings with man and nature is the oldest literary form known in the world It is deeply rooted in the beginnings of humanity and probably had its origus in the magic of early man and in the first dim glimmerings of religion But as the human being and his condition, his relations with his gods, his powers of rationalization have changed through the ages, so has his attitude toward those weird phenomena seemingly outside and above the natural order which he could not explain away Until relatively recent times even the educated man has lived in terror of supernatural manufestations, often he has taken delight in living through them to tell the tale, but not even in this day and age has he been willing to give them up The supernatural menace still stalks the steps of the more credulous segments of modern populations ready to grab them by the throat, the chully horror tale, the fantastic yarn, the spectral tweak upon a ghostly nose are still the delight of our more sophisticated contemporaries

Supernatural literature is likely to survive long after reason and scientuic knowledge penetrate all corners of the earth and the Hattian no longer believes in voodoo, the Irish peasant no longer hears the banshee, the German is qute free of the poltergest, and the backwoods Pennsylvana Dutch of "hex." There are anthropological as well as psychological reasons for the persistence of supernatural tales For one thing, they preserve racial memories from the most promtive tumes to ours, reflecting often the ways of life, the
thought-habits, and the beliefs of various penods of hustory with symbolic fidelity. For another, man even as a rational individual seems not to be quite free from sudden irratronal twinges of fear, puzzling dreams, odd previsions and vague inturtions, which will long contmue to be the inspiration for weird tales and ghostly narratives.

Even of these aberrations of the psyche are exorcised m tume by the widespread knowledge and use of psychiatry and everyone learns how to control his unconscious so that it will not play tricks, the weird yarn, the supernatural story, the tale of mexplicable horror will doubtless still remarn a constant source of entertanment It is very human to tickle one's senses with fright, particularly when one feels quite safe in his very tangible easy chair and in his own mperturbable sophistication. Besides, the supernatural need not always be homble Even in ancient times there were good farres as well as malevolent witches and a well-intentioned ghost can be found now and then at almost any period of history In the last fifty years or so the English, for example, seem to have learned to live very cozily with some of therr household haunts, at least in fiction. As for modern otherworld bengs, you would be quite charmed with some of them Read, for instance, Herb Paul's story which opens this collection and see if you are not as much in love with the Angel as is the young plot himself.

There is a curious continuity in the existence of all types of mystic beings throughout the history of supernatural literature Not one of the horrid horde of ancient lore seems to have been abandoned even in contemporary weird fictionghosts, devils, sorcerers, witches, vampires, werewolves and ghouls with whom our ancestors lived on intimate terms are still commonly encountered on the printed page, but often with a difference The modern writer sometimes looks at them with a certan amount of sympathetic insight, as does Ruchard Hughes in "The Stranger," a story in which the rich humor of the contemporary Welsh countryside brings an unexpectedly pleasant resolution to the age-old argument between devil and angel Again in James Hart's "The Trator," the supernatural being who is most generally feared and
loathed is himself not without fear, not without pity, and not without human impulse

Stories of folk magic and witching never quite die down, nor will they as long as therr legends strike a responsive chord upon our ancestral memories In this volume we have several modern literary versions of thes kund of folklore Charles Tanner's "Angus MacAulffe and the Gowden Tooch" plays a Scottssh tune on the Midas legend A. E Coppard's "Piffingcap," in which a spell is lard on the masculne population of an English nillage, achieves a solld sense of reality through its fine charactenzation and quet wit Will Jenkns' 'Devil's Henchman" and Mary Elzabeth Counselman's "The Tree's Wife" are excellent contemporary examples of the gingery, humorous weird of our own Southern hulls
"The Tree's Wife," meidentally, is perhaps a distant descendant of the classic dryads, though our tree-being a man and a mountameer-has learned a few new tricks In $A$ Fable for Critics James Russell Lowell has Phoebus Apollo say crossly, after he has "treed" Daphne by forcing her to change herself into a laurel in order to escape him-
"And for mercy's sake, how could one keep up a dialogue With a dull wooden thing that will live and will die a log?"

But our little Blue Ridge mountan wnfe has no such trouble with her husband at all, and neither has therr baby

The medieval preoccupation with the phlosopher's stone which would change common metals into gold, as well as the frantic search for the eluxir of life which also engaged the munds of many of the best Dark Ages alchemusts, are both somewhat out of fashion today Scientific progress has outdated them Transmutation of metals we already have through atomic energy The formula for physical immortalty has not been found yet, but at least we live on the average more than twice as long today as people used to a thousand years ago-an mdication that some progress toward the discovery of "life eluxars" has been made Steeped as these two medieval concepts were in magic, nevertheless they have served science well They were perhaps the first scientific
sturnggs in that era and today they have been developed far beyond their naïve beginmings both in science itself and in sclence fiction. Science fiction, however, is a separate branch of imaginative literature, outside the scope of the present volume

As in other fields, a lively scientuic curiosity in the noneteenth century led to great activity in the investigation of spiritualism and of other supernatural phenomena Case histories of ghostly appearances were avidly reported and classified by the Society for Psychical Research, founded in England in 1882, and expenments in establishing contact with the spirit world engaged the interest of considerable sections of the intellectual society of the tirne

The idea that the spirit is independent of the body and could attan higher mystic powers at will if one but knew the proper technuques helped to spur on a great deal of experimentation with hypnotism, mesmerism, and self-hypnosis The passage of a soul into another body, an ancient Eastern belief which early spread into European legends, was made interesting to Victorians by the assumption that a spirit no longer had to wat to slip into the body of an infant just being born-it could be urged to move in on any body at all, under proper conditions of hypnotic trance

Such phenomena offered endless literary possibilities for mystic horror as well as for romantic or humorous situations in fiction, and brought about a renarssance of supernatural writung, especially in England, which is well exemplified in this book Most of the important wnters of the tume were intrigued by these notions and produced excellent psychic fiction for their readers' shivery delight Some of them gave their tales an even more ternfying effect by superimposing extremely ancient elements of supernatural lore upon the commonplace surroundings and the intellectual ratronalizations of the tume Montague Rhodes James, for mstance, himself a scholarly antiquary and a Provost of Eton College achicved a pitch of almost numbing terror in his "Lost Hearts" by the use of the most horrifying ancient mysteries in the prosare setting of a gentle Britush scholar's home A more modern tale, H. F. Heard's "The Swap,"
explores the anthropological and psychological aspects of the soul-or the " I "-beng lodged in another's body The results are inconclusive, scientafically speaking, but the observatoons are fresh and amusing Some readers may find it instructive, incidentally, to compare Arthur Conan Doyle's treatment of the same theme in "The Great Keinplatz Expenment," which was written about half a century earler. The differences between the two stories are considerably more enlightening than are the simulanties

The question of the reality of ghostly manifestations, so vigorously thrown into the arena at that time, seems to have left most Britsh and American writers of the supernatural rooting for the phantom side One gets the feelng that they dutifully tried to make a gesture toward weighing the evidence, but that in the end they usually allowed the decision to be won by the unearthly beings and phenomena with which they had always been so fascinated May Sinclarr poses such a query in "The Nature of the Evidence," but, as you will see, her heart isn't really in her attempt to question the reality of her lovely and passionate young wrath

The truth of the matter is that there is no use in sacnficing a whopping good tale for the sake of pallid reality The supernatural story only comes unto its own when it refuses to be hampered by the rational and scientific princlples of our world Take a look at such grossly unscientific creatures as Sakis "Gabriel-Ernest" or the obscene horror in F Manon Crawford's "For the Blood Is the Lufe," for example They are ternfynngly real because Sakı and Crawford were consummate artists who knew how to make them so, but it would hardly do to submit them to a physical examination and we doubt that we could find a medico who would take them on.

Today the writer of supernatural tales blithely gnores the whole question He is quite aware, in this scientufic age, of the unlikelihood or the downright mpossibility of certain phenomena, but he considers it more fun to play with the impossible than with the ordinary occurrence He may even allow a character to say, "Sorry, I don't believe in this werrd stuff," but that's only to heighten the effect of the havoc
the "weird stuff" is about to wreak upon the hardened realist. And the kinds and variety of havoc a supernatural tale can offer today are considerably greater than at any yesterdays

In addition to the whole weird phantasmagoria inherited from the past, supernatural fiction now can and does play ducks and drakes with the gadgets and devices our vaunted scientific and technological advances have made available to us Consider what happens to the concept of vitamins, an important medical discovery and a leading sales item in our health-conscious civilzation, when Babette Rosmond and Leonard Lake decide to play with it in "Are You Run Down, Trred-"! And on a more mechanical plane, note how the automobile is used as a part of the supernatural apparatus in Edgar Pangborn's "Pick-up for Olympus," and also in Harold Lawlor's nostalgic "The Silver Highway" Arplanes, too, are convement for a take-off into fantasy, as you find in the previously mentioned story by Herb Paul which opens this book.

In short, the scope of the weird yarn is today limited only by the magination and menentiveness of the writer And if it is true, as it seems to us,* that supernatural writing at least here in America has enjoyed a lively renaissance in the last twenty years or so, it is due in great part to this everexpanding freedom in fantasy it offers a welcome relief from the confinement of our noisy, cluttered, and often dull and wornsome everyday lives and an escape from the restraints of our complex civilzation.

A few brief statistics about this book will perhaps give point to this contention Of the twenty-seven stories chosen, about half were published during the past twenty-odd years -and with only one or two exceptions (Nigel Kneale the most obvious one) all of these recent tales are by American writers H F Heard and Jobn Collier are Americans by adoption, of course Roughly a dozen of our stories were

[^1]written about 1900 to 1925 or 1930, most of them before or just after the First World War With only one or two exceptions these earler stories are by British writers Americans did very little supernatural writing in those years, and when they attempted it at all, they were not nearly as persuasive or polished as the ghost-loving British Today the Americans are putang up stiff competition in the spectral field of whtung

Perhaps the reader might unquire why only two stories were chosen from the vast literature of the Victorian age. Every anthologist must set himself certain limitations between the covers of a book, even a book as large as this one is A story, we decided, to appear wn this book must pass several tests (we kept a mystic score scratched in toad's blood on an ancient dragon skin) The most mportant question is, of course, is it a good story-does it keep us from turnmin out the bedside light untll we have finushed it? Does it rase the hair on the nape of our collective neck? Does it make us chuckle with its werd shenanigans and its unexpected twists? If it does any of these things, it's our meat and we welcome you to partake of 1t. Frankly, the average Victorian tale is likely to do none of these things for the modern reader Too often stones of that penod are dull and wordy, conventional in style and concept, and unexciting to the imagination

If they are really great and stll remam so in our tume, they have usually been reprinted ad infintum in other anthologies and everybody has read them so often that they end up by being a bore So that's another test we apply to a story-we find out how often and how recently it has appeared in other collections (most of the stories in this book have never been reprinted before) The tales by Bierce and O'Brien, defintely Victorian as they are, nevertheless pass our tests with high marks and we hope the reader will like them as much as we do Although they haye been anthologized, it has not been recently, if our records are accurate, and they therefore should be fresh to most of our audience

Finally, the accumulation of supernatural fiction is enormous in most languages, not counting the native legends and folklore of the peoples who have not yet gone in for short- less make a series of fascinating volumes, but we have only one book to fill and we have to draw the line somewhere This collection is, therefore, limited to British and American tales, with which of course we are most famular

Within the stated limitations we have tried to present as great a variety of supernaturalia as possible We haven't tried to classify them into sections labeled "Vampires," "Ghosts," "Devils," "Witches," etcetera, because this sort of thing seems to us to dull the fine edge of anticipation before one has sunk one's teeth into the tale Let the reader find out for humself what kind of horror lurks for him in each story Thus is not a region of literature that requires explicit and mundane signposts We belheve you will be much happier shivering your way from tale to tale without any guidance on our part.

Reality is always with us, and it is pleasant to think that one can steal away from it for a while now and then Today the achievement of such a temporary Nirvana is the major, if not the only, purpose of the supernatural story All we can hope, in conclusion, is that you will enjoy a few refreshing hours of sheer unreality in the spectral world we have assembled for you in this collection. If you do, our purpose will be served

This book was orignally edited jointly with Lucy Conklin, who died in November, 1954 It owes more than can be stated to her critical judgment and to her exquisite taste In particular, this Introduction was certanly as much her work as mine, and I want to make this memorial acknowledgment of the fact herewith I have changed none of the plural pronouns appearing in the text, since the Introduction was signed by both of us

Groff Conklın

The Supernatural Reader

## Herb Paul

## The Angel with Purple Hair

It was between the dark and the daylight, when the folks up about Fifty-fifth and Fifth are accustomed to stir about in a spint of restlessness, and she came walking into the dum-lit hush-plush of the Mabuhay Club, slim and lovely in a clonging business of gold lame, and she whipped the ghost of a smule over Craig Gordon's new dinner jacket with its fresh carnation. Then she expertly folded her wings and shd gracefully into the upholstered corner where Craig puts strangers whom he hasn't quite szzed up, and as her beautiful head went by the carnation Craig could see that her har was a pale purple and he could smell that it smelled of dew on spring roses. She smiled up at hum, gently, and then he decided to take a breath
"Good evenung . . " he said The "Madame" stuck in his throat and stayed there
"Good evening, Mr. Gordon." The voice was low as a whisper, and he thought of an Aeolian harp. He hadn't in years.

The crest of one great white wing stirred restlessly behind her shoulder and she frowned ever so slightly Gordon stepped nervously back and swallowed and remembered to take another breath He was staring at the wing in terrible fascination.
"Mr Gordon," she murmured.
He leaned forward attentively.
"Your-your-Highness?" he stammered It was the only thing to say He smuled proudly, and a little foolshly
"You have got the table on my left wing tup," she sard.
He dove to his knees, cracking bis head smartly on the table in passing One broad white tap-feather was crushed beneath the gate leg of the table. He heaved frantically at the heavy base and as it gave, the wing tip lifted, sturred for a moment, and came to rest beside the golden slupper heel. 18

Gordon straghtened up hurriedly, cracking his head again. "Damn'" he said Immediately he was sorry.
"Poor Mr Gordon!"
She touched his forehead with slim, tanned fingers He stayed there Craig Gordon was, and is, a highly intelligent man
"Thank you so much, Mr Gordon," she smiled, and then he got up slowly and straightened his jacket "Now, if you don't mind I'll not bother to order just yet You see, I'm wating for a friend He'll be here in three minutes"

The right wing stirred and the slim fingers stroked it into quescence Gordon didn't move He couldn't.
"Thank you, Mr Gordon"
"I'm so very, very sorry . ." he began, bowing and backing away
"It was nothing They do get in the way sometımes!" Again the quick smile, and again that harp in the wind

Crag Gordon turned away and walked slowly back to his post at the gilded doors George, the doorman, resplendent in maroon and gold, his nose flattened against the plate glass, was frantically waggling his white gloves Eloquently Craig frowned The nose unflattened reluctantly, but the heavy glass door swung open a crack
"Boss! Wot'n hell is that" A hoarse, reaching whisper
Gordon stepped out onto the sidewalk and eyed his henchman with pained dignity
"That," he sard, "is an angel with purple har She's wating for a friend And," he added, "she has trouble managing her wnggs so let's look sharp with thes door"
"Wit poople harr, he says!" George shook his head slowly and sadly "Look, Boss, them wings work-I seen 'em move!"
"I seen 'em too!" Gordon rephed, and he added thoughtfully, "Now you've seen everythung" Then he turned away He looked at his watch About three minutes

George touched his cap as the taxi slid in to the curb and he opened the door with an automatic and practised flourish No tip No lady Quiet-looking young fellow Sunburnt A little wrinkled for the Mabuhay George remembered hum vaguely Long and lean Worried look about him.
" 'Evenung, sr!"' he said.
"Hs"
He ducked the marquee and a big easy hand brushed the heavy glass door aside
"Hı, Mr. Gordon," he said.
Craig rarely forgot a name. A face never But after all he was a little upset. Then it came back. Jake Halloran, test plot out at Monarch Aurcraft Lot of publicity lately new jet fighter, fast like lightning but with bugs in it Giving everybody trouble Nice-looking kid, this Halloran. Looks as though he's been hitting the bottle . . a little.
"A seat at the bar, Mr. Halloran?"
"Thanks," and then to the barman, "Hı, Joe."
"Hello, Mr. Halloran, how're things?"
"Quiet. I'm resting for a week Weary in $m$ ' bones. Could do with a martini, Joe"
"Sure thing'" said Joe, who'd had one long look, and who knew when to talk and when to keep quiet "Sure thing!" Softly.

It wasn't until the martine was put lovingly before him that he saw her. It was then that he felt the tension in the place He felt it first in Joe's quick, worried glance over into the room behind, and he took a quick look himself. Grrl sitting alone. Pretty gurl, but a bad light Very pretty girl. Funny kind of a dress she had on. Very, very pretty girl'

He turned back to his martini and studied it thoughtfully He didn't pick it up. Then he spoke. Gently.
"You a philosopher, Joe?"
Joe smiled indulgently.
"Psychologst?"
"Not me, Mr. Halloran. Tive seen lots of 'em come and go, though "

Jake was persistent. Something on his mind, Joe decided. He put down the glass he was polishing and listened.
"Ever get a sudden feeling that you've been somewhere before . same place . same tume . . . same words . . . but you can't put your finger on 1t?' Jake studied his glass again
"Know what you mean," Joe said, "happens to everybody - ven me, once in a whle" Then he added, proudly,
"French call it déjà $v u$ Means 'seen before' or something But you've been here lots lately "

Jake Halloran shook his head
"That's not it, Joe," he said He shook his head again, sharply, and ran his hand across his forehead

He's plenty worried, Joe was thinking Or maybe tıght.
No, not tight. Then Joe leaned on the bar and watched
Jake Halloran turned slowly, an mech at a time, toward that dım corner where the strangers sit. His eyes were on the floor untll he faced the corner and then he rased them slowly For a long minute he sat there and then slowly he got up and walked toward her

She smiled, and the smile lit up the room She moved aside and the slim brown hand patted the seat beside her
"Hı," she whispered. There was the harp again. "I've been wating for you!"
"I know," he sald
The great white wings moved quietly in the dimness and he saw them move but he was not surprised
"I know," he repeated, and he sat down gently beside her, being careful about the wings "I knew you would be here"
"Of course you knew," she sald "I sent for you"
He nodded slowly and looked full into her eyes Then he looked at her harr and he smelled the dew from the roses
"Your hair," he began, "it's lovely"
"Helotrope," she answered, and then she added, "Pale purple"
"I remember now," he sald
"But you've never seen me before!"
"No," he answered, "but I remember"
She touched his hand gently
"You've not been very well, Jake Halloran!"
He looked from her eyes down at the table
"I'm fine," he sard and he flexed strong brown fingers
"I mean mside, Jake" Her voice was a caress "What's happened to the boy I followed to New Gumea and back? Lost something?"
"You, I guess"
She nodded thoughtfully
'I thought you were going good Expect I've left you alone
too long" Then she searched his face. "Been drinking a bit, Jake?"

He nodded slowly without answering
"Sobering up," he sard "Week of it. I've been having some trouble with that new Cheetah job Too hot Too wild. I was about to blow my top Had to relax someway"
"I know," she sald "Have one with me, Jake?"
"You drınk?" He was a little startled.
"Scotch and mulk," she smuled "Call the waiter, and hurry! We've got things to dol"

By twos and trickles the Club Mabuhay was filling Craig Gordon sadly clicked the switch that controlled the dim wall light over the strangers' corner, and diplomatically steered some of his best customers from their favorite tables He kept nervous watch over the dark corner, and so well had he controlled the lighting that he lost only two customers. In the middle of frozen daquiris Those wings! The hair, alone, the Mabuhay could handle

Jake Halloran paid his check at the bar and studied the gilt and plate glass door carefully. He looked over the chattering crowd and eased over to Craig Gordon's post by the door
"Got a back entrance, Mr Gordon?" he queried anxiously.
"Know what you mean, Mr Halloran," Gordon repled "There is a back door, but it's out through the storeroom. Narrow Boxes and stuff She'd never make itl" He peered speculatively over Halloran's shoulder
"Thanks Will you get me a cab? A big one?"
Gordon nodded nervously and eased the glass doors open a crack.
"George," he said, "get me the biggest cab you can find and look sharp on this door!"

The nose flattened ummediately, agamst the glass.
Jake Halloran stood by the table and looked down.
"Let's go," be said "We've got things to do"
She stood up The wings settled smoothly along the sheath
of gold lame A crackling slence filled the Club Mabuhay.
"Let's go," she sard
George was sharp with the door.

Behınd there was bedlam
The big taxd swung smartly into Sutton Place and pulled up near the corner of Fifty-sixth "This is it," sald Jake
"Costume party, hey Mac?" quipped the driver brightly
"I can only stay a minute, Jake," she said "Things to do"
"Gotta find you a place to stay," sard Jake "Like the Plaza?"
"I thonk I would Do you?"
"Yup know the assistant manager We'll call hum"
"Good!" she murmured "And do I meet Stewart now?"
"You know about Tom?"
"Sure!"
"Nice guy With me at Nadzab "
She smiled
"I know," she said "I know hum well I rode with him one day"
"T'm jealous"
"Not of Tom, Jake He needed me that day"
"I remember," he sald "It was the day the Betty tagged hum over Buna "
"And then you tagged the Betty!"
"You put me therel"
She smiled up at hum as they clumbed the stars
"I love you," he sald
He swung the door open wide and the wning came through and Stewart sat there with the phone in one hand and a glass in the other and he had on a parr of chartreuse shorts That was all He didn't look around but he saluted backward, over his shoulder, with the glass
"But darlong," he was saying to the phone, "I'm a changed man That mught was years ago and Im more mature nowl" And then he listened and covered the mouthprece with the back of his glass hand "H, Jake!" he sard to the room behind "How's about a short one?"
"Company, Tom," Jake sard gently
The great white wings were spread softly over the back of the divan and the smile warmed the room and the voice that belonged to the wind was speaking

[^2]Stewart spun off the chair and made a wild leap for the bathroom door And then he saw the wings He froze, and the glass in his hand dropped quietly onto the carpet.
"Hello, Tom Stewart!" she said again
He forgot the phone, and the glass and the chartreuse shorts
"I know you," he said and hus eyes were fixed and glazed "What have you done to your har?"
"Potts thought I was kıddıng," Jake explained as they rolled up to the Plaza's Fifty-ninth Street entrance "I don't know him very well, but they're nice folks here and they'll take care of you if anyone can They'll even keep French poodles " Thoughtlessly.

She was hurt He knew it immediately and contrition came flooding
"Darlung, I'm sorry!"
She touched his arm.
There was a whispered flurry from the lobby as they walked in Mr. Potts, at the desk, took one glance Precursory Practised
"Good evenng, Mr Halloran . . . and is this the . . . this the "

The wings were sturnng restlessly.
"My God!" sard Mr. Potts and he beckoned aumlessly, frantically behind him Four bellmen and two desk clerks sprang forward Only one of them made it. A boy from Brooklyn
"We'd like to go night up, Mr. Potts," said Jake. 'TVI register for her in a few minutes"

Mr Potts had not spent fifteen years on the Plaza desk for nothing To give him full credit let it be said here that he made a nice recovery At least he was making a nice recovery until the pigeons came in. Four of them. Straight through the open doorway that looked out on to the Park. They made one swift circuit of the lobby and lighted with a whistling swish beside the golden slıppers The Plaza's Fifty-minth Street lobby was suddenly filled with the gurgling croon of four of the fattest, dirthest pigeons that Central Park could
offer Pigeons in ecstasy. Round and round the floor before her they waltzed and pirouetted.

One of them fluttered joyously to her shoulder, and she leaned her lovely head toward it and from deep in her throat came a soft, melodious purring croon From the Palm Court
from the East lobby from the Oak Room white, staning faces came pouring Well-bred faces Cultured voices But all the mouths were open, and the voices were hoarse and stramed
"Please come this way, Mr Halloran, Miss . . . Miss . . . ?"
Potts made a nice recovery Shows what traning will do
The pigeons came too So did the contents of the East lobby, and the Palm Court, and the Oak Room So did a couple of querulous policemen.

The multitude approached the south elevators The pale purple head leaned caressingly toward the pigeon on the golden shoulder Again that deep-throated croon. But this tume with a nising inflection. The pigeon launched itself past Mr Potts's head The three others, waddlung behind the golden sluppers, whistled up and away and they were suddenly gone The soft brown eyes that fixed on Mr Potts were musty
"Mr Potts," she sard, "Mr Halloran and I should like to be shown to my room, and there be served a Scotch and milk Alone"
"And that's the way it is," Jake was saying "The way I figure it this new turbo jet is just a mite too potent for this little ship I've worried and worked and driven myself nearly nuts with it. It fles," he said, "and how it flies!" And he lowered his eyes to his glass "Actually, I'm afraid of 1 ."

[^3]"How will I register you downstars? Address . . . that sort of thing?"

She smiled gently.
"You do 1t, Jake. And now you must go I'll find you after a while"

Stewart was on the telephone again when Jake returned. Another girl this time He hung up mmediately.
"Now talk!" he sard
"Tomorrow I've got to go out to the factory now."
"Tonight, Jake? What for?"
"I've got to think About the Cheetah. And I've got to look at it while I'm doing it"
"Jake, it's no good! That crate has got a hex. I've begged you and threatened you and pleaded with you to give it up You're gonna knock yourself off in that crazy squirt-gun You know they can't get anyone else to fly it How's about forgetting it? I'll get you a date We'll go out and hang one on, like old tomes How's about it, Bud?"
"Can't. I've got a date with an angel, later on."
Stewart's ruddy face paled a little
"Where is she now?" he demanded. "And who and what is she?"

Jake looked long at his friend
"She's an angel," he said, "with purple hair, and she's in Room 643 at the Plaza Her name is Bess"
"She's going to stay?" Tom queried sharply
"She can't," Jake's vorce was low, "she's gotta go back. She ran away She hasn't got a green pass."
"Back where?" The sharp questrion rang off the walls and the celing
"You know where"
The Monarch Arcraft factory lay dark and empty Down past the darkened tool rooms, on out past sub-assembly where the slim hulls of the Cheetahs lay, row on row, on through final assembly to the flught test dock, Jake and the nught chref walked, their footsteps echoing from the high metal walls There, in the ghostly light of the night lamps crouched the Cheetah Tiny, she was, and wicked as the wind
but there was a soft sheen on her swept-back silver wings and Jake reached out and touched her, ran his hand along her fianks and caressed the sleck nose.
"You can go back to your phone now, Mac," he sard. "I want to crawl around her a bit. Think I've got an idea or two"
"Okay, Mr Halloran," the guard rephed "If you need anything, use the phone over there in Dispatch," and be walked off into the murky hangar, his heels echoing hollowly on the concrete

And there they were alone Jake Halloran. The Chectah
Gently he eased back the slum plexiglass batch and climbed up into the tiny cockpit He settled back and toed the rudder pedals and touched the familar stub of a control stick With a shudder he remembered the shocking whip of that stick as she broke Mach 9 five days ago Oh , she was fast, the bitch If she could just be tamed He knew, suddenly, the remorse of a quitter He had asked for this rest. Sure, he had wanted to thunk. But he had been afraid Tred But here, agam, was that job to do He couldn't quit now. He knew the design was sound He hnew the loving care that had shaped and formed those sleekly beautiful lines He knew the tremendous surging power of the new jet engue there behind his head He knew this ship But where did she get that mean streak? That mstinct to kill?

He sat bolt upright in the cockpit Off there in the shadows something had sturred. It moved agan Toward hm, and the Chectah And then she moved under the light and she was soft and warm in something grey and flowing and her beautiful hair caught the soft glow of the night lamp

Jake let his head sink back aganst the shock pad
"I love you," he sald And he meant it.
Without a sound or a word she walked to the Cheetah's side Her soft chin came just to the cockpit coaming, and Jake stretched out a hand to touch her cheek.

She smiled
"I love you, Bess," he sard again.
She looked at him gravely
"I know you do," she sard.
"You know all about me, don't you?"
She nodded
"So what do I do now?" His voice was sharp with desperaton

The lovely head leaned down to the satiny skin of the Cheetah
"I don't know, Jake I'll have to find out"
"Find out?" Again the sharpness of despar was in his voice "Find out! From whom?"

The head did not lift, and the voice was a murmur.
"You know perfectly well from whom"
"Bess . . darling . listen to me . . ." But his eager, earnest voice traled off and the shadows swallowed the echo

There was a long silence Somewhere high up in the ceiling beams a bird twittered nervously, and the Cheetah's elevators clanged softly as Jake let go the control stick and clmbed wearily out of the cockpit
"Tomorrow we'll talk about it," she said "Right now we've got things to do Any ideas yet?"
"Nope"
"How does she go, Jake? 'Smatter with her?"
"High speed stall . . whips to the left Comes up on some speed . high mach numbers . . like a muneteen-ten-model coal truck with sold tures on cobblestones."

## "How d'you figure it?"

He thought for a minute.
'Bess, I don't know/ The only thing I'm sure about is that she's trying to kull somebody Mel I've babied thus mean little b-thang-and petted it through four major design changes She's basically all night. I know that I've tried everything, except long spins. I haven't spun her yet. Scared to"
"Jake, do you remember the old P-40?"
"Sure I do I've got a lot of time in 'em Why?"
"Do you remember that wing root stall-just off the run-way-whip to the left?"
"Sure I remember it But they licked that in a hurry It was just one of those unpredictable thungs Thungs happen with all new models"
"How did they lick 1 t , Jake?"
"Why ." he was deep in thought now "They put a new fillet on the wing root She flew luke an angel after that.

Heyl" he sard "You mean . you mean?" He studied the Cheetah's beautufully farred wing root with eyes that were alight with eagerness

Then, "I know what you mean," he sald quetly "Where's that phone?"

He talked earnestly and long with Rogers, the design engineer Yes, the model was still available for wind tunnel tests They could, of course, if he insisted, run some wing-root stall tests tomorrow In ten munutes Rogers was enthusiastic too First thung tomorrow Would he be avalable for mflight checks on the prototype?
Jake would be available
He dashed out of the darkened Dispatch office and took her in his arms The wings were a little in the way but she stretched them toward the high cellng and her lips were warm and they tasted of spring roses
"I love you, Bess!" he said agan
"I know," and there was a deep concern in her voice
"Let's not talk about it tomorrow, Bess!" he pleaded "Let's talk about it now"
"All right," she said. "But I must talk first."
He listened gravely
"The world," she said, "is very large, and you, in spite of what you are about to say, have not seen 1 , nor do you know much of the joy and happiness which can be found here . . . ShhhP'
He had been about to interrupt.
"You are very young-twenty-seven years and four months old you are You are capable and strong and intelligent and . and charming There should be none of this bitterness in your heart. The world is not right, but you can help to make it right. Thus little ship, for example, is not right. Tomorrow you will make it right In the years to come you will help to make others right You will fall in love and marry $\ddot{\text { a }}$ a mortal You will have a fine, full life I shall see to that. Personally
"But," she continued, "you have seen fit to fall in love with me, because you are " she hesitated, "because you are grateful, I suppose, and because you think me attractive . . . and because, subconsciously, you wish to escape from
this world and what you choose to consider your troubles. They are my troubles-you are my trouble"

She looked him full in the eyes
"You've given me a lot of trouble, Jake Halloran . . . and now . . now you're giving me more You see . . . you see . . ." and the mist was in her eyes "I love you too'
"That," she continued firmly, "is not permitted"
And suddenly she was gone into the shadows
Stewart was not in the apartment when he returned to Sutton Place and the loneliness closed in like the cold fog that drifts in from the Sound He wandered amlessly about the apartment for a while, found a half empty bottle of Scotch in the kitchen, put it back, and finally, a while after midnught, called Room 643 at the Plaza. There was no answer

He called agan at two in the morning Still no answer. Stewart came in at four, and finally, just as the sky out over the river began to fade into grey, be fell asleep At eightthurty the telephone rang, and it was Rogers He had already made one run in the tunnel It was the wing root It was the wing root beyond question How about an in-flight test on the prototype at eleven? High speed turning stalls? Jake said that he would be there at ten-thurty, and hung up Then he called 643 at the Plaza There was no answer.

He could hardly have expected her to answer. She was standing there as he put the telephone slowly back on its cradle She was standing there looking into his eyes as he turned
"Hul" she said, softly. "Goung flyng?"
For a long, long tome he looked into her eyes and then they went a $1_{1 \text { ttle misty }}$ again and she dropped them and she was intently examuing the $t_{1 p}$ of a silver slipper that was digging into the carpet
"I love you," he sard.
"I know, Jake I know"
"Stay here with me!" he said, and there was urgency and loneliness and heartache in his voice

She raised her eyes to his own and the mist was still there
"I can't," she whispered "I love you . . . and I can't," and then sbe was suddenly in his arms.

At thurty thousand he leveled the Cheetah out of its thrusting surging climb and the sound of the slipstream rose in pitch and volume to the old familar, terrifying whine The roaring of the jet behind him was lost to his ears Only the slipstream. The control stick stiffened and bucked in his hand That was familiar too But today it didn't matter This business was about licked Three thght turns left Three right. About elght G's Then he would have it Then Rogers could go ahead on that new wing root.

He called back to the tower, somewhere back in the hazy spit of land that was Long Island "Thurty thousand . . outside arr minus one five . Mach seven . slight auleron ripples buffeting her elevators again " and as he swept into the first turn the $G$ suit swelled and bit into his thighs and his armpits "Seven and a half" And then he shook his head to clear his eyes and squeezed her to the right, pulling her tughter and tighter and a grey-black curtan streaked with red closed down and he could barely read the accelerometer. "Nine, " and then he nosed her down and the pitch of her slipstream whine screamed into a hugh soprano, now left .. and then she whipped . and he had it. Had it! Cold, dead and certan And he called the tower and Rogers who was waiting there took the mike for a minute and then went scuttling down to the big drawing board in his office
He didn't tell the tower he was going to spin 1 t. Long, to the left. Four turns He didn't even know he was going to do it himself But he did Something told him to Rogers would Want to know And besides, it was his day, his hour, and it was the least he could do The least he could do
The Cheetah arched up and out and as the high-pitched whine faded to a whisper he called in.

The tower called the front office on the interphone Almost before the Cheetah shuddered off into her whipping, dizzy spiral they were pourng out onto the flight ramp, dozens and hundreds of them who loved Jake Halloran and the Cheetah They saw the speck come whistlung down and they knew, most of them, that it would never come out. Jake Halloran had known it after the first two turns

He didn't try to get out with his 'chute It was probably because he knew, somehow, that that was the way it had to be

It was because he knew, suddenly, why he had had to spm the ship, and because be knew, now, why it wouldn't come out. It was the only thing that she could have done He knew that too

He called the tower again. "Nineteen thousand . . . seven counted turns . . . no aileron response She spins flat-four tries at recovery-tell Rogers she needs a tal 'chute" And there was no answer. ". . . Tower-do you read?" And the tower knew that Halloran was riding her in.

The purple head was bowed in her hands and the vorce that belonged to the wind was a desperate whisper "Is thus what you want, Jake-is this what you will have? Get out now, Jake Quickly Go out the left side. go out on the inside of the spin, Jake-you know how . . quickly . . quickly I'll watch over you, darling' I'll show you . Quickly, my darling! Now!"-And Jake Halloran heard, and he smiled and the Cheetah struck.

## F. Marion Crawford

## For the Blood Is the life

We had dined at sunset on the broad roof of the old tower, because it was cooler there during the great heat of summer Besides, the little hitchen was built at one corner of the great square platform, which made it more convenient than if the dishes had to be carried down the steep stone steps, brohen in places and everywhere worn with age The tower was one of those built all down the west coast of Calabria by the Emiperor Charles V early in the sisteenth century, to keep off the Barbary prates, when the unbehevers were allhed with Francis I aganst the Emperor and the Church They have gone to rum, a few stll stand intact, and mune is one of the largest How it came into my possession ten years ago, and why I spend a part of each year in it, are matters which do not concern this tale The tower stands in one of the lonelest spots in Southern Italy, at the extremity of a curving rocky promontory, which forms a small but safe natural harbour at the southern extremity of the Gulf of Policastro, and just north of Cape Scalea, the burthplace of Judas Iscar10t, according to the old local legend The tower stands alone on this hooked spur of the rock, and there is not a house to be seen within three mules of it When I go there I take a couple of sallors, one of whom is a far cook, and when I am away ${ }^{3 t}$ is in charge of a gnome-like little being who was once a miner and who attached himself to me long ago

My friend, who sometimes visits me in my summer solrtude, is an artist by profession, a Scandinavian by birth, and a cosmopolitan by force of circumstances We had dined at sunset, the sunset glow had reddened and faded again, and the evening purple steeped the vast chain of the mountams that embrace the deep gulf to eastward and rear themselves higher and higher toward the south It was hot, and we sat at the landward corner of the platform, waiting for the night breeze to come down from the lower hulls The colour sank
out of the air, there was a little interval of deep-grey twilight, and a lamp sent a yellow streak from the open door of the kitchen, where the men were getting their supper

Then the moon rose suddenly above the crest of the promontory, flooding the platform and lighting up every little spur of rock and knoll of grass below us, down to the edge of the motionless water My friend lighted his pipe and sat looking at a spot on the hillside I knew that he was looking at it, and for a long time past I had wondered whether he would ever see anything there that would fix his attention I knew that spot well It was clear that he was interested at last, though it was a long time before he spoke Like most panters, he trusts to his own eyesight, as a lion trusts his strength and a stag his speed, and he is always disturbed when he cannot reconcile what he sees with what he believes that he ought to see
"It's strange," he said. "Do you see that little mound just on this side of the boulder?"
"Yes," I sard, and I guessed what was coming.
"It looks like a grave," observed Holger.
"Very true It does look like a grave"
"Yes," continued my friend, his eyes still fixed on the spot. "But the strange thing is that I see the body lying on the top of it. Of course," continued Holger, turning his head on one side as artists do, "it must be an effect of light In the first place, it is not a grave at all Secondly, if it were, the body would be inside and not outside Therefore, 1 t's an effect of the moonlight. Don't you see it?"
"Perfectly, I always see it on moonlight nights"
"It doesn't seem to interest you much," sald Holger.
"On the contrary, it does interest me, though I am used to it You're not so far wrong, either The mound is really a grave"
"Nonsense!" cried Holger, incredulously "I suppose you'll tell me what I see lying on it is really a corpse!"
'No," I answered, "ti's not I know, because I have taken the trouble to go down and see "
"Then what is it?" asked Holger.
"It's nothing"
"You mean that it's an effect of light, I suppose?"
"Perhaps it is But the inexplicable part of the matter is that it makes no difference whether the moon is rising or setting, or wasung or wanung If there's any moonlight at all, from east or west or overhead, so long as it shines on the grave you can see the outhne of the body on top"

Holger strred up his pipe with the point of his knife, and then used his finger for a stopper When the tobacco burned well he rose from his char
"If you don't mind," he said, "I'll go down and take a look at it."

He left me, crossed the roof, and disappeared down the dark steps I did not move, but sat looking down until he came out of the tower below I heard him humming an old Darash song as he crossed the open space in the bright moonlight, going straight to the mysterious mound When he was ten paces from it, Holger stopped short, made two steps forward, and then three or four backward, and then stopped again I know what that meant. He had reached the spot where the Tlung ceased to be visible-where, as he would have sald, the effect of light changed

Then he went on till he reached the mound and stood upon it I could see the Thing still, but it was no longer lying down, it was on its knees now, winding its white arms round Holger's body and looking $u_{p}$ into his face A cool breeze stirred my harr at that moment, as the mght wind began to come down from the hulls, but it felt like a breath from another world

The Thing seemed to be trying to clumb to its feet, helping itself up by Holger's body while he stood upright, quite unconscious of it and apparently looking toward the tower, which is very picturesque when the moonlight falls upon it on that side
"Come along!" I shouted "Don't stay there all might""
It seemed to me that he moved reluctantly as he stepped from the mound, or else with difficulty That was 1 t. The Thing's arms were still round his wast, but its feet could not leave the grave As he came slowly forward it was drawn and lengthened like a wreath of mist, thun and white, tull I saw distinctly that Holger shook humself, as a man does who feels a chill At the same unstant a little wall of pain came to me on
the breeze-it might have been the cry of the small owl that lives among the rocks-and the misty presence floated swiftly back from Holger's advancing figure and lay once more at its length upon the mound

Again I felt the cool breeze in my hair, and this tume an icy thrill of dread ran down my spine I remembered very well that I had once gone down there alone in the moonlight; that presently, being near, I had seen nothing, that, like Holger, I had gone and had stood upon the mound, and I remembered how, when I came back, sure that there was nothing there, I had felt the sudden conviction that there was something after all if I would only look behind me I remembered the strong temptation to look back, a temptation I had resisted as unworthy of a man of sense, untu, to get rid of it, I had shaken myself just as Holger dıd

And now I knew that those white, misty arms had been round me too, I knew it in a flash, and I shuddered as I remembered that I had heard the night owl then too But it had not been the night owl It was the cry of the Thing

I refilled my pipe and poured out a cup of strong southern wine, in less than a minute Holger was seated beside me again.
"Of course there's nothing there," he sard, "but it's creepy, all the same Do you know, when I was coming back I was so sure that there was something behind me that I wanted to turn round and look? It was an effort not to"

He laughed a little, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and poured himself out some wine For a while netther of us spoke, and the moon rose higher, and we both looked at the Thing that lay on the mound
"You might make a story about that," said Holger after a long time
"There is one," I answered. "If you're not sleepy, I'll tell it to you"
"Go ahead," said Holger, who likes stories.
Old Alario was dyng up there in the village behind the hill You remember him, I have no doubt They say that he made his money by selling sham jewellery in South Africa, and escaped with his gains when he was found out. Like all those
fellows, if they bring anything back with them, he at once set to work to enlarge his house, and as there are no masons here, he sent all the way to Paola for two workmen They were a rough-looking par of scoundrels-a Neapolitan who had lost one eye and a Sicilian with an old scar half an unch deep across his left cheek I often saw them, for on Sundays they used to come down here and fish off the rocks When Alario caught the fever that killed hum the masons were still at work As he had agreed that part of therr pay should be ther board and lodgng, he made them sleep in the house His wife was dead, and he had an only son called Angelo, who was a much better sort than himself Angelo was to marry the daughter of the richest man in the village, and, strange to say, though their marrage was arranged by their parents, the young people were said to be in love with each other

For that matter, the whole village was in love with Angelo, and among the rest a wild, good-looking creature called Cristona, who was more like a gipsy than any gurl I ever saw about here She had very red lips and very black eyes, she was built like a greyhound, and had the tongue of the devil But Angelo did not care a straw for her He was rather a simple-minded fellow, quite different from his old scoundrel of a father, and under what I should call normal circumstances I really believe that he would never have looked at any girl except the mice plump little creature, with a fat dowry, whom his father meant hum to marry. But things turned up which were nether normal nor natural

On the other hand, a very handsome young shepherd from the hills above Maratea was in love with Cristina, who seems to have been quite indifferent to him Cristina had no regular means of subsistence, but she was a good grl and willing to do any work or go on errands to any distance for the sake of a loaf of bread or a mess of beans, and permission to sleep under cover She was especially glad when she could get something to do about the house of Angelo's father There is no doctor in the village, and when the neighbours saw that old Alarıo was dying they sent Cristına to Scalea to fetch one That was late in the afternoon, and if they had waited so long, it was because the dymg miser refused to allow any
such extravagance while he was able to speak But whule Cristina was gone matters grew rapidly worse, the priest was brought to the bedside, and when he had done what he could he gave it as his opinon to the bystanders that the old man was dead, and left the house.

You know these people They have a physical horror of death Until the priest spoke, the room had been full of people The words were hardly out of his mouth before it was empty It was night now. They hurned down the dark steps and out into the street.

Angelo, as I have said, was away, Cristina had not come back-the simple woman-servant who bad nursed the stck man fled with the rest, and the body was left alone on the fluckering light of the earthen oul lamp

Five munutes later two men looked in cautiously and crept forward toward the bed They were the one-eyed Neapohtan mason and hus Sicilian companion They knew what they wanted In a moment they had dragged from under the bed a small but heavy mron-bound box, and long before any one thought of coming back to the dead man they bad left the house and the village under cover of the darkness It was easy enough, for Alario's house is the last toward the gorge which leads down here, and the thieves merely went out by the back door, got over the stone wall, and had nothing to risk after that except the possibility of meeting some belated countryman, which was very small indeed, since few of the people use that path. They had a mattock and shovel, and they made their way here without accident.

I am telling you this story as it must have happened, for, of course, there were no witnesses to this part of it The men brought the bo down by the gorge, intending to bury it untul they should be able to come back and tahe it away in a boat. They must have been clever enough to guess that some of the moncs sould be in paper notes, for they would otherwise have buried it on the beach in the wet sand, where $n$ would have heen much safer But the paper would have rotted of they had been obliged to leave it there long, so they dug thers hole down there, close to that boulder Yes, just where the mound is nos

Critina did not find the doctor in Scalea, for he had been
sent for from a place up the valley, halfway to San Domenico If she had found hum, he would have come on his mule by the upper road, which is smoother but much longer But Cristuna took the short cut by the rocks, which passes about fifty feet above the mound, and goes round that corner The men were digging when she passed, and she heard them at work. It would not have been like her to go by without finding out what the noise was, for she was never afraid of anything in her lfe, and, besides, the fishermen sometumes come ashore here at nught to get a stone for an anchor or to gather sticks to make a little fire The nught was dark, and Cristina probably came close to the two men before she could see what they were doung. She knew them, of course, and they knew her, and understood instantly that they were in her power There was only one thung to be done for their safety, and they did it They knocked her on the head, they dug the hole deep, and they buried her quickly with the iron-bound chest. They must have understood that their only chance of escaping suspicion lay in getting back to the village before their absence was noticed, for they returned immediately, and were found half an hour later gossiping quetly with the man who was making Alario's coffin He was a crony of theirs, and had been working at the repars in the old man's house So far as I have been able to make out, the only persons who were supposed to know where Alanio kept his treasure were Angelo and the one woman-servant I have mentioned Angelo was away, it was the woman who discovered the theft.

It is easy enough to understand why no one else knew where the money was The old man kept his door locked and the key in his pocket when he was out, and did not let the woman enter to clean the place unless he was there himself The whole village knew that he had money somewhere, however, and the masons had probably discovered the whereabouts of the chest by clumbing in at the window in his absence If the old man had not been delirious untul he lost consciousness, he would have been in frightful agony of mind for his niches The fathful woman-servant forgot their existence only for a few moments when she fled with the rest, overcome by the horror of death Twenty minutes had not passed before she returned with the two hideous old hags who are always called
in to prepare the dead for burial Even then she had not at first the courage to go near the bed with them, but she made a pretence of dropping something, went down on her knees as if to find $1 t$, and looked under the bedstead The walls of the room were newly whitewashed down to the floor, and she saw at a glance that the chest was gone It had been there in the afternoon, it had therefore been stolen in the short interval sunce she had left the room

There are no carabineers stationed in the village, there is not so much as a municipal watchman, for there is no municipality There never was such a place, I believe Scalea is supposed to look after it in some mysterious way, and it takes a couple of hours to get anybody from there As the old woman had lived in the village all her life, it did not even occur to her to apply to any civil authority for help She simply set up a howl and ran through the village in the dark, screaming out that her dead master's house had been robbed Many of the people looked out, but at first no one seemed inclined to help her Most of them, judging her by themselves, whispered to each other that she had probably stolen the money herself The first man to move was the father of the girl whom Angelo was to marry, having collected his household, all of whom felt a personal interest in the wealth which was to have come into the family, he declared it to be his opinion that the chest had been stolen by the two journeyman masons who lodged in the house He headed a search for them, which naturally began in Alario's house and ended in the carpenter's workshop, where the thieves were found discussing a measure of wine with the carpenter over the half-finshed coffin, by the light of one earthen lamp filled with oil and tallow The search party at once accused the delinquents of the crime, and threatened to lock them up in the cellar tull the carabineers could be fetched from Scalea The two men looked at each other for one moment, and then without the slightest hesitation they put out the single light, seized the unfinushed coffin between them, and using it as a sort of battering ram, dashed upon their assanlants in the dark In a few moments they were beyond pursuit.

That is the end of the first part of the story The treasure had disappeared, and as no trace of it could be found the people naturally supposed that the theves had succeeded in carrying it off The old man was buried, and when Angelo came back at last he had to borrow money to pay for the miserable funeral, and had some difficulty in doing so He hardly needed to be told that in losing his inheritance he had lost his bride In this part of the world marriages are made on strictly business principles, and if the promised cash is not forthcoming on the appointed day the bride or the bridegroom whose parents have failed to produce it may as well take themselves off, for there will be no wedding Poor Angelo knew that well enough His father had been possessed of hardly any land, and now that the hard cash which he had brought from South America was gone, there was nothing left but debts for the building materials that were to have been used for enlarging and improving the old house Angelo was beggared, and the nuce plump little creature who was to have been his turned up her nose at him in the most approved fash10n. As for Cristma, it was several days before she was mussed, for no one remembered that she had been sent to Scalea for the doctor, who had never come She often disappeared in the same way for days together, when she could find a little work here and there at the distant farms among the hulls But when she did not come back at all, people began to wonder, and at last made up their munds that she had connived with the masons and had escaped with them.

I paused and emptied my glass
"That sort of thing could not happen anywhere else," observed Holger, filling his everlastung pipe agan "It is wonderful what a natural charm there is about murder and sudden death in a romantic country like this Deeds that would be sumply brutal and disgusting anywhere else become dramatic and mysterious because this is Italy and we are living in a genume tower of Charles V built against genuine Barbary pirates "
"There's something in that," I admutted Holger is the most romantic man in the world inside of humself, but he always thinks it necessary to explain why he feels anything
"I suppose they found the poor grl's body with the box," he said presently
"As it seems to interest you," I answered, "I'll tell you the rest of the story"

The moon had risen high by this time, the outlune of the Thing on the mound was clearer to our eyes than before.

The village very soon settled down to its small, dull life No one missed old Alario, who had been away so much on his voyages to South America that he had never been a famular figure in his native place Angelo lived in the half-finished house, and because he had no money to pay the old womanservant she would not stay with hum, but once in a long time she would come and wash a shirt for him for old acquantance's sake Besides the house, he had unherited a small patch of ground at some distance from the village, he tried to cultuvate 1 , but he had no heart in the work, for he knew he could never pay the taxes on it and on the house, which would certamly be confiscated by the Government, or seized for the debt of the bulding material, which the man who bad suppled it refused to take back

Angelo was very unhappy So long as his father had been alive and rich, every girl in the village bad been in love with hum, but that was all changed now. It had been pleasant to be admired and courted, and invited to drink wine by fathers who had grls to marry. It was hard to be stared at coldly, and sometimes laughed at because he had been robbed of his wheritance He cooked his miserable meals for himself, and from being sad became melancholy and morose.

At twilight, when the day's work was done, instead of hanging about in the open space before the church with young fellows of his own age, he took to wandering in lonely places on the outskrts of the village tull it was quite dark. Then he slunk home and went to bed to save the expense of a light. But in those lonely twillght hours he began to have strange waking dreams He was not always alone, for often when he sat on the stump of a tree, where the narrow path turns down the gorge, he was sure that a woman came up nosselessly over the rough stones, as if her feet were bare, and she stood under a clump of chestnut trees only half a dozen yards down the path, and beckoned to hum without speaking Though she was in the shadow he knew that her lips were red, and that
when they parted a little and smiled at him she showed two small sharp teeth He knew this at first rather than saw it, and he knew that it was Cristina, and that she was dead Yet he was not afraid, he only wondered whether it was a dream, for he thought that if he had been awake he should have been frightened

Besides, the dead woman had red lips, and that could only happen in a dream Whenever he went near the gorge after sunset she was already there wating for him, or else she very soon appeared, and he began to be sure that she came a little nearer to him every day At first he had only been sure of her blood-red mouth, but now each feature grew distinct, and the pale face looked at hum with deep and hungry eyes

It was the eyes that grew dım Little by little he came to know that some day the dream would not end when he turned away to go home, but would lead hum down the gorge out of which the vision rose She was nearer now when she beckoned to hum Her cheeks were not livid like those of the dead, but pale with starvation, with the funous and unappeased physical hunger of her eyes that devoured hum They feasted on his soul and cast a spell over hum, and at last they were close to his own and held hum. He could not tell whether her breath was as hot as fire or as cold as ice, he could not tell whether her red lips burned his or froze them, or whether her five fingers on his wnst seared scorching scars or bit his flesh like frost, he could not tell whether he was awake or asleep, whether she was alive or dead, but he knew that she loved him, she alone of all creatures, earthly or unearthly, and her spell had power over him.

When the moon rose high that nught the shadow of that Thing was not alone down there upon the mound

Angelo awoke in the cool dawn, drenched with dew and chilled through flesh, and blood, and bone He opened his eyes to the faint grey light, and saw the stars stall shining overhead He was very weak, and his heart was beating so slowly that he was almost like a man fanting Slowly he turned his rhead on the mound, as on a pillow, but the other face was not there Fear seized hum suddenly, a fear unspeakable and unknown, he sprang to his feet and fled up the gorge, and he never looked behind hum until he reached the door of the
house on the outskirts of the village Drearly he went to his work that day, and wearily the hours dragged themselves after the sun, till at last it touched the sea and sank, and the great sharp hulls above Maratea turned purple agamst the dove-coloured eastern sky

Angelo shouldered his heavy hoe and left the field He felt less tired now than in the morning when he had begun to work, but he promised himself that he would go home without lingering by the gorge, and eat the best supper he could get himself, and sleep all night in his bed like a Christian man Not again would he be tempted down the narrow way by a shadow with red lips and icy breath; not again would he dream that dream of terror and delight He was near the village now, it was half an hour snce the sun had set, and the cracked church bell sent little discordant echoes across the rocks and ravines to tell all good people that the day was done Angelo stood stll a moment where the path forked, where it led toward the village on the left, and down to the gorge on the right, where a clump of chestnut trees overhung the narrow way He stood still a minute, lifting his battered hat from his head and gazing at the fast-fading sea westward, and his lips moved as he silently repeated the familar evening prayer His lips moved, but the words that followed them in his brain lost their meaning and turned into others, and ended in a name that he spoke aloud-Cristma! With the name, the tension of his will relaxed suddenly, reality went out and the dream took him agam, and bore him on swiftly and surely like a man walking in his sleep, down, down, by the steep path in the gathering darkness And as she glded beside him, Cristina whispered strange, sweet things in his ear, which somehow, if he had been awake, he knew that he could not quite have understood, but now they were the most wonderful words he had ever heard in his life And she kissed him also, but not upon his mouth He felt her sharp kisses upon his white throat, and he knew that her lips were red So the wnld dream sped on through twinght and darkness and moonrise, and all the glory of the summider"s night But in the chully dawn he lay as one half dead upon the mound down there, recalling and not recalling, drained of his blood, yet strangely longing to give those red lips more Then
came the fear, the awful nameless panic, the mortal horror that guards the confines of the world we see not, nether know of as we know of other things, but which we feel when its icy chill freezes our bones and stirs our hair with the touch of a ghostly hand Once more Angelo sprang from the mound and fled up the gorge in the breaking day, but his step was less sure this tume, and he panted for breath as he ran, and when he came to the bright spring of water that rises halfway up the hillside, he dropped upon his knees and hands and plunged his whole face in and drank as he had never drunk beforefor it was the thirst of the wounded man who has lan bleeding all nught long upon the battle-field

She had him fast now, and he could not escape her, but would come to her every evenung at dusk until she had dramed him of his last drop of blood It was in vain that when the day was done he tried to take another turning and to go home by a path that did not lead near the gorge It was in vain that he made promises to himself each morning at dawn when he clmbed the lonely way up from the shore to the village It was all in vain, for when the sun sank burning into the sea, and the coolness of the evenung stole out as from a hidingplace to delight the weary world, his feet turned toward the old way, and she was wating for him in the shadow under the chestnut trees, and then all happened as before, and she fell to kissing his white throat even as she flitted lightly down the way, winding one arm about him And as his blood faled, she grew more hungry and more thirsty every day, and every day when he awoke in the early dawn it was harder to rouse himself to the effort of climbing the steep path to the village, and when he went to his work his feet dragged panfully, and there was hardly strength in his arms to wield the heavy hoe He scarcely spoke to any one now, but the people sad he was "consuming himself" for love of the girl he was to have married when he lost his mheritance, and they laughed heartily at the thought, for this is not a very romantic country At this time, Antomo, the man who stays here to look after the tower, returned from a visit to his people, who live near Salerno He had been away all the time since before Alario's death and knew nothing of what had happened He has told me that he came back late in the afternoon and shut himself up in the
tower to eat and sleep, for he was very tired It was past midnight when he awoke, and when he looked out the wanng moon was rising over the shoulder of the hill He looked out toward the mound, and he saw something, and he did not sleep again that night When he went out again in the morning it was broad daylight, and there was nothing to be seen on the mound but loose stones and driven sand Yet be did not go very near it, he went straight up the path to the village and directly to the house of the old priest.
"I have seen an evil thing this night," he said, "I have seen how the dead drink the blood of the living And the blood is the lfe"
"Tell me what you have seen," sard the priest in reply
Antonio told hum everything he had seen
"You must bring your book and your holy water to-might," he added "I will be here before sunset to go down with you, and if it pleases your reverence to sup with me while we wait, I will make ready."
"I will come," the priest answered, "for I have read in old books of these strange beings which are nether quick nor dead, and which lie ever fresh in therr graves, stealing out m the dusk to taste life and blood "

Antomo cannot read, but he was glad to see that the priest understood the business, for, of course, the books must have mostructed hum as to the best means of quieting the halfliving Thing for ever.

So Antonio went away to his work, which consists largely in sittung on the shady side of the tower, when he is not perched upon a rock with a fishing-line catching nothing But on that day he went twice to look at the mound in the bright sunlight, and he searched round and round it for some hole through which the being might get in and out, but he found none When the sun began to sink and the arr was cooler in the shadows, he went up to fetch the old priest, carrying a little wicker basket with him; and in this they placed a bottle of holy water, and the basin, and sprnkler, and the stole which the prest would need, and they came down and wated in the door of the tower till it should be dark. But while the light stll longered very grey and faint, they saw something monng, just there, two figures, a man's that
walked, and a woman's that flitted beside him, and whle her head lay on his shoulder she kissed his throat The priest has told me that, too, and that his teeth chattered and he grasped Antono's arm The vision passed and disappeared into the shadow Then Antonio got the leathern flask of strong liquor, which he kept for great occasions, and poured such a draught as made the old man feel almost young agan, and he got the lantern, and his pick and shovel, and gave the priest his stole to put on and the holy water to carry, and they went out together toward the spot where the work was to be done Antono says that in spite of the rum his own knees shook together, and the priest stumbled over his Latın For when they were yet a few yards from the mound the fllckenng light of the lantern fell upon Angelo's white face, unconscious as if in sleep, and on his upturned throat, over which a very thin red line of blood trickled down into his collar, and the flickering light of the lantern played upon another face that looked up from the feast-upon two deep, dead eyes that saw in spite of death-upon parted lips redder than life itself-upon two gleaming teeth on which glistened a rosy drop Then the priest, good old man, shut his eyes tight and showered holy water before him, and his cracked vorce rose almost to a scream, and then Antonio, who is no coward after all, rased his pick in one hand and the lantern in the other, as he sprang forward, not knowing what the end should be, and then he swears that he heard a woman's cry, and the Thing was gone, and Angelo lay alone on the mound unconscious, with the red lune on his throat and the beads of deathly sweat on his cold forehead They lifted hum, half-dead as he was, and lad hum on the ground close by, and then Antomo went to work, and the priest helped him, though he was old and could not do much, and they dug deep, and at last Antono, standing in the grave, stooped down with his lantern to see what he might see

His hair used to be dark brown, with gnezled streaks about the temples, in less than a month from that day he was as greyjas a badger He was a miner when he was young, and most of these fellows have seen ugly sights now and then, when accidents have happened, but he had never seen what he saw that night-that Thing which is nether alve nor dead,
that Thing that will abide neither above ground nor in the grave Antonio had brought something with him which the priest had not noticed He had made it that afternoon-a sharp stake shaped from a prece of tough old driftwood He had it with him now, and he had his heavy pick, and he had taken the lantern down into the grave I don't think any power on earth could make him speak of what happened then, and the old priest was too frightened to look in He says he heard Antonio breathing like a wild beast, and moving as if he were fighting with something almost as strong as himself, and he heard an evil sound also, with blows, as of something violently driven through flesh and bone, and then the most awful sound of all-a woman's shriek, the unearthly scream of a woman nether dead nor alive, but burned deep for many days And he, the poor old priest, could only rock humself as he knelt there in the sand, crying aloud his prayers and exorcisms to drown these dreadful sounds Then suddenly a small ron-bound chest was thrown up and rolled over aganst the old man's knee, and in a moment more Antonio was beside him, his face as white as tallow in the flickering light of the lantern, shovelling the sand and pebbles into the grave with furious haste, and looking over the edge till the pit was half full, and the priest sard that there was much fresh blood on Antono's hands and on his clothes

I had come to the end of my story Holger finushed his wine and leaned back in his chair
"So Angelo got his own again," he said "Did he marry the prim and plump young person to whom he had been betrothed?"
'No, he had been badly frightened. He went to South Amer1ca, and has not been heard of since"
"And that poor thing's body is there still, I suppose," said Holger. "Is it quite dead yet, I wonder?"

I wonder, too But whether it be dead or alive, I should hardly care to see 1 t, even in broad daylight Antonio is as grey as a badger, and he has never been quite the same man" sunce that might.

## Richard Hughes

## The Siranger

## I

The street in Cylfant was so steep that if you took a middling jump from the top of the village you would not touch ground again till you reached the bottom but you would probably hurt yourself The houses sat each on other's left shoulder, all the way up, so that the smoke from Mrs Grocery-Jones' chimney blew in at Mrs Boot-Jones' basement, and out through her top windows into the cellar of the Post Office, and out through the Post Office Daughter's little bedroom casement into that of the Butchery Aunt (who was paralysed and lived downstars) and so on, up the whole line like a flue, till it left soot on the stomachs of the sheep grazing on the hillside above

But that does not explan why the Stranger came to Cylfant village, unless it was through curiosity nor, indeed, what he was doing in such a Sabbath-keeping little Anabaptist hamlet at all, where he mıght have known he would meet with an accident nor what he was doing so far from home

Mr Williams was the rector of Cylfant, and perhaps thirty mules round such an old fat man that he had difficulty in walking between his different churches on Sundays His face was heavy, his eyes small but with a dream in them, and he kept sticky sweet things ready in his pocket. He was stonedeaf, so that now he roared like a bull, now whispered like a young lover He might be heard roaring across a valley He had one black suit, with patches on it, and one surplice, that he darned sometımes He lived by letting the rectory in the summer and when the Disestablishment Bill wiped away his stipend of eight pounds a year, he made up for it by taking in laundry you would see him in front of the rectory, legs set well apart, both heavy arms plunged up to the elbows in suds,
a towel pinned to both shoulders to save his black coat, roaring a greeting to all who might pass

Cylfant was very proud of the smallness of has congregation for in Wales to have many churchpeople in a village is a great disgrace They are always the scallywags, the folk who have been expelled from therr chapels; and who hope, even if they cannot expect heaven, that things will not be quite so uncomfortable for them in the next world as if they gave up religion altogether. There were only three famulies, except for the Squire's governess, that ever came to Cylfant church Mr. Williams hated verse, but he preached them pure poetry. he had such an imagination that if he meditated on the anatomy of angels there seemed to be strange flying things about his head, and the passionate roaring and whispering of his voice could hang Christ even on the polished brass altar-cross

Presently he married the girl who played the harmonum: but she had one leg

It was she, Minne, that took in the Stranger. They were sitting one night in the rectory parlour, and Mr Williams was reading a book of sermons with great fixity of mind, in order to forget his Loss for that day the little ring on his watch-chain had opened, and he had lost the gold cross that he had always carried Minnie was sure that it had been there when they started to climb the village but they had no lantern the wind was a fleet howling darkness, so they could not search till the morning, even if it lay on their very doorstep Mr Williams read three sermons at a gulp, and closed the book. It was always a thing of amazement that a man who read such dull sermons with such avidity could put so much thrill and beauty, so little of the moralities, into his own preaching

He shut the book, and, giving a great sigh, puffed out his cheeks, while he squinted along the broad shirt-front under his chin Minnue went to turn down the lamp-as she always did, for reasons of thnft, when her husband was not actually reading, and all at once she heard a cry in the might, sharp as a child's, and full of terror and innocence She opened the door, and saw a small huddled figure in the roadway There
was a little light shining from it, bluish and fitful and she knew at once it was something more than natural She set her wooden leg firmly against the doorstep, and, bending down, caught the Stranger up in her arms, and lifted him over the threshold He lay there, blinking in the lamplight a grotesque thing, with misshapen ears and a broad, flat nose His lumbs were knotted, but the skin at his joints was yellow and delicate as a snake's belly He had crumpled wings, as fine as petrol upon water even thus battered, their beauty could not but be seen He seemed in pain and there was a small cross-shaped weal burnt on his side, as if he had stumbled on a little red-hot iron
"Poor little thing," said Mr Willams, looking at it sideways from his chair "What is 1 t ?"
"It is more ugly than anything I have ever seen," sand Minne "Perhaps it is an angel for it was never born of woman"
"We should be more humble, Minnie," sard her husband "Who are we that God should send His angels to try us?"
"At any rate, I think it is not," said Minnie "We will see"
She took up the book of sermons, and touched him on the forehead with it He gave a shrill yell of pain
"God forgive me for my cruelty," she exclamed "It' must be a-"
"It is a Stranger," sard Mr Williams quekly
Minne turned and looked at hum
"What shall we do?" she shouted in his ear "For if we harbour it we shall surely be damned We must not help God's enemies"
"We are taught to love our enemies," whispered Mr Willams "And who is God's enemy is ours too"
"But it can feel no gratitude," said Minne "It will return us evil for good"
"If we do good in the hope of gratitude we have our reward," roared Mr Willams
"You mean you will keep him?" said Minnie
"I mean"-the old man groaned-"I do not know what to do, indeed, whatever "

But the visitor settled that question for them himself He
crawled over to the fircplace, and sitting himself on one of the reddest coals, smiled out at them with a grin that stretched from ear to ear.

## II

That was how the little devil came to Cylfant rectory. He had great natural charm, and when the cross-shaped weal on his side was better-for it healed quickly under the action of fire-his spirits returned to him One was led to forget the grotesque beauty of his form by the generous amiability of his expression He took to the old rector at once, and Mr. Williams himself could not but feel a secret liking for him. That night he followed them up to bed Mr Williams bad to shut and lock the bedroom door on him But hardly were they inside when they saw a bluish light on the panel: and presently the little devil was sitting perched upon the bed-rau, watching with a sober interest Minnie unstrap her wooden leg and even when she said her prayerswhich she did in a shamefast fashion, for fear of giving him pain-he showed no embarrassment whatever When they were both fast aslecp, he took down Minnie's old peg from the shelf where she had laid it, and did something to it in the corner He then lay down in a pool of moonhght, and was still sleeping soundly when the rector heaved himself out of bed in the morning The old man woke Minnie, who scrambled out of bed, and began to strap on her leg preparatory to getting the breakfast but a wonderful thing happened, for no sooner had she fitted her scarred stump into the leather socket than the leather changed to flesh, and the wood to flesh, and there she was with the most elegant and seductive leg that ever troubled a man's eye and, moreover, there was a silk stocking on it, and a hugh-heeled Parns shoe on 1t, before she could recover from her surprise As she drew on her old ringed black-and-white cotton oddment over the other stocky red ankle she thought that never had such a parr of legs been seen together on one body She looked round in a guilty fash$10 n$ but her husband was balanced in front of the lookingglass shaving humself He had not seen. She pulled on her
dress all in a hurry and danced away downstairs. She let up the blinds and swept the floor, and all the time her new leg behaved as well as if she had known it all her life but directly she flung open the front door to shake the mat, it began all at once to drag, and jb she got pins and needles in it it jumped and kicked luke a thing quite out of control And she saw the reason for there in the roadway, where she had found the Stranger the night before, was the rector's gold cross
"There is no mistaking," said Minne to herself, "where that leg came from"

And, indeed, there was not She sidled up to the cross with difficulty, and recovered it and all at once heard steps on the cobbles It was Scraggy Evan, the postman Minnue's first thought was to hide the leg, for it would take some explaming away But it would not be hidden the shameless thang thrust the delicate turn of its ankle right under Scraggy Evan's nose Scraggy's cheery "bore dal" was lost in a gasp, and poor Minnue fled into the house scarlet with shame, the damnable leg giving coquettish little kicks into the arr as she went.

What Scraggy told the village we can only guess but he must have told them something, or why should Mrs Willams have received so many callers that morning? The first came when breakfast was hardly over and the Stranger was sitting quetly on the hob picking his teeth with his tall Minnue had great presence of mind She ran to her wood-box, and taking from it a red-flannel pettucoat that she had been mending, wrapped the Stranger in it and crammed him quickly into a wooden box, begging him in a staccato whisper to he still Upon the face of Mr Willuams there was a look of much courage and resignation Devil or no, he was prepared to justufy his guest to all comers Minne opened the door, and Mrs Grocery-Jones stood there
"Good mornug," sard she "I was calling to ask if you are driving over to Ynysllanbedrbachdeudraethgerylan today."

She paused and sniffed, then snuffed agan

- There was no doubt of it somewhere sulphur was burning
"We are not," sald Minne "We are too busy here, m- smoked out one nest, but bad are they as they were before, indeed"

Mrs Jones gave a gasp of surprise.
"Wasps in the winter-time?" she said.
"I did not say wasps," said Minnie, "I said the wall-paper, which the doctor thinks may have the scarlet-fever lurking in it, so have we fumigated the whole house "

It was lucky, thought Munnee, that her husband was so deaf He would never have forgiven her.
"Well, good gracious!" sard Mrs Jones. As her eyes got used to the dim light she caught sight of a broad head with two beady yellow eyes, peering at her from a soap-box. "And is that a cat you have there, Mrs Willams?"
"It is a pıg" she cried with sudden heat, for her new leg showed an obvious desire to kıck Mrs Jones out of the house. "It has the wind," she explaned, "so we thought it would be best in the house, indeed "
"Well, good gracious me!" repeated Mrs Jones.
Minne's leg was quivering, but she managed to control it. Mrs Jones was staring past her at the pig, as if she could not take her eyes off it As, indeed, she could not for suddenly she shot half across the road, backward, with the force of a bullet and when released she scrambled down the street, as she herself explained $1 t$, "as if the devil was after me": and there was the Stranger, wrapped still in the red-flannel petticoat, sitting on the window-sill and gnnning amiably at her back.

## III

If Mr Williams had lived longer, a few curious things might have happened in Cylfant village but he did not. There was a buzzing feeling in his head all that day, and when he went to bed at night he lay quietly on his back staring at the ceiling It had turned a bright green Presently, with his eyes open still, be began to snore Minnie did not notice anything queer, and in the small hours of the morming, after two or three loud snorts, he stopped altogether

When he felt better, he found that hus soul was outside bus
body It was not at all the kond of thing he had expected-1t to be, but was fairly round, and made of some stuff like white of egg He gathered it gently into his arms, and began to float about his body had disappeared. Presently he was aware that the Stranger was still watching hum.
"You'll be damned for this' double-damned even, for giving place to the devil-and you a priest." He sighed "It is so hard," he went on seriously, "even for devils to conquer their better nature Oh, I try hard enough I surely try The seeds of goodness have lurked in us ever since the Fall try as we will, they sprout
> "With a fork drive Nature out, She will ever yet return

"Temptation is always lurking ready for us it is a long and a hard fight the Forces of Evil agaunst the Forces of Good But we shall conquer in the end with Wrong on our side, we must conquer" There was an elation in his face that transcended all earthly ugliness "At last," he went on, "I have done a really immoral act an act with no trace of good in it, either in motive or effect. You will be damned, and Minne will be damned too, even if she has to hop to hell on the leg I gave her But it was hard, hard "

Old Willams floated over onto the other side
"I am a sinful man," he said, "a very sinful man. Heaven Was never my deserts, whatever"

The devil looked at him in surprise
"Oh, you were not!" he said earnestly. "Indeed, you were not! You were the truest-"

He stopped suddenly Willams was aware of the presence of some very unpleasant personality He looked round and behind hum stood a tall figure with thin, tight lips and watery eyes, who began speaking at once-rapidly, as if by rote
"As a matter of form," said he, "I clam this soul."
"As a matter of form," replied the devil in a singsong voice, "he is mine"

The angel rapped out "De qua causa?"
"De diabolo consortando," chaunted the little devil, in even worse Latın
"Quae sit evidentia?"
"Tuos voco oculos ipsos"
"Quod vidi, vero, atque affirmo -Satis," contnnued the angel. "Tuumst" And he turned to go.
"Stopl" cried the Stranger suddenly, all his bad resolutions breaking down
"Stopl" he cried, and began speaking rapidly. "I'm a backshider, I know, but the stran is too much there's no true devilry in me Take hum take him. there never was better Christian in Wales, I swear it and to that alone his damnation is due. pure charity-"
"What are you talkang about?" snapped the angel petulantly. "The case is settled I have withdrawn my claim"
"So do I!" cried the devil excitedly. "I withdraw mine"
The angel shrugged his wings
"What's the use of making a scene?" he sard "Never, in all my office, have I known a fiend break down and forget himself like this before You are making an exhibition of yourself, sir' Besides, if we both withdraw, he can't go anywhere It's none of my business "

He shrugged bis wings and soared away.
"Heaven or Hell or the Land of Whipperginny," murmured Willams to himself, vague memorres of Nashe nsung to the surface of his astonishment. Together they watched the angel's purple pinions bearing him from sight: the Stranger cocked a snook at hus straight back.
"Where now?" asked the rector.
"Where now? Heaven' Wart till be's out of sight."
He turned and winked broadly at Williams, malung a motion on his bare shanks as if to thrust his hand in a pocket.
"You come with me," he said. "I know how I can get things fixed for youl"

## Stephen Grendon

## AArs. Alcmifold

I don't know whether I would have gone into the Sailor's Rest if I had seen its proprietress before I saw the gnmy card with its scrawled "Clerk Wanted" in the window But perhaps I would-a man with less than a shulling in his pocket, and little chance to add to that, can't hesitate too much Stull, there was something about Mrs Manıfold, something you could feel but hardly put into words I never saw anyone so fat, though she was a short woman, she weighed over three hundred pounds, and it was easy to understand why she preferred to keep to her own room on the fourth floora gable room.
"Ever been a clerk before, Mr Robinson?" she asked me
Her voice was thin, high, almost piping, it was a small voice for so big a woman, and because it was so shrill and penetrating, the contrast was the more starthng
"No But I can read and write, I can add figures, if it comes to that," I said.

She gave me a sharp glance "It's plan to see you've had some schooling Down on your luck, is it?"

I admitted that.
She sat looking at me, humming a queer little tune, which I came to recognize later when she sang it a sea-chanty. In all that tremendous bulk, only her eyes seemed to move small, black, with short-lashed eyelids, there was no evidence that she breathed, no tremor disturbed her flesh, clad in a dress of black satin, which, despite her great mass, was frilled and ruflled like a child's frock and looked almost obscene Her eyes scrutinized me with a kind of bold furtiveness, her fat fingers resting on the arms of the char which contaned her strangely motionless body There was something horrible, not in a bestial sense, but in a spiritual way, about her-not m any one facet, but in everything-somethung that suggested terror and cold grue
"My clientele," she said in a voice suddenly subdued, but with a crafty smile, "might not always be a nuce one, Mr Robinson A rough lot, Mr. Robinson. You wouldn't expect anything else of Wapping, now, would you? Or of somebody like Mrs Ambrose Manıfold?"

Then she tittered A faint ripple disturbed that vast bulk, and the effect was wholly horrible
'I can hold my own," I said.
"Perhaps Perhaps We shall see, Mr Robinson Your duties will be smple. You know what an innkeeper's clerk must do Make them sign the register, Mr. Robinson Sometumes they have reason to avoid it. Once a week, you will bring the register up to me I wish to examine it. The money will be deposited to my account at the Bridsley Bank whenever and as soon as it collects to fifty pounds I am not at home to anyone Begin now."

Thereupon she rang a little bell, and the old man who had conducted me up the stairs led the way back down, having been instructed by Mrs Manufold that I was to begin my duties at once

I lost no time acquainting myself with my surroundings Whule the old man, whose name was Mr Clator, removed the sign from the window and put it carefully away, with an air of doubtless needing it soon again, I took a look at the registry It was nothing but an old ledger, on the first page of which someone had wntten in a flowing hand, "Sallors' Rest -Registry" There were two floors of rooms, which someone's fancy had numbered, to make seven in all-four on the second, three on the third; the first floor being given over to the kutchen, the small lobby, and three closet-like rooms for the staff One of these was occupred by Mr. Claitor, another by Mr. and Mrs Jeffers, and the third by the clerk of Sailors' Rest. Sux of the rooms were occupied at four shillings the night, sux for day and night, evidently there were no rates by the week The lobby had an appearance of genteel shabbiness, it was not exactly dirty, but it was certandy not clean, and it conveyed the impression of never having been quite clean within the memory of any living person The glass in the window and the door facing the street was fly-specked
and dust-streaked, and there was about the entire building a faint but unmistahable odor of the river The Thames flowed not far away, and at night its musk, rising with the fog, enclosed and permeated the old building

Mr Clator, who was tall, thin, and gray, with the lugubrous expression of a very tired Great Dane, got around to instructing me, finally, that the lobby was to be closed promptly at nine o'clock every night, though, thereafter, I might expect to be summoned to open the door for one or more of our tenants come roistering home

Probably there is nothing so turing as the position as clerk in a shabby, hole-in-a-corner inn, which seems designed to attract only the dregs of mankind the bitter, disillusioned old men of the sea-the hopeless wanderers haunting Limehouse and Whitechapel and Wapping-the hunted and the haunted and the lost. Yet, I suppose everyone in a position not especially to his liking is similarly convinced, the human being is essentially weak and insecure, no matter what his place in life, and if that place is not felicitous, that weakness makes itself manufest in dissatisfaction, out of which grows the conviction that anytbing at all is better than the present position Work at the Sallors' Rest was monotonous, even when there were books to be read-which was not often, and it soon became a pattern

But the weekly trip to Mrs Manifold's gable room was somehow never quite part of that pattern There was something a little different every time, despite the fact that her position never seemed to have changed, for all her appearance, she need never have moved from one week to the next, and not at all since first I saw her Every time she would take the registry and examine the new entries
"Roald Jensen," she read out slowly "Now, what is he like? Is he a tall man or is he short?"
"Tall, thin, sandy-red hair, one wooden leg He wears a moustache Last salled on the Lofoten out of Oslo "
"Frederick Schwartz, then What is he like?"
"Short, fat Looks like a German Burgomeister Red cheeks, blue eyes Very talkatıve Heavy German accent. Last sarled on the Stresemann out of Hamburg "
"Good gracious, Mr Robinson," she sald on occasion, "you should have been a policeman I admire the quality of observation"

But, each time she sard it, I caught the unmstakable mpression that she was laughing at me behind her small, dark eyes, and each time she finushed her examunation of the registry, I could not escape the conviction that she did so with relief, so that I wondered often why she insisted on taking this trouble at all if she concluded it always with such manfest satisfaction at being done with it.

Once, she was talkative She said comparatively little, but I learned from her that she bad bad some hind of place in Singapore half a dozen years ago or thereabouts; she and her husband had run it. Then she had come to England.
"And where is Mr. Manfold now?" I asked her
"Ah, nobody knows, nobody knows Nobody, Mr Robmson"

Thereafter she had given the unmstakable sign of baving finshed with me-closing her eyes and leaning back, inert, save for a trembling of her thick lips, as she hummed the chanty she sometimes sang
> "Oh, the Captain's in the brig, Lads, The First Mate's brains are blown;
> We'll sall the Seven Seas, Lads, And make them all our own . . ."

But there were diversions, though they were out of the ordinary

Sometımes gentlemen from the CID at Scotland Yard came around to look for somebody-on the average, once a fortnight. Sometunes one of our registrants walked out and never came back, leaving all his baggage behind to be stored against his return-which might not happen Things could happen in the fogs, things could take place no one ever found out-robbery and sudden death, suicide sometunes I never felt any inclination to go outside on a foggy night, daytime was dreary enough, for the Sailors' Rest was not in a good neighborhood-oh, good enough, for what it was, I suppose, but not good enough for what it might have been And there
was something about Mrs Manifold, too, that seemed to say she had known better days and a better business than this, even if in Singapore

Singapore' Pcrhaps it had its holes like Saulors' Rest, its districts lhe Wapping, too-but, being far away, it was caught in a kind of magic aura, it tooh on color and life and drama built up solcly in imagnation, as of all faraway places which are never, somehow, quite real, and always, always wonderfully exciting Why had Mrs Manifold left Singapore to come to London? And why had she come down into Wapping, of all places? But here she was, and apparently content to be here, making no complaint, occastonally even making sly remarks about her reduced station in life. Yet she need not have been here, for her balance at the bank was always written in five figures-in ready funds alone, she was worth more than fifty thousand pounds

But for all the signs of breeding which showed through, there was never anything which could dispel that fecling of terror she could induce Did it arise out of her shocking obesity, or from some other, hidden source? All too often revulsion stimulates dislihe and hatred; it is impossible sometimes to uncover the roots of fear or horror Curiously, she had but one taboo, about which I heard from Mr Clator, when he came to my room one night
"Mrs Manifold says you are not to drink wine, Mr Robinson No wine in the house, she says It's the rule of Sallors' Rest "

When I mentioned it to her, she confirmed it. "Wine I cannot abide, Mr Robinson Ale, yes Whiskey, yes Gin, if you luke Vermouth, certanly Whatever you wish-but no wine"

She occupied her gable in lordly splendor Splendor being relative, her self-denial did not dimunish it. She ruled Sailors' Rest with an unchallenged and indomitable will In a sense, she was Saulors' Rest, and Saılors' Rest was Mrs Manıfold, sometunes at nught, in that borderland between sleep and waking, I thought of the old building as somehow alive, squattung obscenely in its row of ancient buldings, with small black window-eyes, like Mrs Mamfold's, and straight black hair, parted in the middle and drawn around back over invisible ears, and gold hoops for earnngs, I thought of the
wide, fly-specked, dust-streaked window in front expanding briefly, fleetingly into a sly-lipped smile, something akin to a leer Lake the fog and the musk of the Thames, Mrs Manifold's presence permeated the very walls, made itself felt in every nook and cranny, and hingered in the quiet arr.

In the middle of my eleventh week, early one hot summer nught, there came an old sarlor just in on $H M S$ Malaya, out of Singapore A Yankee, by the look of him, with a brush of short beard reaching around his chin from one ear to another a Quaker cut, I think they call it He was in his sixties, I judged, and did not like the look of the place, saying so, and adding that there was no other.
"I'll stay the nught," he sard.
"American?" I asked
"Born there Spent most of my life in Singapore"
Perhaps it was natural that I should ask whether he had ever heard of Mrs Ambrose Manufold There was nothing to show that he was withun shouting distance of her
"Mrs Manifold," he said, and grinned "Mister, there was a woman Big enough for half a dozen women Never been as good a house in Singapore since she lit out for parts unknown."
"Why did she leave?"
"Who knows? Women don't do things sensible, Mister She was makıng money faster'n they could spend it Then Amby run out on her, and she closed up her place, and off she went. Biggest thing I ever seen to drop out of sight like that!"
"What happened to him?" I asked
"Nobody knows that, Mister They didn't get along too well sometimes Amby liked to drank-but he was a wine-drınker -in Singaporel He could get sick stewed on wine faster'n you could say Jack Robinson. Your name an't Jack, is it?"
"No," I said. "It doesn't matter"
"Well, Amby ran out on her, though how he did it, God knows And he took along the biggest cask of mne they had in the cellar. The way she watched him and all, he was sly and fast to get out-and with that wine, tool Nobody ever saw hum go-but the cask of wine he had hauled out bold as brass! He had his mind made up, Mister-and so would you,
if you ever saw Mrs Manifold What could a man do with a woman as fat as that, eh, Mister?"

He poked me in the ribs and sard that he was tired
In the morning he was gone, but he had pard in advance; so it was his privilege to go when he liked It was necessary to get one-night payment in advance to guard aganst this method of departure

And that week end, when Mrs Manufold came upon his name, her eyes held to it, and she began to tremble-a strange sight, like the shahing of jelly, a shuddering and trembling that was unpleasant to behold
"Joshua Bennington Mr Robinson-a well-built man with a brown beard, was he? From Singapore One night, tool In midweek. Ah, too bad, too bad' Why didn't you let me know?"
"I had no idea you would want to know before now I have my instructions"
"Yes, yes-that's true Singaporel I would have liked to talk to him "

She sard no more, but there was a strange expression in her eyes I could not fathom it Triumph, amusement, regretall these were there-or were they only reflections from my own imagnation? It was difficult to tell with Mrs Manifold But the trembling in her body continued for a long time, and I was anxious to get away, to get out of that gable room, to escape the burden of her eyes

Three days after that, something changed in that old inn.
The change was in Mrs Manfold, too, and it happened after the empty seventh room was filled He came in just before closing time, a small man with a limp, with hus hat pulled down low, and his face all muffled up aganst the fog which was so thick it had got into the lobby and was yellow in the light at the desk He was wet with it, wet with fog-and inside wet-with wine For he reeked of it-stronger than the room reeked of the fog and the river's smell, the sickish smell of sweet wine hung about him luke a cloud.

A strange man and a silent one
"Good evening, sir," I said.
No answer

I turned the registry toward him, holding out the pen "Number Seven left, srr," I sadd "Will it be for the night or longer?"

What he said sounded like, "Longer," but his voice was so muffled I could not easily tell.
"A wet night, str," I said
He signed the registry in a crabbed hand, writing with difficulty, and without removing his tattered gloves
"Third floor back, last door It's standing open," I sald
Without a word he left the lobby for the stars, tralling that nauseating smell of wine

I looked at the regstry
The writing was difficult, but it could be read, after a fashion Unless the fog and the addling sweetness of the wine smell and my imagination deceived me, I read there, "Amb Manifold, late of Singapore, out of Madeira"

I took the registry and mounted to the fourth floor The crack under the door showed a light, stlll I knocked
"It's Robinson, Mrs Manıfold," I sand "You told me if we ever got anybody else from Singapore . . ."
"Come in"
I went in She was still sitting there in her black satun dress, like a queen in the muddle of the room.
"Let me see," she said eagerly
I put the registry before her
And then she saw Her dark-skinned face went pale, and if she had trembled before, she shook now-a great ob rene shaking ammating that mass of flesh She pushed the book away, and it fell to the floor. I bent and picked it up
"Seems to be the same name as your own," I sard
With some effort at control, she asked the farmular queston "What is he like?"
"Short-a small man-with a lump"
"Where is he?"
"In Number Seven-just under you."
"I want to see him."
"Now?"
"Now, Mr Robinson"
I went down the stars and knocked on the door of Number
Seven. No answer I knocked louder Still no answer A surly, swer

I tried the door It was open
I pushed it -ajar and said softly into the darkness, "Mr. Mamfold?"

## No answer.

I opened the door all the way and turned up the light.
The room was empty Empty, that 1s, of human occupa-tion-it was alive with the rich headiness of wine, a sickening sweetness, cloying and repelling There was no sign that the bed had been touched, yet the door of the room was closed, where it had been open before, so he had been there, slnce no one else had

I went downstars into the lobby, but no one was there, and the outer door was locked, as I had left it Mr Manifold was nowhere to be seen

I went back to the gable room where Mrs Manfold wated.
"Well?" she asked, seeing me alone
"I can't find hum," I sard "I tried his room, but he's gone"
She was still shaking, but in the midst of her inner turmoil, she asked, "Mr Robinson, have you been drinking wine?"
"No That smell came in with hum He's been drinking, I suspect. Madeira, I think-or something equally heavy A sweet port "

But she was not listening Or rather, she was not listening to me Her little eyes had narrowed, and she was leaning a little to one side, with her massive head on her great shoulders cocked somewhat to the left and down, as if she were listening to something from below
"Do you hear someone sunging, Mr Robinson?" she asked in a harsh whisper
"Can't say as I do," I answered, after a moment of listening
"It goes like this," she said, and sang with horrible urgence the famular lines of her own chanty-
> "Oh, the Captain's in the brig, Lads, The First Mate's brains are blown, We'll sall the Seven Seas, Lads, And make them all our own . ."
"No," I said
She closed her eyes and leaned back. "Let me know when you see him again, Mr Robinson"

After that, Mrs Manufold's bell rang several tumes a day for me

First it was, "Get that smell of mine out of this house, Mr. Robinson."

But I couldn't Open doors and windows as I would, I couldn't get that smell of wine out there it was-nch, heady, nauseating, it had come in to stay, and there was nothing to do but live with it I could imagine how it bothered her, what with her hatred for the stuff, but it was in her room, too, and she had to endure it as well as the rest of us

Then, afterward, it was about Mr Manufold. Had I seen him?

No, I had not I never saw him again He had gone without paying, but then, he never rightly used that room except to put the smell of wine into it , and there was no charge for that.

And did I hear that singing?
I never did
But she did, and it bothered her And it bothered her, too, to hear Mr Manfold the way she sald she did She knew his walk, there was a slight drag because of that lump I never heard anything like that, and neither did anyone else, for she did ask Mr Claitor, who had not even seen Mr. Manufold, as I had

I used to ask myself, if it were mdeed her husband, why 'had he come? And, having come, why had he gone without so much as saying bello or good-bye to his wife? It was strange -but Sailors' Rest was a place for strange things to happen even in the ordmary course of its monotonous existence.

Mrs Manifold was not the same
If anything, she was more terrible There was a greater furtiveness about her, there was less sly humor, almost nothing of humor at all, there was an unmistakable grimness, a kind of terrible bravado, and there was above everything else something about her that made her far more horrible than she had ever seemed to me-something that made me think of death and fear of death, of violence and unimaginable horror, something eldritch and meffably terrible, some-
thing that throbbed in the core of Mrs Manifold as the red blood coursed through the heart keeping life in that bulgng mound of flesh

And being wnth her even for the little while I had to be there was infintely unpleasant, for she was always listening, catching her breath and listening, and hearing things when there was nothing to hear And she was always asking questions I couldn't answer to please her, and scolding at me to clear the ar of that wine smell, which was impossible-but I needn't ever have told her for all the mpression it made on her And she went on, sometumes, about her husband
"Always the wine and never tending to business, that was Ambrose," she sald "And the women, too Never could leave them alone I gave hum wine-more than he could drink, damn his black soul!"

I heard that over and over If I heard it once, I heard it a score of tumes It was better than that terrible listening You can't imagine what it is untıl you go through such a thing by yourself Even today, long after my short tenure at Sallors' Rest, I can see that horrible, obese woman with her flesh lapping out over the sides of her chair, pushing out between the slats, leaning that vast bulk over to listen with her blackhared head and the golden hooped earrings glistening in the feeble yellow light that was in the room, to listen for the sound of singing and the dragging limp, I can still hear her shrill, piping voice complain about the stench of wine, the nauseating sweetness of that cloying odor brought into the Sailors' Rest on that fateful night of fog

## -And then, one night, the end came

I woke out of my sleep, and that wine smell was thick enough to choke me I got up and opened the door of my room, and then I heard the singing-something like she said, only a little different, and it went like this-
> "Oh, the Old Man's in the Deep, Lads, The Madarn's pached and flownI'll sall the Seven Seas, Lads, Untll I find her home .

It was coming from somewhere upstairs; so I went back and put something on I came out again and started up the stars, and I thought I could hear that dragging walk Mrs Mawfold always said she heard, but I could not be sure

I got up to the thard fllght of staurs when $I$ heard her scream It was Mrs Manfold's voice, shnil and awful, and she was screamung at her husband.
"Go away, Ambrose! Go back!" she cried in that horrible, piping vorce that came so unnaturally from her obese body "Don't touch me!"

And then there was just a terrbble, unnatural scream, diminushing into a choking, gurgling sound

I was struck motionless with fright untul Clator came up behind me, agitated and scared; then I pulled myself together and ran up to the fourth floor. Clattor was right behund me, which turned out to be the best thing for me, since he could testify later on, and there was nothing the people at Scotland Yard could do to me.

Because Mrs Manufold was dead-choked to death She lay there on the floor, with her black satin dress nipped down one side, and her white flesh pushing out from the tear, and her eyes turned up All over the room there was a smell of sweet wine so thick that 1 t seemed there was no arr left-only that sickeming smell.

And there was something else-something that shouldn't have been, something nobody could explan

There were bones scattered in the room, human bones, a man's bones-and sharp, deep marks in Mrs. Manufold's neck where she had been choked, and preces of cloth and a battered old hat I had seen once before on a nught when the fog was yellow in the light at the desk of the Sallors' Rest

There was nothing Scotland Yard could say to explan all that

But then, there was no reason why they should think of any connection between what happened up there in that gable room where Mrs Manifold was hiding and what they found up the Thames from its mouth, far up, in Wapping An old wine-cask out of Singapore, a cask that had once held Madeira and now was stove in at one end, and held nothing but
the bones of two toes and a finger-nothing to tell them that Mrs Manifold had killed her husband and put his body in that cask of wine and had it carned far out to sea, weighted perhaps, to sink untul time and the tide carried it far from Singapore-just as whatever it was came into the Sailors' Rest that foggy night put it down in the registry-
"Amb Manifold, late of Singapore, out of Madeira" Or was it somebody's ghoulish sense of humor? Out of Maderra indeed! I cannot abide the smell of it to this day!

## A. E. Coppard

## Pifingeap

Piffingcap had the cup from an old friend, a queer-minded man He had given it to him just before he had gone out of this contunent, not for the first but for the last time-a cup of lead with an inscription upon it in decent letters but strange words.
"Here, Elmer," said his old friend to the barber of Bagwood, "have this-there's the doom of half a million beards in $1 t^{\prime \prime}$ "

Piffingcap laughed, but without any joy, for his heart was heavy to lose his friend
"There is in it too," continued Grafton, offering the pot and tapping it with his forefinger, "a true test of virtue-a rare thing, as you know, in these parts Secondly, there is in it a choice of fortunes, and thirdly, it may be, a triple calamity and-and-and very senious, you know, but there you are" He gave it into the barber's hand with a slight sigh While his friend duly admired the dull gft the traveller picked up his walking stick and winked at himself in the mirror.

And Elmer Piffingcap, the barber of Bagwood, took his frend's cup, set it in a conspicuous place upon the shelf of his shop, and bade that friend good-bye, a little knot rolling into hus lungs as they shook their two hands together.
"It is true then," said he, starng at the shining baldness of his frend who stood with hat and stick in hand-for as Piffingcap dared not look into his friend's eyes, the gleam of the skull took his gaze, as a bright thing will seize the mind of a grat -"it is true, then, I shall see you no more?"
"No more again," said the wanderer affably, replacing his hat-dsliking that pliant will-less stare of the barber's mournful cyes. This wandering man had a heart full of bravery though he could not walk with pride, for the corns and bunkles be suffered would have crippled a creature of four 70
feet, leave alone two But-would you beheve it-he was goung now to walk himself for all his days round and round the world $O$, he was such a man as could put a decert upon the slyest, with his tall hat and his johes, living as easy as a bird in the softness and sweetness of the year.
"And if it rans, it rans," he declared to Polly, "and I squat like a hare in the hedge and keep the blessed bones of me dry and my feet warm-it's not three weeks since it hapened to me, my neek as damp as the inside of an onion, and my curly locks caught in blackberry bushes-stint your laughing, Polly!-the end of my nose as cold as a prece of dead pork, and the place very inconvement with its sharp thorns and nettles-and no dockleaf left in the whole parish But there was young barley wagging in the field, and clover to be smelling, and rooks to be watching, and doves, and the rain heaving its long sigh in the greyness-I declare to my God it was a fine handsome day I had that day, Polly!"

In the winter he would be sleeping in decent nooks, eating his food in quiet inns, drying his coat at the forge, and so he goes now into the corners of the world-the little husky fat man, with large spectacles and fox-coloured beard and tough boots that had slits and gouts in them-gone seeking the feathers out of Priam's peacock And let hum go, we take no more concern of hum or his shuming skull or hus tra-la-la m the highways

The barber, who had a romantic drift of mund, went into his saloon, and taking up the two cracked china lather mugs he flung them from the open window into his back garden, puttung the fear of some evil into the mind of his drowsy cat, and a great anticipation in the brains of his two dusty hens, who were lurking there for anything that could be devoured Mr Piffingcap placed the pot made of lead upon his convenrent shelf, laid therem his brush, lit the small gas stove under the copper urn, and when Polly, the child from the dary, arrived with her small can for the barber's large jug she found hum engaged in shaving the chin of Timmy James the butcher, what tume Mr James was engaged in a somewhat stilted conversation with Gregory Barnes about the carnal women of Bagwood.

Polly was a little lean girl, eight or nune years old, with a face that was soft and rosy and fresh as the bud of gum on the black branches of the orchard She wore a pretty dimity frock and had gay flowers in her hat. This was her last house of call, and, sitting down to watch Mr Piffingcap, the town's one barber, shaving friends and enemies allke, she would be the butt of their agreeable chaff because of her pleasant country jargon-as nich as nutmeg in a homely cake-or her yellow scattered hair, or her sweet eyes that were soft as remembered twilight.
"Your razor is roaring, Mr Piffingcap!"-peeping round the chair at him. "Oh, it's that Mir. James!" she would say in pretended surprise. Mir. James had a gruff beard, and the act of removing it occasioned a noise resembling that of her mother scraping the new potatoes
"What have you got this pot for?" she chattered, "I don't like it, it's ugly."
"Don't say that now," said Mr. Pifingcap, pausing with his hand on the butcher's throttle, "it was Mr. Grafton's parting gift to me, I shall never see hum again, nor will you netther, he's gone round the world for ever more this timel"
"Oh!" gurgled the child in a manner that hung between pain and delight, "has he gone to Rinjigoffer land?"
"Gone where?" roared Timothy James, lifting his large red neck from the rest.
"He's told me all about it," said the child, ignoring him.
"Well, he's not gone there," interrupted the barber
And the child contmued, "It's where the doves and the partridges are so fat that they break down the branches of the trees where they roost. . ."
"Garn whth yer!" said Mr James.
". . and the hares are as big as foxes . .."
"God a mercyl" sald Mr James.
". . . yes, and a fox was big and brown and white like a skew-bald donkey-hel hel hel And oo yes" continued Polly, shrilling with excitement, "there was a king badger as would stop your eyes from wnking if you met hum walking in the dawn!"
"Lord, what should the man be doing telling you them
lies," ejaculated Timothy, now miping his chin on the napkin. "Did he give you that cup, Puff?"
"Yes," rephed the barber, "and if what he says is tue there's a power o' muracle in it."

The butcher surveyed it cautiously and read the inscriptoon:

## NE SAMBRA DIVORNAK

"That's a bit o' Roosian, I should say," he remarked as he and Gregory left the saloon.

Polly picked up her empty can and looked at Mr. P. "Won't he come back no more?"
"No, Polly, my pigeon, he won't come back."
'Didn't he like us?" asked the child.
The barber stood dumb before her bright searching eyes.
"He was better than my father," said the chuld, "or me uncle, or the schoolmaster"
"He's the goodest man alive, Polly," sard Mr. P.
"Didn't he like us?" agam she asked, and as Mr P could only look vaguely about the room she went out and closed the latch of the door very softly behind her
In the succeeding days the barber lathered and cut or sat smokng meditatively in his saloon, the doom began to work its will, and business, which for a quarter of a century had flournshed like a plant, as indeed it was, of constant and assured growth, suddenty declned. On weekdays the barber cleaned up the chins of his fellow townsmen alone, but on Sunday monnings he would seek the ard of a neighbour, a youngster whom he called Charleyboy, when four men would be seated at one tume upon his shavng-chairs, towel upon breast and neck bared for the sacnfice, while Charleyboy dabbed and pounded their crops into foam. Mr. Piffingcap would follow hum, plyng his weapon like the genius he was, while Charleyboy again in turn followed him, drying with linen, cooling with rhum, or soothing with splendid unguent. 'Next gent, please!" he would cry out, and the last shorn man would rise and turn away, dabbing his right hand into the depths of his breeches pocket and elevating that with his
left before producing the customary tribute
But the genus of Puffingcap and the neat hand of Charley languished in distress There was no gradual cessation, the thing completely stopped, and Piffingcap did not realise until too late, until, indeed, the truth of it was current in the little town everywhere but in his own shop, that the beards once shaven by hum out of Grafton's pot grew no more in Bagwood; and there came the space of a week or so when not a soul entered the saloon but two schoolboys for the cutting of hair, and a little housemard for a fringe net

Then he knew, and one day, having sat in the place the whole morning luke a beleaguered rat, with ruin and damnatoon a hand's-breadth only from him, he rushed from his shop across to the hardware merchant's and bought two whute china mugs, delicately lined with gold and embossed with vague lumps, and took them back to the saloon.

At dinner-tume he put the cup of lead into his coat pocket and walked down the street in an anxious kind of way until he came to the bridge at the end of the town It was an angular stone bridge, crossing a deep and leisurely flowing river, along whose parapet boys had dared a million times, wearing smooth, with their adventunng feet, its soft yellow stone He stared at the water and saw the shining flank of a tench as it turned over. All beyond the bridge were meads thick with ripe unmown grass and sweet with scabious bloom. But the barber's mind was harsh with the rancour of noon heats and the misfortunes of life. He stood with one hand resting upon the hot stone and one upon the heavy evil thing in his pocket The bridge was deserted at this hour, its little traffic having paused for the meal He took, at length, the cup from his pocket, and whispering to bumself "God forgive you, Grafton," be let it fall from his fingers into the water; then be walked sharply home to his three daughters and told them what he had done
"You poor loon"' said Bersa.
"O man' man!" moaned Grue
"You're the rum of us all!" cried Mavie
Three fine women were Grue and Mavie and Bersa, in spite of the clamour of the outlandish Piffingcap names, and their father had respect for them and admured ther hand-
someness But they had for their father, all three of them, the principal filial emotion of compassion, and they showed that his action had been a foolsh action, that there were other towns in the world besides Bagwood, and that thousands and mullions of men would pay a good price to be quit of a beard, and be shaved from a pot that would complete the destruction of all the unwanted hariness of the world And they were very angry with hum.
'Let us go and see to it. . . . what is to be done now. . . . bring us to the place, father!"

He took them down to the river, and when they peered over the side of the bridge they could see the pot lying half sunk in some white sand in more than a fathom of water
"Let us mstruct the waterman," they said, "he will secure $1 t$ for us"

In the afternoon Grue met the waterman, who was a sly young fellow, and she mstructed him, but at teatime word was brought to Plffingcap that the young waterman was fallen into the river and drowned. Then there was gref in his mind, for he remembered the calamity which Grafton had foretold, and he was for giving up all notions of re-taking the cup, but his daughter Bersa went in a few days to a man was an angler and instructed hum, and he took a crooked pole and leaned over the bridge to probe for the cup In the afternoon word was brought to Puffingcap that the parapet had given way, and the young angler in falling through had dashed out his brains on the abutment of the bridge And the young gaffer whom Mave instructed was took of a sunstroke and died on the bank.

The barber was in great gref at these calamities, he had tremors of guilt in his mind, no money in his coffers, and the chins of the Bagwood men were still as smooth as children's, but it came to hum one day that he need not fear any more calamities, and that a thing which had so much tricks in it should perhaps be cured by trickery
"I will go," he sald, "to the Widow Buckland and ask her to assist me"

The Widow Buckland was a wnld strange woman who lived on a heath a few mules away from Bagwood, so he went over one very hot day to the Widow and found her cottage on the -it was a red caravan with yellow wheels A blackbird hung in a wicker cage at the door, and on the side of the roof board was painted

## AGLAURA BUCKLAND FEATS \& GALIAS ATENDED

There was nobody in the caravan so he knocked at the cottage door, the Widow Buckland led him into her dim little parlour
"It 'ull cost you half a James'" says she when Mr Puffingcap had given her his requirements
"Half a what?" cried he
"You are not," sard the gipsy, "a man of a mean heart, are you?" She sald it very persuasively, and he felt he could not annoy her for she was a very large woman with sharp glances
"No," said Piffingcap.
"And you'll believe what I'm telling you, won't you?"
"Yes," sard Pıffingcap
"It 'ull maybe some time before my words come true, but come true they will, I can take my oath."
"Yes," agan sand Piffingcap
"George" she bawled to someone from the doorway, "wher'd yer put my box?"

There was an mdistinct reply but she bawled out again, "Well, fetch it off the rabbit hutch"
"And a man luke you," she continued, turning agan to the barber, "doesn't think twice about half a sovereign, and me putting you in the way of what you want to know, I'm sure" And Piffingcap mumbled dubiously, "No," producing with dufficulty some shillings, some coppers, and a postal order for one and threepence which a credulous customer had that morning sent hum for a bottle of hairwash
"Let's look at your 'and," she said, taking it she refiected gravely
"You're a man that's 'ad your share o' trouble, ann't you?" Piffingcap bou ed meekly
"And you've'ad your 'appy days, ain't you?"
A nod
"Well listen to me, you've got more fortune in store for you if you hnow how to pluck it . you understand my meaning, don't you? . than any man in the town this bleedun minute Rught, George," she exclaimed, turning to a very ugly little hunchbached fellow-truly he was a mere squint of a man, there was such a little bit of hum for so much uncomeliness The Widow Buchland took the box from the hunchback and, thrusting hum out of the room, she shut fast the door and turned the key in the lock Then she drew up a bit of a table to the window, and taking out of the box a small brass vessel and two bottles she set them beforc her
"Sit down there, young feller," she said, and Puffingcap sat down at the end of the table facing the window The Widow turned to the window, which was a small square, the only one in the room, and closed over it a shutter The room was clapped in darkness except for a small ray in the middle of the shutter, coming through a round hole about as large as a guinea She pulled Mr Piffingcap's shoulder untıl the ray was shuning on the middle of his forehead, she took up the brass vessel, and holding it in the light of the ray polished it for some tume with her forefinger All her fingers, even her thumbs, were covered with rich sinister rings, but there were no good looks in those fingers for the nalls had been munched almost away, and dirty skin hid up the whites The polished vessel was then placed on the table directly beneath the ray, drops from the two phals were poured into it, a green liquid and a black liquid, mixing together they melted into a pillar of smoke which rose and was seen only as it flowed through the beam of light, twisting and veering and spmoing in strange waves

The Widow Buckland sard not a word for a time, but contemplated the twisting shapes as they poured through the ray, breathing heavily all the while or suffering a slight sigh to pass out of her breast. But shortly the smoke played the barber a trick in his nose and heaving up his chin he rent the room with a great sneeze When he recovered himself she was speaking certam words
"Fire and water I see and a white virgin's skin The triple gouts of blood I see and the doom given over. Fire and water I see and a white virgin's skin"

She threw open the shutter, letting in the light, smoke had ceased to rise but it filled the parlour with a sweet smell "Well ." said Mr Pıffingcap dubiously
And the Widow Buckland spoke over to hum plandy and slowly, patting his shoulder at each syllable,
"Fire and water and a white virgin's skin."
Unlatching the door she thrust him out of the house into the sunlight. He tramped away across the heath meditating her words, and coming to the end of it he sat down in the shade of a bush by the side of the road, for he felt sure he was about to capture the full meaning of her words But just then he heard a strange voice speaking, and speaking very vigorously He looked up and observed a man on a bicycle, riding along toward him, talking to hımself in a great way.
"He is a political fellow rehearsing a speech," said Mr. Piffingcap to humself, "or perhaps he is some holy-minded person devising a sermon"

It was a very bald man and he had a long face hung with glasses, he had no coat and rode in his shirt and knockerbockers, with hot thick stockings and white shoes The barber watched hum after he had passed and noted how his knees turned angularly outwards at each upward movement, and how his saddlebag hung at the bottom of his back like some ronical label
"Fooll" exclaumed Mr Piffingcap, rising angrily, for the man's chatter had driven his mind clean away from the Widow Buckland's meaning But it was only for a short whule, and when he got home he called one of his daughters into the saloon.
"My child," said Puffingcap, "you know the great trouble which is come on me?" and he told Bersa his difficulty and requested her and, that is to say. would she go down in the early morning in her skin only and recover the pot?
"Indeed no, father"" sard his daughter Bersa, "it is a very evil thing and I will not do your request."
"You will not?" says he
"No!" says sbe, but it was not in the fear of her getting her death that she ref used him

So he called to another of his daughters
"My child," sard he, "you know the great trouble that is come on me," and be told Mavie his desire and asked for her and
"Why, my father," says she, "this is a thing which a black hag has put on us all and I will get my death I love you as I love my life, father, but I won't do thus!"
"You will not?" says he
"No!" says she, but it was not for fear of her death she refused him
And he went to his third daughter Grue and tried her with the same thing "My child, you know the trouble that's come on me?"
"Oh, will you let me alone!" she says, "I've greater trouble on me than your mouldy pot "And it is true what she said of her trouble, for she was a girl of a loose habit. So the barber said no more to them and went to his bed
Two days later, it being Saturday, he opened in the morning his saloon and sat down there And while he read his newspaper in the empty place footsteps scampered into his doorway, and the door itself was pushed open just an inch or two
"Come in," he sadd, rising
The door opened fully
"Zennybody here?" whispered Polly walking in very mysteriously, out of breath, and dressed in a long macintosh
"What is the matter, my little one?" he asked, puttung his arm around her shoulders, for he had a fondness for her. "Ach, your har's all wet, what's the matter?"

The little girl put her hand under the macintosh and drew out the leaden pot, handing it to the barber and smiling at hirn with inartuculate but intense happiness She said not a word as he stared his surprise and joy
"Why Poolly, my dear, how did you get 1 t?"
"I drved in and got it"
"You never you princess youl"
"I just bun and come straght here with 1 t."

She opened and shut the macintosh quickly, displaying for a brief glance her little white naked figure with the slightest tremulous crook at the sharp knees
"Ah, my darling," exclaimed the enraptured barber, "and you're shivering with not a rag on you but them shoes .. run away home, Polly, and get some things on, Polly . and Polly, Polly!" as she darted away, "come back quick, won't you?"

She nodded brightly back at him as she sprang through the doorway He went to the entrance and watched her taking her twnakling leaps, as bonny as a young foal, along the pavement.

And there came into the barber's mund the notion that this was all agan a prece of fancy tricks, but there was the dark pot, and he examined it Thoughtfully he took it into his backyard and busied himself there for a while, not telling his daughters of its recovery When, later, Polly jomed him in the garden he had already rased a big fire in an old ron brazier which had lain there
"Ah, Polly my dear, I'm overjoyed to get it back, but I dasn't keep it . it's a bad thing Take it in your fingers now, my dear little girl, and just chuck it in that fire Ah, we must melt the wickedness out of it," he sard, observing her disappountment, "it's been the death of three men and we dasn't keep it"

They watched it among the coals until it had begun to perish drop by drop through the grating of the brazier.

Later in the day Mr Piffingcap drove Polly in a little trap to a neighbouring town to see a circus, and the parr of them had a roaring dinner at the Green Dragon Next morning when Polly brought the milk to the saloon there were Timmy James and Gregory Barnes being shaved, for beards had grown again in Bagwood

## Theodore Sturgeon

## Shomle Bop

Id never seen the place before, and I lived just down the block and around the corner I'll even give you the address, if you like "The Shottle Bop," between Twentreth and Twentyfirst streets, on Tenth Avenue in New York City You can find it if you go there looking for it. Might even be worth your While, too

But you'd better not.
"The Shottle Bop" It got me It was a small shop with a weather-beaten sign swung from a wrought crane, creaking dismally in the late fall wind I walked past it, thinking of the engagement ring in my pocket and how it had just been banded back to me by Audrey, and my mind was far removed from such things as shottle bops I was thinking that Audrey might have used a gentler term than "useless" in describing me, and her neatly turned remark about my being a "constitutional psychopathic incompetent" was as uncalledfor as it was spectacular She must have read it somewhere, balanced as it was by "And I wouldn't marry you if you were the last man on earth!" which is a notably worn cliché.
"Shottle Bopl" I muttered, and then paused, wondenng where I had picked up such oddly rhythmic syllables with which to express myself I'd seen it on that sign, of course, and it had caught my eye "And what," I asked myself, "mught be a Shottle Bop?" Myself rephed promptly, "Dunno Toddle back and have a look" So toddle I did, back along the east side of Tenth, wondering what manner of man might be running such an establishment in pursuance of what kind of business I was enlightened on the second pount by a sign in the window, all but obscured by the dust and ashes of apparent centurnes, which read

There was another line of smaller print there I rubbed at the crusted glass with my sleeve and finally was able to make out

## With things in them.

Just like that:

## WE SELL BOTTLES

With things in them.
Well of course I went in. Sometimes very delightful thrigs come in bottles, and the way I was feeling, I could stand a little delighting
"Close at!" shrilled a voice, as I pushed through the door. The voice came from a shmmering egg adrift in the air behind the counter, low-down. Peering over, I saw that it was not an egg at all, but the bald pate of an old man who was clutching the edge of the counter, his scrawny body streaming away in the slight draft from the open door, as if he were made of bubbles A mite startled, I kicked the door with my heel He immediately fell on his face, and then scrambled smuleng to his feet.
"Ah, it's good to see you agam," he rasped.
I thunk hus vocal cords were dusty, too. Everything else here was. As the door swung to, I felt as if I were inside a great dusty brain that had just closed 1ts eyes Oh yes, there was light enough But it wasn't the lamplight and it wasn't daylight It was like-like light reflected from the cheeks of pale people. Can't say I enjoyed it much
"What do you mean, 'agann'?" I asked irritably. "You never saw me before."
"I saw you when you came in and I fell down and got up and saw you again," he quibbled, and beamed. "What can I do for you?"
"Oh," I sard "Well, I saw your sign. What have you got in a bottue that I might like?"
"What do you want?"
"What've you got?"

He broke into a piping chant-I remember it yet, word for word
> "For half a buck, a vial of luck Or a bottle of nifty breaks Or a flash of joy, or Myrna Loy

> For luncheon with sirloin steaks
> "Pour out a mug from this old jug, And you'll never get wet in rains l've bottles of grins and racetrack wins And lotions to ease your pains

"Here's bottles of imps and wet-pack shrimps
From a sea unknown to man,
And an elvxir to banish fear, And the sap from the pipes of Pan.
> "Wuth the powered horn of a unicorn You can win yourself a mate, With the rich hobnob, or get a jobIt's yours at a lowered rate"

"Now wart night therel" I snapped "You mean you actually sell dragon's blood and ink from the pen of Friar Bacon and all such mumbo-jum?"

He nodded rapidly and smiled all over his improbable face.
I went on-"The genume article?"
He kept on nodding
I regarded hum for a moment "You mean to stand there with your teeth in your mouth and your bare face hanging out and tell me that in this day and age, in this city and in broad daylight, you sell such trash and then expect me-me, an enlightened intellectual-"
"You are very stupid and twice as bombastic," he said quetly

I glowered at him and reached for the doorknob-and there I froze And I mean froze For the old man whipped out an ancient bulb-type atomizer and squeezed a couple of whiffs
at me as I turned away; and so help me, I couldn't movel I could cuss, though, and boy, did I

The propnetor hopped over the counter and ran over to me. He must have been standing on a box back there, for now I could see he was barely three feet tall He grabbed my coat tails, ran up my back and sld down my arm, which was extended doorward He sat down on my wrist and swung his feet and laughed up at me. As far as I could feel, he werghed absolutely nothing

When I had run out of profanity-I pride myself on never repeating a phrase of invective-he sard, "Does that prove anything to you, my cocky and unintelligent friend? That was the essential oul from the harr of the Gorgon's head. And untul I give you an antidote, you'll stand there from now till a week text Neusday'"
"Get me out of thes," I roared, "or I smack you so hard you lose your brains through the pores in your feetl"

He giggled
I tried to tear loose again and couldn't. It was as if all my epidermis had turned to high-carbon steel. I began cussing again, but quit in desparir.
"You think altogether too much of yourself," said the proprietor of the Shottle Bop 'Look at you! Why, I wouldn't hire you to wash my windows You expect to marry a grl who is accustomed to the least of anmmal comfort, and then you get muffed because she turns you down. Why does she turn you down? Because you won't get a job. You're a nogood You're a bum He, hel And you have the nerve to walk around telling people where to get off. Now if I were in your position I would ask politely to be released, and then I would see if anyone in this shop would be good enough to sell you a bottle full of something that might help out."

Now I never apologze to anybody, and I never back down, and I never take any guff from mere tradesmen. But this was different I'd never been petnfied before, nor had my nose rubbed in so many galling truths I refented. "O K., O K; let me break away then I'll buy something"
"Your tone is sullen," he sard complacently, dropping lightly to the floor and holding his atomizer at the ready.
"You'll have to say, Please Pretty please "
"Pretty please," I sard, almost choking with humuliation
He went back of the counter and returned with a paper of powder which he had me sniff In a couple of seconds I began to sweat, and my limbs lost their rigidity so quickly that it almost threw me Id have been flat on my back if the man hadn't caught me and solicitously led me to a chair As strength dribbled back into my shocked tissues, it occurred to me that I might like to flatten this hobgoblin for pulling a trick like that. But a strange something stopped me-strange because I'd never had the experience before It was simply the idea that once I got outside I'd agree with him for having such a low opmion of me
He wasn't worrying Rubbing his hands briskly, he tumed to his shelves "Now let's see
what would be best for you, I wonder? Hm-m-m Success is something you couldn't justify Money? You don't know how to spend it. A good job? You're not fitted for one" He turned gentle eyes on me and shook his head "A sad case Tsk, tsk" I crawled "A perfect mate? Nup You're too stupid to recognaze perfection, too concerted to appreciate it I don't think that I can-Watl!"
He whipped four or five bottles and jars off the dozens of shelves behind him and disappeared somewhere in the dark recesses of the store Immediately there came sounds of violent activity-clinkings and little crashes, sturrings and then the rapid susurrant gratugg of a mortar and pestle, then the slushy sound of liqued being added to a dry ingredient during stirring, and at length, after quite a silence, the glugging of a bottle being filled through a filtering funnel The proprietor reappeared triumphantly bearing a four-ounce bottle without a label.
"This will do 1t!" he beamed.
"That will do what?"
"Why, cure youl"
"Cure-" My pompous attitude, as Audrey called it, had returned while he was mixing "What do you mean 'cure'? I haven't got anything!"
"My dear little boy," he sard offensively, "you most certauly have Are you happy? Have you ever been happy? No

Well, Im going to fix all that up. That is, I'l give you the start you need Like any other cure, it requires your cooperation.
"You're in a bad way, young fellow. You have what is known in the profession as retrogressive metempsychosis of the ego in its most malignant form. You are a constitutional unemployable, a downnght sociophagus. I don't like you. Nobody lukes you"

Feeling a little bit on the receiving end of a blita, I stammered, "W-what do you aim to do?"

He extended the bottle. "Go home Get into a room by yourself-the smaller the better. Drink this down, right out of the bottle Stand by for developments That's all"
"But-what will it do to me?"
"It will do nothing to you. It will do a great deal for you. It can do as much for you as you want it to But mind me, now. As long as you use what it gives you for your self-improvement, you will thrive Use it for self-gratification, as a bass for boasting, or for revenge, and you will suffer in the extreme Remember that, now."
"But what is it? How-."
"I am selling you a talent. You bave none now. When you discover what kind of a talent it is, it will be up to you to use it to your advantage. Now go away. I still don't like you."
"What do I owe you?" I muttered, completely snowed under by this time
"The bottle carries its own price You won't pay anything unless you faul to follow my drrections Now will you go, or must I uncork a bottle of jinn-and I don't mean London Dry?'
"I'll go," I said I'd seen something smrling in the deptbs of a ten-gallon carboy at one end of the counter, and I didn't like it a bit. "Good-bye"
"Bood-gye," he returned.
I went out and I headed down Tenth Avenue and I turned east up Twentreth Street and I never looked back And for many reasons I wish now that I had, for there was, without doubt, something very strange about that Shottle Bop.

I didn't simmer down until I got home, but once I had a cup
of black Italian coffec under my belt I felt better I was sheptical about it at last I was actually inclined to scoff But somehow I didn't want to scoff too loudly I loohed at the bottle a little scornfully, and there was a certain something about the glass of it that seemed to be staring bach at me I snuffed and threw it up behind some old hats on top of the closet, and then sat down to unlan I used to love to unlar I'd put my feet on the doorknob and slide down in the upholstery until I was siting on my shoulder blades, and as the old saying has it, "Sometimes I sets and thinks, and sometımes I just sets" The former is easy enough, and is what even an accomplished loafer has to go through before he reaches the latter and more blissful state It tahes years of practice to relax sufficiently to be able to "just set" I'd learned it years ago

But just as I was about to slip into the vegetable status, I was annoyed by something I tried to ignore it I manifested a superhuman display of lack of curiosity, but the annoyance persisted A light pressure on my elbow, where it draped over the arm of the chair I was put in the unpleasant predicament of having to concentrate on what it was, and realizing that concentration on anything was the least desirable thing there could be, I gave up finally, and with a deep sigh, opened my eyes and had a look.

It was the bottle
I screwed up my eyes and then looked agan, but it was still there The closet door was open as I had left it, and its shelf almost directly above me Must have fallen out. Feeling that if the damn thing were on the floor it couldn't fall any farther, I shoved it off the arm of the chair with my elbow

It bounced It bounced with such astonishing accuracy that it wound up in exactly the same spot it had started from-on the arm of the easy charr, by my elbow. Startled, I shoved it volently This tume I pushed it hard enough to send it against the wall, from which it rebounded to the shelf under my small table, and thence back to the chair arm-and this tume it perched cozaly against my shoulder Jarred by the bouncing, the stopper hopped out of the bottle mouth and
rolled into my lap; and there I sat, breathing the bittersweet fumes of its contents, feeling frightened and sully as hell

I grabbed the bottle and snuffed I'd smelled that somewhere before-where was 1 t? $\mathrm{Uh}-\mathrm{oh}$, yes; that mascara the Chinese honkytonk girls use in Frisco The liquid was darksmoky black. I tasted it cautiously. It wasn't bad If it wasn't alcoholic, then the old man in the shop had found a darn good substrtute for alcohol At the second sip I liked at and at the third I really enjoyed it and there wasn't any fourth because by then the little bottle was a dead marine. That was about the time I remembered the name of the black mgredient with the funny smell Kohl It is an herb the Orientals use to make it possible to see supernatural beings Silly superstition! And then the liquid I'd just put away, lying warm and comfortable in my stomach, began to fizz. Then I think it began to swell I tried to get up and couldn't. The room seemed to come apart and throw itself at me precemeal, and I passed out.

Don't you ever wake up the way I did. For your own sake, be careful about things luke that Don't swim up out of a sodden sleep and look around you and see all those things fluttering and drffong and flying and creeping and crawling around you-puffy things dripping blood, and filmy, legless creatures, and little bits and snatches of pasty human anatomy It was awful. There was a human hand afloat in the arr an inch away from my nose, and at my startled gasp it drifted away from me, fingers fluttering in the disturbed air from my breath Something veined and bulbous popped out from under my chair and rolled across the floor. I heard a faint clicking, and looked up into a gnashing set of jaws without any face attached I think I broke down and cried a little I know I passed out agam.

The next time I awoke-must have been hours later, because it was broad daylight and my clock and watch had both stopped-things were a little better. Oh , yes, there were a few of the horrors around But somehow they didn't bother me much now. I was practically convinced that I was nuts; now that I bad the conviction, why worry about it? I dunno; it must have been one of the ingredrents in the bottle that had
calmed me down so I was currous and excited, and tbat's about all I looked around me and I was almost pleased.

The walls were green! The drab wallpaper had turned to something breathtakingly beautuful. They were covered with what seemed to be moss, but never moss like that grew for human eyes to see before It was long and thick, and it had a slight perpetual movement-not that of a breeze, but of growth. Fascinated, I moved over and looked closely Growing indeed, with all the quick magic of spore and cyst and root and growth agan to spore, and the swift magic of it was only a part of the magical whole, for never was there such a green I put my hand to touch and stroke it, but I felt only the wallpaper But when I closed my fingers on it, I could feel that light touch of it in the palm of my hand, the weight of twenty sunbeams, the soft resilience of jet-darkness in a closed place The sensation was a delicate ecstasy, and never have I been happier than I was at that moment

Around the baseboards were little snowy toadstools, and the floor was grassy Up the hinged side of the closet door climbed a mass of flowerng vines, and therr petals were hued in tones indescribable I felt as if I had been blind until now, and deaf, too, for now I could hear the whispering of scarlet, gauzy insects among the leaves and the constant murmur of growth All around me was a new and lovely world, so delicate that the wind of my movements tore petals from the flowers, so real and natural that it defied its own impossibility Awestruck, I turned and turned, runnung from wall to wall, lookng under my old furniture, into my old books, and everywhere I looked I found newer and more beautuful things to wonder at. It was whule I was flat on my stomach looking up at the bed springs, where a colony of jewel-IIke lizards had nested, that I first heard the sobbing.

It was young and plantive, and had no nght to be in my room where everything was so happy I stood up and looked around, and there in the conner crouched the translucent figure of a little girl She was leaning back aganst the wall. Her thin legs were crossed in front of her, and she held the leg of a tattered toy elephant dejectedly in one hand and cried into the other Her hair was long and dark, and it poured and tumbled over her face and shoulders

I said, "What's the matter, kiddo?" I hate to hear a chuld cry like that.

She cut herself off in the muddle of a sob and shook the hair out of her eyes, looking up and past me, all fright and olive skin and big, filled violet eyes "Oh!" she squeaked.

I repeated, "What's the matter? Why are you crying?"
She hugged the elephant to her breast defensively, and whimpered, "W-where are you?"

Surprised, I said, "Right here in front of you, chuld Can't you see me?"

She shook ber head. "I'm scared. Who are you?"
"I'm not going to hurt you I heard you crying, and I wanted to see if I conld help you Can't you see me at all?' "No," she whispered "Are you an angel?"
I guffawed. "By no means!" I stepped closer and put my hand on her shoulder The hand went right through her and she winced and shrank away, uttering a little wordless cry "I'm sorry," I said quickly. "I didn't mean . . . you can't see me at all? I can see you."

She shook her head again. "I thook you're a ghost", she said.
"Do tell!" I said "And what are you?"
"I'm Ginny," she sard "I have to stay here, and I have no one to play with." She blinked, and there was a suspicion of further tears
"Where did you come from?" I asked
"I came here with my mother," she said. "We lived in lots of other rooming houses Mother cleaned floors in office buildings But this is where I got so sick. I was sick a long time Then one day I got off the bed and came over here but then when I looked back I was stll on the bed It was awful funny. Some men came and put the 'me' that was on the bed onto a stretcher-thung and took it-me-out After a while Mummy left, too She cried for a long tume before she left, and when I called to her she couldn't hear me. She never came back, and I just got to stay here"
"Why?"
"Oh, I got to. I-don't know why I just-got to."
"What do you do here?"
"I just stay here and think about things Once a lady lived
here, had a little grl just like me We used to play together until the lady watched us one day She carried on somethin' awful She said her little grl was possessed The gurl kept callin' me, 'Ginny' Ginny! Tell Mamma you're here!', an' I tried, but the lady couldn't see me Then the lady got scared an' picked up her hittle gurl an' cried, an' so I was sorry I ran over here an' hid, an' after a whule the other little girl forgot about me, I gucss They moved," she finished with pathetic finality
I was touched "What will become of you, Gnny?"
"I dunno," she sard, and her voice was troubled "I guess Ill just stay here and wait for Mummy to come back. I been here a long time I guess I deserve it, to "

## "Why, chlld?"

She looked guiltily at her shoes "I couldn' stand feelin' so awful bad when I was sick I got up out of bed before it was tume I shoulda stayed where I was This is what I get for quittin' But Mummy'll be back, just you see "
"Sure she will," I muttered My throat felt tight. "You take it easy, kd Any time you want someone to talk to, you just pipe up I'll talk to you any time I'm around "

She smiled, and it was a pretty thing to see What a raw deal for a kidl I grabbed my hat and went out

Outside things were the same as in the room to me The hallways, the dusty star carpets wore new garments of brllant, nearly intangible folage They were no longer dark, for each leaf had its own pale and different light Once in a while I saw things not quite so pretty There was a giggling thing that scuttled back and forth on the third floor landing. It was a little indistinct, but it looked a great deal like Barrel-head Brogan, a shanty-Insh bum who'd returned from a warehouse robbery a year or so ago, only to shoot humself accidentally with his own gun I wasn't sorry

Down on the first floor, on the bottom step, I saw two youngsters sittong The girl had her head on the boy's shoulder, and he had his arms around her, and I could see the banster through them I stopped to listen Their voices were faint, and seemed to come from a long way away.

He said, "There's one way out."
She sand, "Don't talk that way, Tommy!"
"What else can we do? I've loved you for three years, and we still can't get married No money, no hope-no nothing Sue, if we did do $1 t$, I just know we'd always be together Always and always-"

After a long time she said, "All night, Tommy You get a gun, like you sard" She suddenly pulled him even closer "Oh, Tommy, are you sure we'll always be together just like this?"
"Always," he whispered, and kissed her "Just like ths" Then there was a long sllence, whule netther moved Suddenly they were as I had first seen them, and he said.
"There's only one way out"
And she said, "Don't talk that way, Tommyl"
And he said, "What else can we do? I've loved you for three years-" It went on like that, over and over and over.

I felt lousy I went on out into the street
It began to filter through to me what had happened The man in the shop had called it a "talent." I couldn't be crazy, could I? I didn't feel crazy The draught from the bottle had opened my eyes on a new world What was this world?

It was a thing peopled by ghosts There they were-storybook ghosts, and regular haunts, and poor damned souls-all the fixings of a storied supernatural, all the things we have heard about and loudly disbelieved and secretly wonder about. So what? What had it all to do with me?

As the days shd by, I wondered less about my new, strange surroundings, and gave more and more thought to that question I had bought-or been given-a talent. I could see ghosts I could see all parts of a ghostly world, even the vegetation that grew in it. That was perfectly reasonable-the trees and birds and fungi and flowers $A$ ghost world is a world as we know it, and a world as we know it must have vegetation Yes, I could see them But they couldn't see me!

O K., what could I get out of it? I couldn't talk about it or write about it because I wouldn't be beleved, and besides, I had this thing exclusive, as far as I knew, why cut a lot of other people in on at?

On what, though?
No, unless I could get a steer from somewhere, there was
no percentage in it for me that I could see And then, about six days after I took that cye-opener, I remember the one place where I might get that steer

## The Shottle Bop!

I was on Sixth Avenue at the time, trying to find something in a five-and-dime that Ginny might like She couldn't touch anything I brought her but she enjoyed things she could look at-picture books and such By getting her a little book on photographs of trains since the "De Witt Clunton," and asking her which of them was like ones she had seen, I found out approxmately how long it was she'd been there Nearly eighteen years Anyway, I got my bright idea and headed for Tenth Avenue and the Shottle Bop I'd ask that old manhe'd tell me And when I got to Twenty-first Street, I stopped and stared Facing me was a blank wall The whole side of the block was vord of people There was no sign of a shop

I stood there for a full two minutes not even daring to think Then I walked downtown toward Twentieth, and then uptown to Twenty-first Then I did it again No shop I wound up without my question answered-what was I gomg to do with this "talent"?

I was talkng to Ginny one afternoon about this and that when a human leg, from the knee down, complete and puffy, drifted between us I recoiled in horror, but Ginny pushed it gently with one hand It bent under the touch, and started toward the window, which was open a little at the bottom. The leg floated toward the crack and was sucked through like a cloud of cigarette smoke, reforming agan on the other side It bumbled aganst the pane for a moment and then ballooned away
"My gosh!" I breathed "What was that?"
Ginny laughed "Oh, just one of the Things that's all 'e tume flying around Did it scare you? I used to be scared, but I saw so many of them that I don't care any more, so's they don't light on me"
"But what in the name of all that's disgusting are they?"
"Parts" Ginny was all childish savoir-farre
"Parts of what?"
"People, silly. It's some kind of a game, I think You see, if someone gets hurt and loses something-a finger or an ear or something, why, the ear-the inside part of 1 , I mean, the me being the inside of the 'me' they carried out of here-lt goes back to where the person who owned it lived last. Then it goes back to the place before that, and so on. It doesn't go very fast Then when something happens to a whole person, the 'inside' part comes looking for the rest of itself It picks up bit after bit-Look ${ }^{\text {" }}$, she put out a filmy forefinger and thumb and nupped a flake of gossamer out of the arr

I leaned over and looked closely, it was a small section of semitransparent human skin, ridged and whorled
"Somebody must have cut bis finger," sard Ginny matter-of-factly, "while he was living in this room. When something happens to um-you see! He'll be back for it!"
"Good heavens"' I said "Does this happen to everyone?"
"I dunno Some people have to stay where they are-like me But I guess if you haven't done nothing to deserve bein' kept in one place, you have to come all around pickin' up what you lost"

I'd thought of more pleasant things in my time.
For several days Id noticed a gray ghost hovering up and down the block He was always on the street, never inside He whimpered constantly. He was-or had been-a little inoffensive man of the bowler hat and starched collar type He pard no attention to me-none of them did, for I was apparently invisible to them But I saw him so often that pretty soon I realized that I'd miss him if he went away I decided I'd chat with him the next tume I saw him.

I left the house one morning and stood around for a few munutes in front of the brownstone steps Sure enough, pressing through the flotsam of my new, weird co-existent world, came the slum figure of the wrath I had noticed, his rabbit face screwed up, his eyes deep and sad, and his swallowtal coat and striped waistcoat immaculate I stepped up behind him and said, "Hil"

He started violently and would have run away, I'm sure, if he'd known where my voice was coming from
"Take it easy, pal," I said "I won't hurt you"
"Who are you?"
"You wouldn't know if I told you," I said "Now stop shivening and tell me about yourself "

He mopped hus ghostly face with a ghostly handkerchref, and then began fumbing nervously with a gold toothpick. "My word," he sald "No one's talked to me for years I'm not quite myself, you see "
"I see," I said "Well, take it easy. I just happen to've noticed you wandering around here lately. I got curious. You looking for somebody?"
"Oh, no," he sard Now that he had a chance to talk about his troubles, he forgot to be afraid of this mysterious voice from nowhere that had accosted him "I'm looking for my home"
"Hm-m-m," I said. "Been lookıng for a long tıme?"
"Oh, yes" His nose twitched "I left for work one morning a long time ago, and when I got off the ferry at Battery Place I stopped for a moment to watch the work on that newfangled elevated railroad they were building down there All of a sudden there was a loud noise-my goodness! It was ter-rible-and the next thing I knew I was standing back from the curb and looking at a man who looked just like me! A "grder had fallen, and-my word!" He mopped his face again. "Since then I have been lookng and lookng I can't seem to find anyone who knows where I might have lived, and I don't understand all the thangs I see floating around me, and I never thought Id see the day when grass would grow on lower Broadway-oh, it's terrible " He began to cry
I felt sorry for hum I could easily see what had happened The shock was so great that even his ghost had amnesial Poor little egg-until he was whole, he could find no rest. The thing interested me Would a ghost react to the usual cures for amnesia? If so, then what would happen to hum?
"You say you got off a ferryboat?"
"Then you must have lived on the Island . Staten Island, over there across the bay'"'
"You really think so?" He stared through me, puzzled and hopeful
"Why sure! Say, how'd you like me to take you over there?
Maybe we can find your house"

## "Yes"

"Oh, that would be splendid' But-oh, my, what will my wrfe say?"

I grinned "She might want to know where you've been. Anyway, she'll be glad to see you back, I imagne Come on; let's get going!"

I gave hum a shove in the direction of the subways and strolled along behind hum Once in a whule I got a stare from a passer-by for walking with one hand out in front of me and talkıng into thin air. It didn't bother me very much My companion, though, was very self-conscious about $1 t$, for the inhabitants of his world screeched and giggled when they sam him doing practically the same thing Of all the humans, only I was invisible to them, and the little ghost in the bowler hat blushed from embarrassment untal I thought he'd burst.

We hopped a subway-it was a new experience for him, I gathered-and went down to South Ferry. The subway system in New York is a very unpleasant place to one gifted as I was Everything that enjoys lurking in the dark hangs out there, and there is a quite a crop of dismembered human remans After this day I took the bus
We got a ferry without waitıng. The little gray ghost got a real kick out of the trip He asked me about the ships in the harbor and their flags, and marveled at the dearth of sailugg vessels He tsk, tsked at the Statue of Liberty; the last time he had seen $1 t$, he said, was while it still had its original brassy gold color, before it got its patina By this I placed him in the late seventies, he must have been looking for bis home for over sixty years!

We landed at the Island, and from there I gave him his head At the top of Fort Hull he suddenly said, "My name is John Quigg I live at 45 Fourth Avenuel" I've never seen anyone quite so delighted as he was by the discovery And from then on it was easy He turned left again, straight down for two blocks and agan right. I noticed-he didn't-that the street was marked "Winter Avenue" I remembered vaguely that the streets in this section had been numbered years ago

He trotted briskly up the hill and then suddenly stopped and turned vaguely "I say, are you stll with me?"
"I'm all right now I can't tell you how much I appreciate this Is there anything I could do for you?"

I considered "Hardly We're of different times, you know. Things change "

He looked, a little pathetically, at the new apartment house on the corner and nodded "I think I know what happened to me," he said softly "But I guess it's all right I made a will, and the hids were grown"He sighed "But if it hadn"t been for you I'd stlll be wandering around Manhattan Let's seeah, come with me!"

He suddenly broke into a run. I followed as quickly as I could Almost at the top of the hull was a huge old shingled house, with a silly cupola and a complete lack of paint. It was dirty and it was tumble-down, and at the sight of it the little fellow's face twisted sadly. He gulped and turned through a gap in the hedge and down beside the house Casting about in the long grass, he spotted a boulder sunk deep into the turf
"Thus is it," he sard "Just you dig under that There is no mention of it in my will, except a small fund to keep payng the box rent. Yes, a safety-deposit box, and the key and an authority are under that stone I hid it"-he giggled-"from my wife one nught, and never did get a chance to tell her You can have whatever's any good to you" He turned to the house, squared his shoulders, and marched in the side door, which banged open for him in a convement gust of wind I listened for a moment and then smuled at the trade that burst forth Old Quigg was catching real hell from his wife, who'd sat wattong for over suxty years for huml It was a bitter stream of invective, but-well, she must have loved him. She couldn't leave the place until she was complete, if Ginny's theory was correct, and she wasn't really complete untul her husband came home! It tickled me They'd be all right now!

I found an old pinchbar on the drive and attacked the ground around the stone It took quite a while and made my hands bleed, but after a while I pried the stone up and was able to scrabble around under 1. Sure enough, there was an onled silk pouch under there I caught it up and carefully unwrapped the strings around 1 t. Inside was a key and a letter
addressed to a New York bank, designating only "Bearer" and authorizing the use of the key. I laughed aloud. Little old meek and mild John Quigg, I'd bet, had set aside some "mad money." With a layout like that, a man could take a powder without leaving a single sign The son-of-a-gun' I would never know just what it was he had up his sleeve, but I'll bet there was a woman in the case Even fixed up with his will! Ah, well-I should kick!

It didn't take me long to get over to the bank. I had a little trouble getting into the vaults, because it took quite a while to look up the box in the old records But I finally cleared the red tape, and found myself the proud possessor of just under eight thousand bucks in small bills-and not a yellowback among 'em!

Well, from then on I was pretty well set What ddd I do? Well, first I bought clothes, and then, I started out to cut se for myself. I clubbed around a bit and got to know a lot of people, and the more I knew the more I realized what a lot of superstrtious dopes they were. I couldn't blame anyone for skirting a ladder under which crouched a genune basilsk, of course, but what the heck-not one in a thousand have beasts under them' Anyway, my question was answered I dropped two grand on an elegant office with drapes and dim indirect lighting, and I got me a phone installed and a little quiet sign on the door-Psycbic Consultant And, boy, I did all right

My customers were mostly upper crust, because I came high It was generally no trouble to get contact with people's dead relatives, which was usually what they wanted Most ghosts are crazy to get in contact with this world anyway. That's one of the reasons that almost anyone can become a medium of sorts if he tries hard enough; Lord knows that it doesn't take much to contact the average ghost. Some, of course, were not available If a man leads a pretty square life, and kicks off leaving no loose ends, he gets clear I never did find out where these clear spints went to. All I knew was that they weren't to be contacted But the vast majority of people have to go back and tie up those loose ends after they die-righting a little wrong here, helping someone they've hundered, cleaning $u_{p}$ a bit of dirty work. That's where luck
itself comes from, I do believe. You don't get something for nothing
If you get a nice break, it's been arranged that way by someone who did you dirt in the past, or someone who did wrong to your father or your grandfather or your great-uncle Julus Everything evens up in the long run, and until it does, some poor damned soul is wandenng around the earth trying to do something about it. Half of humanity is walking around crabbing about its tough breaks If you and you and you only knew what dozens of powers were begging for the chance to help you if you'll let them! And if you let them, you'll help clear up the mess they've made of therr lives here, and free them to go wherever it is they go when they've cleaned up. Next tume you're in a jam, go away somewhere by yourself and open your mind to these folks They'll cut in and guide you all right, if you can drop your smugness and your mistaken confidence in your own judgment.
I had a couple of ghostly stooges to run errands for me One of them, an ex-murderer by the name of One-eye Rachuba, was the fastest spook ever I saw, when it came to locating a wanted ancestor, and then there was Professor Grafe, a frog-faced teacher of social scrence who'd embezzled from a charity fund and fallen into the Hudson tryng to make a getaway He could trace the most devious genealogies in mere seconds, and deduce the most likely whereabouts of the ghost of a missing relative The parr of them were all the office force I could use, and although every time they helped out one of my chents they came closer to freedom for themselves, they were both so entangled with their own sloppy lives that I was sure of therr services for years

But do you think I'd be satisfied to stay where I was making money hand over fist without really working for it? Oh, no Not me No, I had to big-tume I had to brood over the events of the last few months, and I had to get dramatic about that screwball Audrey, who really wasn't worth my trouble It wasn't enough that Pd prove Audrey wrong when she said I'd never amount to anything And I wasn't happy when I thought about the gang I had to show them up

I even remembered what the hittle man in the Shottle Bop had said to me about using my "talent" for braggng or for
revenge. I figured I had the edge on everyone, everything Cocky, I was Why, I could send one of my ghostly stooges out any time and find out exactly what anyone had been doing three hours ago come Michaelmas With the shade of the professor at my shoulder, I could back-track on any farfetched statement and give ummedrate and logical reasons for back-tracking No one had anything on me, and I could out-talk, out-maneuver, and out-smart anyone on earth I was really quite a fellow I began to think, "What's the use of my doing as well as this when the gang on the West Side don't know anything about 1 t?" and "Man, would that half-wit Happy Sam burn up if he saw me drifting down Broadway in my new six-thousand-dollar roadster" and "To think I used to waste my tume and tears on a dope like Audrey!" In other words, I was tripping up on an inferiority complex I acted like a veridam fool, which I was I went over to the West Side

It was a chilly, late winter might I'd taken a lot of trouble to dress myself and my car so we'd be bright and shiming and would knock some eyes out. Pity I couldn't brighten my brans up a little

I drove up in front of Casey's pool room, being careful to do it too fast, and concentrating on shrieks from the tres and a shuddering twenty-four-cylinder roar from the engme before I cut the switch I didn't hurry to get out of the car, either. Just leaned back and lit a fifty-cent cigar, and then tipped my hat over one ear and touched the horn button, causing it to play "Tuxedo Junction" for forty-erght seconds. Then I looked over toward the pool hall.

Well, for a minute I thought that I shouldn't have come, If that was the effect my return to the fold was going to have. And from then on I forgot about everything except how to get out of here
There were two figures slouched in the glowing doorway of the pool room It was up a small stde street, so short that the city had depended on the place, an old institution, to supply the street lighting Looking carefully, I made out one of the sllhouetted figures as Happy Sam, and the other was Fred Bellew They just looked out at me, they didn't move, they didn't say anytbing, and when I sard, "Hiya, small fryremember me?" I noticed that along the darkened walls
flanking the bright doorway were ranked the whole crowd of them-the whole gang It was a shock, it was a little too casually perfect. I didn't lihe it
"H,", said Fred quictly I knew he wouldn't like the bigtuming I didn't expect any of them to like 1 t, of course, but Fred's dislike sprang from distaste, and the others from resentment, and for the first tume I felt a little cheap I climbed out over the door of the roadster and let them have a gander at my fine feathers

Sam snorted and sard, "Jellybcan!" very clearly Someone else giggled, and from the darkness beside the building came a high-pitched, "Woo-wool"
I walked up to Sam and grinned at him I didn't feel like gnnoing "I ain't seen you in so long I almost forgot what a heel you were," I sard "How you making?"
"I'm doing all right," he sard, and added offensively, "I'm still worhing for a living"

The murmur that ran through the crowd told me that the really smart thing to do was to get back into that shiny new automoble and hoot along out of there I stayed
"Wise, huh?" I sard weakly.
They'd been drinking, I realized-all of them. I was suddenly in a spot Sam put his hands in his pockets and looked at me down his nose He was the only short man that ever could do that to me After a thick silence he sald
"Better get back to yer crystal balls, phony We luke guys that sweat We even like guys that have rackets, if they run them because they're smarter or tougher than the next one But luck and gab an't enough Scram"

I looked around helplessly I was getting what I'd begged for What had I expected, anyway? Had I thought that these boys would crowd around and shake my hand off for acting this way?

They hardly moved, but they were all around me suddenly If I couldn't think of something quickly, I was going to be mobbed And when those mugs started mobbing a man, they did it up just fine I drew a deep breath
"I'm not asking for anything from you, Sam. Nothing;
that means advice, see?"
"You're gettin' it?" he flared "You and your seeanses

We heard about you. Hanging up widdow-women for fifty bucks a throw to talk to their 'dear departed'! P-sykik investigator' What a line! Go on, beat 1t!"

I had a leg to stand on now "A phony, huh? Why I'll bet I could put a haunt on you that would make that harr of yours stand up on end, if you have guts enough to go where I tell you to"
"You'll bet? That's a laugh. Listen at that, gang" He laughed, then turned to me and talked through one side of his mouth. "All right, you wanted it Come on, rich guy, you're called Fred'll hold stakes How about ten of your lousy bucks for every one of mine? Here, Fred-hold this sawbuck"
"Ill give you twenty to one," I said half hysterically. "And I'll take you to a place where you'll run up aganst the homelest, plumb-meanest old haunt you ever heard of "

The crowd roared Sam laughed with them, but didn't try to back out With any of that gang, a bet was a bet. He'd taken me up, and he'd set odds, and he was bound I just nodded and put two century notes into Fred Bellew's hand. Fred and Sam climbed into the car, and just as we started, Sam leaned out and waved
"See you in hell, fellas," he said "I'm goin' to rase me a ghost, and one of us is going to scare the other one to death!"

I honked my horn to drown out the whooping and hollering from the sidewalk and got out of there I turned up the parkway and headed out of town
"Where to?" Fred asked after a while.
"Stick around," I said, not knowing
There must be some place not far from here where I could find an honest-to-God haunt, I thought, one that would make Sam back-track and set me up with the boys agan I opened the compartment in the dashboard and let Ikey out Ikey was a little twisted mp who'd got his tall caught in between two sheets of steel when they were assembling the car, and had to stay there until it was junked
"Hey, Ike," I whispered He looked up, the gleam of the compartment light shining redly in his bright little eyes "Whistle for the professor, will you? I don't want to yell for hum because those mugs in the back seat will hear me They can't hear you."
"O K, boss," he said, and putting his fingers to his lips, he gave vent to a blood-curdling, howling scream

That was the prof's call-letters, as it were The old man flew ahead of the car, curcled around and slid in beside me through the window, which I'd opened a crack for him.
"My goodness," he panted, "I wish you wouldn't summon me to a location which is traveling with this high degree of celenty It was all I could do to catch up with you"
'Don't give me that, Professor," I whispered "You can catch a stratoliner if you want to Say, I have a guy in the back who wants to get a real scare from a ghost. Know of any around here?"

The professor put on his ghostly pince-nez 'Why, yes. Remember my telling you about the Wolfmeyer place?"
"Golly-he's bad "
"He'll serve your purpose admirably But don't ask me to go there with you None of us ever associates with Wolfmeyer And for heaven's sake, be careful"
'I guess I can handle hum Where is it?"
He gave me explicit directions, bade me good nught and left. I was a little surprised, the professor traveled around with me a great deal, and I'd never seen him refuse a chance to see some new scenery I shrugged it off and went my way. I guess I just didn't know any better

I headed out of town and into the country to a certan old farmhouse Wolfmeyer, a Pennsylvana Dutchman, had hung himself there He had been, and was, a bad egg Instead of being a nuce guy about it all, he was the rebel type He knew perfectly well that unless he did plenty of good to make up for the evll, he'd be stuck where he was for the rest of etermity That didn't seem to bother him at all He got surly and became a really bad spook Eight people had died in that house since the old man rotted off his own rope Three of them were tenants who had rented the place, and three were hobos, and two were psychic investigators They'd all hung themselves That's the way Wolfmeyer worked I think he really enjoyed haunting He certanly was thorough about it anyway

I didn't want to do any real harm to Happy Sam I just wanted to teach hum a lesson And look what happened!

We reached the place just before midnight No one had sald much, except that I told Fred and Sam about Wolfmeyer, and pretty well what was to be expected from him They did a good deal of laughing about it, so I just shut up and drove The next item of conversation was Fred's, when he made the terms of the bet To win, Sam was to stay in the house until dawn He wasn't to call for help and he wasn't to leave. He had to bring in a coll of rope, tie a noose in one end and string the other up on "Wolfmeyer's Beam"-the great oaken beam on which the old man had hung himself, and eight others after hım This was an added temptation to Wolfmeyer to work on Happy Sam, and was my idea I was to go in with Sam, to watch him in case the thing became too dangerous Fred was to stay in the car a hundred yards down the road and watt.

I parked the car at the agreed distance and Sam and I got out Sam had my tow rope over his shoulder, already noosed. Fred had quieted down considerably, and his face was dead serious.
"I don't think I like this," he said, looking up the road at the house It hunched back from the highway, and looked luke a malign being deep in thought.

I sard, "Well, Sam? Want to pay up now and call it quits?"
He followed Fred's gaze It sure was a dreary-looking place, and hus lquor had fizzed away. He thought a minute, then shrugged and grinned I had to admire the rat. "Hell, I'll go through with it. Can't bluff me with scenery, phony."

Surprisingly, Fred piped up, "I don't think he's a phony, Sam."

The resistance made Sam stubborn, though I could see by his face that he knew better. "Come on, phony," he said and swung up the road

We climbed into the house by way of a cellar door that slanted up to a window on the first floor I hauled out a flashlight and lit the way to the beam It was only one of many that delighted in turning the sound of one's footsteps into laughing whispers that ran round and round the rooms and halls and would not die Under the famous beam the dusty fioor was dark-staned

I gave Sam a hand in fixing the rope, and then clicked off
the light. It must have been tough on him then. I didn't mind, because I knēw I could see anything before it got to me, and even then, no ghost could see me Not only that, for me the walls and floors and ceilings were lit with the phosphorescent many-hued glow of the ever-present ghost plants For its eerie effect I wished Sam could see the ghost-molds feeding greedily on the stain under the beam

Sam was already breathing heavily, but I knew it would take more than just darkness and silence to get his goat. He'd have to be alone, and then he'd have to have a visitor or so
"So long, kıd," I said, slapping him on the shoulder, and I turned and walked out of the room

I let him hear me go out of the house and then I crept silently back It was without doubt the most deserted place I have ever seen Even ghosts kept away from it, excepting, of course, Wolfmeyer's There was just the luxurious vegetation, invisible to all but me, and the deep sılence rippled by Sam's breath After ten minutes or so I knew for certain that Happy Sam had more guts than I'd ever have credited hum with He had to be scared He couldn't-or wouldn't-scare himself

I crouched down against the walls of an adjoining room and made myself comfortable I figured Wolfmeyer would be along pretty soon I hoped earnestly that I could stop the thing before it got too far No use in making this any more than a good lesson for a wiseacre I was feeling pretty smug about it all, and I was totally unprepared for what happened

I was looking toward the doorway opposite when I realızed that for some minutes there had been the palest of pale glows there It brightened as I watched, brightened and flıckered gently It was green, the green of things moldy and rotting away, and with it came a subtly harrowing stench It was the smell of flesh so very dead that it had ceased to be really odorous It was utterly horrible, and I was honestly scared out of my wits It was some moments before the comforting thought of my invulnerability came back to me, and I sbrank lower and closer to the wall and watched

And Wolfmeyer came in.
Hes was the ghost of an old, old man. He wore a flowing,
filthy robe, and his bare forearms thrust out in front of hım were stringy and strong His head, with its tangled hair and beard, quivered on a broken, runed neck like the blade of a knufe just thrown into soft wood Each slow step as he crossed the room set his head to quivering agan $\mathrm{H} s$ eyes were alught, red they were, with deep green flames buried in them His canine teeth had lengthened into yellow, blunt tusks, and they were like pillars supporting his crooked grin The putrescent green glow was a horrid halo about hm. He was a bright and evil thing

He passed me completely unconscious of my presence and paused at the door of the room where Sam waited by the rope He stood just outside it, his claws extended, the quivering of his head slowly dying He stared in at Sam, and suddenly opened his mouth and howled It was a quiet, deadly sound, one that might have come from the throat of a distant dog, but, though I couldn't see into the other room, I knew that Sam had jerked his head around and was staring at the ghost. Wolfmeyer raised his arms a trifle, seemed to totter a bit, and then moved into the room

I snapped myself out of the crawling terror that gripped me and scrambled to my feet If I didn't move fast-

Tiptoeing swiftly to the door, I stopped just long enough to see Wolfmeyer beating his arms about erratically over his head, a movement that made his robe flutter and his whole figure pulsate in the green light, just long enough to see Sam on his feet, wide-eyed, staggering back and back toward the rope He clutched his throat and opened his mouth and made no sound, and his head tilted, his neck bent, his twisted face gaped at the ceiling as he clumped backward away from the ghost and into the ready noose. And then I leaned over Wolfmeyer's shoulder, put my lips to his ear, and sard.
"Bool"
I almost laughed Wolfmeyer gave a little squeak, jumped about ten feet, and, without stopping to look around, hightarled out of the room so fast that he was just a blur That was one scared old spook!

At the same tume Happy Sam straightened, his face relaxed and relieved, and sat down with a bump under the noose That was as close a thing as ever I want to see He sat
there, his face soaking wet with cold sweat, his hands between his hnees, staring limply at his feet
"That'll show you!" I exulted, and walked over to him "Pay up, scum, and you may starve for that week's pay!" He didn't move I guess he was plenty shocked
"Come on'" I sald "Pull yourself together, man! Haven't you seen enough? That old fellow will be back any second now On your feet!"

He didn't move
"Sam!"
He didn't move
"Sam!" I clutched at his shoulder He pitched over sideways and lay still He was quite dead

I didn't do anything and for a while I didn't say anythıng Then I sard hopelessly, as I knelt there, "Aw, Sam Samcut it out, fella"
After a minute I rose slowly and started for the door I'd taken three steps when I stopped Something was happening! I rubbed my hand over my eyes Yes, it is-1t was getting dark! The vague luminescence of the vines and flowers of the ghost world was getting dımmer, fadıng, fadıng-

But that had never happened before!
No difference I told myself desperately, it's happenıng now, all right $I$ got to get out of here!

See? You see It was the stuff-the damn stuff from the Shottle Bop It was weanng off! When Sam died it it stopped working on mel Was this what I had to pay for the bottle? Was this what was to happen if I used it for revenge?

The light was almost gone-and now it was gone I couldn't see a thing in the room but one of the doors Why could I see the doorway? What was that pale-green light that set off 1ts dusty frame?

Wolfmeyer' I got to get out of here!
I couldn't see ghosts any more Ghosts could see me now I ran I darted across the dark room and smashed into the wall on the other side I reeled back from it, blood spouting from between the fingers I slapped to my face I ran agan Another wall clubbed me Where was that other door? I ran agan, and agan struck a wall I screamed and ran agan. I tripped over Sam's body My head went tbrough the noose

It whipped down on my windpipe, and my neck broke with an agonizing crunch. I floundered there for half a minute, and then dangled

Dead as hell, I was Wolfmeyer, he laughed and laughed. Fred found me and Sam in the morning He took our bodies away in the car. Now I've got to stay here and haunt this damn old house Me and Wolfmeyer.

## H. H. Munro ("Saki")

## Gabriel-Ernesi

"There is a wild beast in your woods," said the artist Cunnungham, as he was being driven to the station It was the only remark he had made durıng the drive, but as Van Cheele had talked incessantly his companion's silence had not been noticeable
"A stray fox or two and some resident weasels Nothing more formidable," said Van Cheele The artist sard nothing
"What did you mean about a wild beast?" said Van Cheele later, when they were on the platform
"Nothing My imagination Here is the tran," said Cunmingham.

That afternoon Van Cheele went for one of his frequent rambles through his woodland property He had a stuffed bittern in his study, and knew the names of quite a number of wild flowers, so his aunt had possibly some justification in describing him as a great naturalist At any rate, he was a great walker It was his custom to take mental notes of everything he saw during his walks, not so much for the purpose of assisting contemporary science as to provide topics for conversation afterwards When the bluebells began to show themselves in flower he made a point of informing every one of the fact, the season of the year might have warned his hearers of the likelihood of such an occurrence, but at least they felt that he was being absolutely frank with them

What Van Cheele saw on this particular afternoon was, however, something far removed from his ordinary range of experience On a shelf of smooth stone overhanging a deep pool in the hollow of an oak coppice a boy of about sixteen lay asprawl, drying his wet brown limbs luxuriously in the sun His wet hair, parted by a recent dive, lay close to his head, and his light-brown eyes, so light that there was an almost tigerish gleam in them, were turned towards Van Cheele
with a certan lazy watchfulness It was an unexpected appantion, and Van Cheele found himself engaged in the novel process of thinking before he spoke Where on earth could this wild-looking boy hail from? The muler's wife had lost a child some two months ago, supposed to have been swept away by the mill-race, but that had been a mere baby, not a half-grown lad
"What are you dong there?" he demanded
"Obviously, sunning myself," replied the boy.
"Where do you live?"
"Here, in these woods"
"You can't live in the woods," said Van Cheele
"They are very nuce woods," said the boy, with a touch of patronage in his voice
"But where do you sleep at nught?"
"I don't sleep at nught; that's my busiest time "
Van Cheele began to have an irritated feeling that he was grappling with a problem that was eluding him
"What do you feed on?" he asked
"Flesh," said the boy, and he pronounced the word with slow relish, as though he were tastung it.
"Flesh' What flesh?"
"Since it interests you, rabbits, wild-fowl, hares, poultry, lambs in their season, children when I can get any, they're usually too well locked in at night, when I do most of my hunting It's quite two months since I tasted child-flesh"

Ignoring the chaffing nature of the last remark Van Cheele tried to draw the boy on the subject of possible poachung operatıons.
"You're talking rather through your hat when you speak of feeding on hares" (Considering the nature of the boy's tonlet the simule was hardly an apt one ) "Our hillside hares aren't easily caught."
"At night I hunt on four feet," was the somewhat cryptic response
"I suppose you mean that you hunt with a dog?" hazarded Van Cheele

The boy rolled slowly over on to his back, and laughed a weird low laugh, that was pleasantly like a chuckle and disagreeably like a snarl
"I don't fancy any dog would be very anxious for my company, especially at night "

Van Cheele began to feel that there was something positively uncanny about the strange-eyed, strange-tongued youngster
"I can't have you staying in these woods," he declared authoritatively
"I fancy you'd rather have me here than in your house," sard the boy

The prospect of this wild, nude anımal in Van Cheele's prımly ordered house was certaınly an alarmıng one
"If you don't go I shall have to make you," sard Van Checle

The boy turned like a flash, plunged into the pool, and in a moment had flung his wet and glistening body half-way up the bank where Van Cheele was standing In an otter the movement would not have been remarkable, in a boy Van Cheele found it sufficiently startling His foot slipped as he made an involuntary backward movement, and he found himself almost prostrate on the slippery weed-grown bank, with those tigerish yellow eyes not very far from his own Almost instanctively he half rased his hand to his throat The boy laughed again, a laugh in which the snarl had nearly driven out the chuckle, and then, with another of his astonishing lightning movements, plunged out of view into a yielding tangle of weed and fern
"What an extraordinary wild anımal!" said Van Cheele as he picked himself up And then he recalled Cunningham's remark, "There is a wild beast in your woods"

Walking slowly homeward, Van Cheele began to turn over in his mind various local occurrences which might be traceable to the existence of this astonishing young savage

Something had been thinning the game in the woods lately, poultry had been missing from the farms, hares were growing unaccountably scarcer, and complaints had reached him of lambs being carned off bodily from the hills Was it possible that this wild boy was really hunting the countryside in company with some clever poacher dog? He had spoken of hunting "four-footed" by might, but then, again, he had hinted strangely at no dog caring to come near hum, "especially at ran his mind over the varrous depredations that had been committed during the last month or two, he came suddenly to a dead stop, alike in his walk and his speculations The chuld missing from the mill two months ago-the accepted theory was that it had tumbled into the mill-race and been swept away, but the mother had always declared she had heard a shriek on the hill side of the house, in the opposite direction from the water it was unthinkable, of course, but he wished that the boy had not made that uncanny remark about child-flesh eaten two months ago Such dreadful things should not be said even in fun

Van Cheele, contrary to his usual wont, did not feel disposed to be communicative about his discovery in the wood. His position as a parish councillor and justice of the peace seemed somehow compromised by the fact that he was harbouring a personality of such doubtful repute on his property, there was even a possibility that a heavy bill of damages for raided lambs and poultry might be laid at his door. At dinner that night he was quite unusually silent.
"Where's your vose gone to?" sald his aunt. "One would tbunk you had seen a wolf."

Van Cheele, who was not famular with the old sayng, thought the remark rather foolsh, if he had seen a wolf on his property his tongue would have been extraordmanly busy with the subject

At breakfast next morning Van Cheele was conscious that his feeling of uneasiness regarding yesterday's episode had not wholly disappeared, and he resolved to go by train to the neighbouring cathedral town, hunt up Cunningham, and learn from him what he had really seen that had prompted the remark about a wild beast in the woods With this resolution taken, his usual cheerfulness partially returned, and he hummed a bright little melody as he sauntered to the morningroom for his customary cigarette As he entered the room the melody made way abruptly for a pious invocation Gracefully asprawl on the ottoman, in an attitude of almost exaggerated repose, was the boy of the woods He was drier than when Van Cheele had last seen hum, but no other alteration was noticeable in his tollet
"How dare you come here?" asked Van Cheele furiously "You told me I was not to stay in the woods," sard the boy calmly
"But not to come here Supposing my aunt should see you!"

And with a view to moumizng that catastrophe Van Cheele hastily obscured as much of his unwelcome guest as possible under the folds of a Morning Post At that moment his aunt entered the room.
"This is a poor boy who has lost his way-and lost his memory He doesn't know who he is or where he comes from," explained Van Cheele desperately, glancing apprehensively at the warf's face to see whether he was going to add inconvenient candour to his other savage propensities

Miss Van Cheele was enormously interested
"Perhaps his underlinen is marked," she suggested
"He seems to have lost most of that, too," sard Van Cheele, making frantic little grabs at the Morning Post to keep it in 1ts place

A naked homeless child appealed to Miss Van Cheele as warmly as a stray kitten or derelict puppy would have done
"We must do all we can for him," she decided, and in a very short time a messenger, dispatched to the rectory, where a pageboy was kept, had returned with a suit of pantry clothes, and the necessary accessories of shirt, shoes, collar; etc Clothed, clean, and groomed, the boy lost none of his uncanniness in Van Cheele's eyes, but his aunt found him sweet
"We must call hum something till we know who he really is," she said "Gabriel-Ernest, I thunk, those are nuce suitable names"

Van Cheele agreed, but he privately doubted whether they were being grafted on to a mice suitable child His misgivings were not dimunshed by the fact that his stand and elderly spaniel had bolted out of the house at the first incoming of the boy, and now obstinately remaned shivering and yapping at the farther end of the orchard, while the canary, usually as vocally industrious as Van Cheele himself, had put itself on an allowance of frightened cheeps More than ever he was resolved to consult Cunningham without loss of time

As he drove ofi to the station hus aunt was arranging that Gabriel-Ernest should help her to entertain the infant members of her Sunday-school class at tea that afternoon.

Cunningham was not at first disposed to be communicative "My mother died of some brain trouble," he explaned, "so you will understand why I am averse to dwelling on anything of an impossibly fantastic nature that I may see or think that I have secn."
"But what did you sec?" persisted Van Checle
"What I thought I saw was something so extraordinary that no really sane man could dignify it with the credit of having actually happened I was standing, the last evening I was with you, half-hudden in the hedgegrowth by the orchard gate, watching the dying glow of the sunset Suddenly I became aware of a naked boy, a bather from some neighbouring pool, I took him to be, who was standing out on the bare hillside also watching the sunset His pose was so suggestive of some wild faun of Pagan myth that I instantly wanted to engage him as a model, and in another moment I thinh I should have halled him But just then the sun dipped out of view, and all the orange and pink slid out of the landscape, leaving it cold and grey And at the same moment an astounding thing happened-the boy vanished too'"
"What' vanished away into nothing?" asked Van Checle excitedly
"No, that is the dreadful part of $1 t$," answered the artist, "on the open hillside where the boy had been standing a second ago, stood a large wolf, blachish in colour, with gleaming fangs and cruel, yellow eyes You may think-"

But Van Cheele did not stop for anything as futle as thought Already he was tearing at top speed towards the station He dismissed the idea of a telegram "Gabriel-Ernest is a werewolf" was a hopelessly inadequate effort at conveying the situation, and his aunt would think it was a code message to which he had omitted to give her the key His one bope was that he might reach home before sundown The cab which he chartered at the other end of the rallway journey bore him with what seemed exasperating slowness along the country roads, which were pink and mauve with the flush
of the sinhing sun His aunt was putting away some unfinished jams and cake when he arrived
"Where is Gabrel-Ernest?" he almost screamed
"He is tahing the little Toop child home," said his aunt. "It was gettung so late, I thought it wasn't safe to let it go back alone What a lovely sunset, isn't it?"

But Van Checle, although not oblivious of the glow in the western shy, did not stay to discuss its beauties At a speed for which he was scarcely geared he raced along the narrow lane that led to the home of the Toops On one side ran the swift current of the mill-stream, on the other rose the stretch of bare hullside A dwinding rim of red sun showed still on the shyline, and the next turning must bring him in view of the $1 l l$-assorted couple he was pursuing Then the colour went suddenly out of things, and a grey light settled itself with a quich shuver over the landscape Van Cheele heard a shrill wail of fear, and stopped running

Nothing was ever seen again of the Toop child or GabrielErnest, but the latter's discarded garments were found lying in the road, so it was assumed that the child had fallen into the water, and that the boy had stripped and jumped in, in a van endeavour to save it. Van Cheele and some workmen who were near by at the time testified to having heard a chuld scream loudly just near the spot where the clothes were found Mrs Toop, who had eleven other children, was decently resigned to her bereavement, but Miss Van Cheele sincerely mourned her lost foundling it was on her initiative that a memorial brass was put up in the parish church to "Gabriel-Ernest, an unknown boy, who bravely sacrificed his life for another"

Van Cheele gave way to his aunt in most things, but he flatly refused to subscribe to the Gabriel-Ernest memorial

## Fitz-James O'Brien

## The losy Room

It was oppressively warm The sun had long disappeared, but seemed to have left its vital spirit of heat behind it The air rested, the leaves of the acacia-trees that shrouded my windows hung plumb-like on their delicate stalks The smoke of my cigar scarce rose above my head, but hung about me in a pale blue cloud, which I had to dissipate with languid waves of my hand My shirt was open at the throat, and my chest heaved laboriously in the effort to catch some breaths of fresher air The noises of the city seemed to be wrapped in slumber, and the sbrilling of the mosquitoes was the only sound that broke the stullness

As I lay with my feet elevated on the back of a chair, wrapped in that peculiar frame of mind in which thought assumes a species of lifeless motion, the strange fancy seized me of making a languld inventory of the principal articles of furniture in my room It was a task well suited to the mood in which I found myself Their forms were duskily defined in the dim twilight that floated shadowily through the chamber; it was no labor to note and particulanze each, and from the place where I sat I could command a view of all my possessions without even turning my head

There was, imprimis, that ghostly lithograph by Calame It was a mere black spot on the white wall, but my inner vision scrutinized every detal of the picture A wild, desolate, midnught heath, with a spectral oak-tree in the centre of the foreground The wind blows fiercely, and the jagged branches, clothed scantily with ill-grown leaves, are swept to the left continually by its grant force. A formless wrack of clouds streams across the awful sky, and the ran sweeps almost parallel with the horizon Beyond, the heath stretches off into endless blackness, in the extreme of which either fancy or art has conjured up some undefinable shapes that seem riding into space. At the base of the huge oak stands a 116
shrouded figure His mantle is wound by the blast m thght folds around his form, and the long cock's feather in his hat is blown upright, till it seems as if it stood on end with fear His features are not visible, for he has grasped bis cloak with both hands, and drawn it from either side across his face The picture is seemingly objectless It tells no tale, but there is a weird power about it that haunts one

Next to the picture comes the round blot that hangs below it, which I know to be a smoking-cap It has my coat of arms embroidered on the front, and for that reason I never wear it, though, when properly arranged on my head, with its long blue sulken tassel hanging down by my cheek, I believe it becomes me well I remember the time when it was in the course of manufacture I remember the tiny little hands that pushed the colored silks so numbly through the cloth that was stretched on the embroidery-frame,-the vast trouble I was put to to get a colored copy of my armorial beanngs for the heraldic work which was to decorate the front of the band, the pursings up of the little mouth, and the contractoons of the young forehead, as therr possessor plunged mto a profound sea of cogitation touching the way in which the cloud should be represented from which the armed hand, that is my crest, issues, -the heavenly moment when the tiny hands placed it on my head, in a position that I could not bear for more than a few seconds, and I, king-lhke, immediately assumed my royal prerogative after the coronation, and instantly levied a tax on my only subject, which was, however, not pard unwillingly Ah, the cap is there, but the embroiderer has fled, for Atropos was severing the web of life above her head whule she was weaving that slken shelter for mine!

How uncouthly the huge piano that occupies the corner at the left of the door looms out in the uncertan twilight! I neither play nor sing, yet I own a prano It is a comfort to me to look at $1 t$, and to feel that the music is there, although I am not able to break the spell that binds it It is pleasant to know that Bellin and Mozart, Cmarosa, Porpora, Gluck, and all such, -or at least their souls,-sleep in that unwieldy case There lie embalmed, as it were, all operas, sonatas, oratorios, notturnos, marches, songs, and dances, that ever clumbed
into existence through the four bars that wall in a melody. Once I was enturely repard for the investment of my funds in that instrument which I never use Blokecta. the compoeer, came to see me Of course his mnstincts urged him as utresistibly to my piano as if some magnetue power lay sithon it compelling him to approach He tuned it, he played on it. All night long, until the gray and apectral dawn rose out of the depths of the midnight, he sat and played, and I lay emoking by the window listening Wild, unearthly, and sometimes insufferably painful, were the improvieations of Blohecta. The chords of the instrument seemed breahing with anguish Lost souls shrieked in his dismal preludes: the half-heard utterances of spirits in pain, that groped at inconceivable distances from anything lovely or harmonious, seemed to rise dimly up out of the waves of sound that gathered under his hands Melancholy human love wandered out on distant heaths, or bencath dank and gloomy cypresses, murmuring its unanswered sorrow, or hateful gnomes sported and sang in the stagnant swamps, trumphing in unearthly tones over the knight whom they had lured to his death Such was Blokeeta's night's entertainment, and when he at length closed the piano, and hurried away through the cold morning, he left a memory about the mstrument from which I could never escape.

Those snowshoes that hang in the space between the mirror and the door recall Canadian wanderings,-a long race through the dense forests, over the frozen snow, through whose brittle crust the slender hoofs of the caribou that we were pursuing sank at every step, until the poor creature desparingly turned at bay in a small juniper coppice, and we heartlessly shot him down And I remember how Gabriel, the habitant, and François, the half-breed, cut his throat, and how the hot blood rushed out in a torrent over the snowy soil; and I recall the snow cabane that Gabriel bult, where we all three slept so warmly, and the great fire that glowed at our feet, painting all kinds of demonac shapes on the black screen of forest that lay without, and the deersteaks that we roasted for our breakfast; and the savage drunkenness of Gabriel in the morning, he having been privately draking out of my brandy-flask all the night long

That long, haftless dagger that dangles over the mantelpiece makes my heart swell I found it, when a boy, in a hoary old castle in which one of my maternal ancestors once lived. That same ancestor-who, by the way, yet lives in historywas a strange old sea-hing, who dwelt on the extremest point of the southwestern coast of Ireland He owned the whole of that fertile sland called Inniskerran, which directly faces Cape Clear, where between them the Atlantic rolls furiously, forming what the fishermen of the place call "the Sound" An awful place in winter is that same Sound On certan days no boat can live there for a moment, and Cape Clear is frequently cut off for days from any communication with the manland

Thus old sea-king-Sir Florence O'Driscoll by name-passed a stormy life From the summit of his castle he watched the ocean, and when any nchly laden vessels, bound from the south to the industrious Galway merchants, hove in sight, Sir Florence hoisted the sails of his galley, and it went hard with him if he did not tow into harbor ship and crew In this way, he lived, not a very honest mode of livelhhood, certanly, accordung to our modern ideas, but quite reconcilable with the morals of the time As may be supposed, Sir Florence got into trouble Complants were land agamst hum at the English court by the plundered merchants, and the Insh viking set out for London, to plead hus own cause before good Queen Bess, as she was called He had one powerful recommendation he was a marvelously handsome man Not Celtic by descent, but half Spanish, half Danish in blood, he had the great northern stature with the regular features, flashing eyes, and dark har of the Ibenan race This may account for the fact that his stay at the English court was much longer than was necessary, as also for the tradition, which a local historian mentons, that the Englsh Queen evinced a preference for the Insh chieftam, of other nature than that usually shown by monarch to subject.

Previous to his departure, Sir Florence had intrusted the care of his property to an Englishman named Hull During the long absence of the knight, this person managed to ingratiate humself with the local authorities, and gain their favor so far that they were willing to support hum in almost
any scheme. After a protracted stay, Sir Florence, pardoned of all his misdeeds, returned to his home Home no longer. Hull was in possession, and refused to yield an acre of the lands he had so nefariously acquired It was no use appealmg to the law, for its officers were in the opposite interest. It was no use appealing to the Queen, for she bad another lover, and had forgotten the poor Irish knight by this tume, and so the viking passed the best portion of his life in unsuccessful attempts to reclaim his vast estates, and was eventually, in his old age, obliged to content humself with hus castle by the sea and the island of Innuskeiran, the only spot of which the usurper was unable to deprive hum So this old story of my kinsman's fate looms up out of the darkness that enshrouds that haftless dagger hanging on the wall

It was somewhat after the foregoing fashion that I dreamily made the inventory of my personal property As I turned my eyes on each object, one after the other,-or the places where they lay, for the room was now so dark that it was almost impossible to see with any distinctness,-a crowd of memones connected with each rose up before me, and, perforce, I had to indulge them. So I proceeded but slowly, and at last my cigar shortened to a hot and bitter morsel that I could barely hold between my lips, while it seemed to me that the nught grew each moment more insufferably oppressive While I was revolving some impossible means of cooling my wretched body, the cigar stump began to burn my lips I flung it angrly through the open window, and stooped out to watch it falling It first lighted on the leaves of the acacia, sending out a spray of red sparkles, then, rolling off, it fell plump on the dark walk in the garden, fantly illuminating for a moment the dusky trees and breathless flowers Whether it was the contrast between the red flash of the cigarstump and the silent darkness of the garden, or whether it was that I detected by the sudden light a faint waving of the leaves, I know not, but sometbing suggested to me that the garden was cool I will take a turn there, thought I, just as I am, it cannot be warmer than this room, and however still the atmosphere, there is always a feelng of liberty and spaciousness in the open air, that partrally supplies one's wants With this idea running through my head, I arose, It another
cigar, and passed out into the long, intricate corridors that led to the main starrcase As I crossed the threshold of my room, with what a different feeling I should have passed it had I known that I was never to set foot in it agan!
I lived in a very large house, in which I occupied two rooms on the second floor The house was old-fashioned, and all the floors communicated by a huge circular staircase that wound up through the centre of the building, while at every landing long, rambling corridors stretched off into mysterious nooks and corners Thus palace of mine was very high, and its resources, in the way of cranmes and windings, seemed to be intermunable Nothing seemed to stop anywhere Cul-de-sacs were unknown on the premises The corridors and passages, like mathematical lines, seemed capable of indefinte extenslons, and the object of the architect must have been to erect an edufice in which people might go ahead forever The whole place was gloomy, not so much because it was large, but because an unearthly nakedness seemed to pervade the structure The starcases, corridors, halls, and vestibules all partook of a desert-like desolation There was nothing on the walls to break the sombre monotony of those long vistas of shade No carvings on the wanscoting, no moulded masks peering down from the simple severe cornices, no marble vases on the landings There was an eminent drearmess and want of life-so rare in an American establisbment-all over the abode It was Hood's haunted house put in order and newly pannted The servants, too, were shadowy, and chary of their visits Bells rang three times before the gloomy chambermard could be induced to present herself, and the Negro water, a ghoul-like-lookng creature from Congo, obeyed the summons only when one's patience was exhausted or one's want satisfied in some other way When he did come, one felt sorry that he had not stayed away altogether, so sullen and savage did he appear He moved along the echoless floors with a slow, noiseless shamble, until his dusky figure, advancing from the gloom, seemed like some reluctant afreet, compelled by the superior power of his master to disclose humself When the doors of all the chambers were closed, and no light illumnated the long corridor save the red, unwholesome glare of a small ol lamp on a table at the
end, where late lodgers lit their candles, one could not by any possibility conjure up a sadder or more desolate prospect

Yet the house suited me. Of meditative and sedentary habits, I enjoyed the extreme quiet. There were but few lodgers, from which I infer that the landlord did not drive a very thriving trade; and these, probably oppressed by the sombre spurit of the place, were quiet and ghost-luke in their movements The proprietor I scarcely ever saw My bills were deposited by unseen hands every month on my table, while I was out walking or riding, and my pecuniary response was intrusted to the attendant afreet. On the whole, when the bustling wide-awake spirit of New York is taken mto consideration, the sombre, half-vivified character of the house in which I lived was an anomaly that no one appreciated better than I who lived there.

I felt my way down the wide, dark staircase in my pursuit of zephyrs The garden, as I entered it, did feel somewhat cooler than my own room, and I puffed my cigar along the dim, cypress-shrouded walks with a sensation of comparative relief It was very dark The tall-growing flowers that bordered the path were so wrapped in gloom as to present the aspect of solid pyramidal masses, all the details of leaves and blossoms being buried in an embracing darkness, while the trees had lost all form, and seemed like masses of overhanging cloud It was a place and tume to excite the umagnation, for in the impenetrable cavities of endless gloom there was room for the most riotous fancies to play at will I walked and walked, and the echoes of my footsteps on the ungravelled and mossy path suggested a double feeling I felt alone and yet in company at the same time The solitariness of the place made itself distinct enough in the stillness, broken alone by the hollow reverberations of my step, whule those very reverberations seemed to imbue me with an undefined feelng that I was not alone I was not, therefore, much startled when I was suddenly accosted from beneath the solld darkness of an mmense cypress by a voice saying, "Will you give me a light, sır?"
"Certannly," I replied, trying in vain to distinguish the speaker amidst the impenetrable dark.

Somebody advanced, and I held out my cigar All I could gather defintely about the individual who thus accosted me was that he must have been of extremely small stature; for I, who am by no means an overgrown man, had to stoop considerably in handing him my cigar The vigorous puff that he gave his own lighted up my Havara for a moment, and I fancied that I caught a glimpse of a pale, word countenance, mmersed in a bachground of long, wild har The flash was, however, so momentary that I could not cven say certanly whether this was an actual impression or the mere effort of magnation to embody that wheh the senses had failed to distinguish
"Sir, you are out late," sald this unknown to me, as he, with half-uttered thanks, handed me back my cigar, for Which I had to grope in the gloom
"Not later than usual," I replied dryly.
"Hum! you are fond of late wanderings, then?"
"That is just as the fancy seizes me"
"Do you live bere?"
"Yes"
"Queer house, isn't it?"
"I have only found it quiet."
"Hum! But you will find it queer, take my word for at." This was earnestly uttered, and I felt at the same tume a bony finger lad on my arm, that cut it sharply like a blunted knife
"I cannot take your word for any such assertion," I rephed, rudely, shaking off the bony finger with an urrepressible motion of disgust
"No offence, no offence," muttered my unseen companion rapidly, in a strange, subdued voice, that would have been shrill had it been louder, "your being angry does not alter the matter You will find it a queer house Everybody finds it a queer house Do you know who live there?"
"I never busy myself, sir, about other people's affars," I answered sharply, for the individual's manner, combined with my utter uncertanty as to his appearance, oppressed me with an irksome longing to be rid of him
"O, you don't?" Well, I do I know what they are,-well, well, well!" and as he pronounced the three last words his vore
rose with each, untu, with the last, it reached a shrill shriek that echoed horribly among the lonely walks. "Do you know what they eat?" he contınued.
"No sir,-nor care."
" O , but you will care You must care You shall care I'll tell you what they are. They are enchanters They are ghouls They are cannibals Did you never remark their eyes, and how they gloated on you when you passed? Did you never remark the food that they served up at your table? Did you never in the dead of night hear muffled and unearthly footsteps gliding along the corridors, and stealthy hands turning the handle of your door? Does not some magnetic influence fold itself continually around you when they pass, and send a thrill through spint and body, and a cold shiver that no sunshıne will chase away? O, you havel You have felt all these things! I know ti"'

The earnest rapidity, the subdued tones, the eagerness of accent, with which all this was uttered, impressed me most uncomfortably. It really seemed as if I could recall all those weird occurrences and influences of which he spoke, and I shuddered in spite of myself in the midst of the impenetrable darkness that surrounded me
"Hum!" sard I, assumeng, without knowing it, a confidental tone, "may I ask how you know these things?"
'How I know them? Because I am therr enemy, because they tremble at my whisper, because I follow upon ther track with the perseverance of a bloodhound and the stealthlness of a tiger, because-because-I was of them oncel"
"Wretch!" I cried excitedly, for involuntarily his eager tones had wrought me up to a high pitch of spasmodic nervousness, "then you mean to say that you-"

As I uttered this word, obeying an uncontrollable impulse, I stretched forth my band in the direction of the speaker and made a blind clutch The tips of my fingers seemed to touch a surface as smooth as glass, that glided suddenly from under them A sharp, angry hiss sounded through the gloom, followed by a whirring noise, as if some projectile passed rapidly by, and the next moment I felt nnstinctively that I was alone

A most disagreeable feeling instantly assanled me,-a pro-
phetic mstinct that some terrible misfortune menaced me; an eager and overpowering anxiety to get back to my own room without loss of tume I turned and ran blindly along the dark cypress alley, every dusky clump of flowers that rose blackly in the borders making my heart each moment cease to beat. The echoes of my own footsteps seemed to redouble and assume the sounds of unknown pursuers following fast upon my track The boughs of llac bushes and syringas, that here and there stretched partly across the walk, seemed to have been furnshed suddenly with hooked hands that sought to grasp me as I flew by, and each moment I expected to behold some awful and mpassable barrier fall across my track and wall me up forever.

At length I reached the wide entrance With a single leap I sprang up the four or five steps that formed the stoop, and dashed along the hall, up the wide, echoing stairs, and again along the dim, funereal comidors until I paused, breathless and panting, at the door of my room Once so far, I stopped for an instant and leaned heavily against one of the panels, panting lustily after my late run I had, however, scarcely rested my whole weight against the door, when it suddenly gave way, and I staggered in head-foremost To my utter astomshment the room I had left in profound darkness was now a blaze of light So intense was the illummation that, for a few seconds while the pupls of my eyes were contractung under the sudden change, I saw absolutely nothing save the dazzling glare This fact in itself, coming on me with such utter suddenness, was sufficient to prolong my confusion, and it was not untul after several minutes had elapsed that I perceived the room was not only illuminated, but occupied And such occupants' Amazement at the scene took such possession of me that I was incapable of ether moving or utterng a word All that I could do was to lean aganst the wall, and stare blankly at the strange picture

It might have been a scene out of Faublas, or Grammont's Memorrs, or happened in some palace of Minister Fouque

Round a large table in the centre of the room, where I had left a student-lhe litter of books and papers, were seated a half a dozen persons Three were men and three were women The table was heaped with a prodigality of luxuries

Luscious eastern fruits were piled up in silver filigree vases, through whose meshes therr glowing rinds shone in the contrasts of a thousand hues Small silver dishes that Benyenuto might have designed, filled with succulent and aromatic meats, were distributed upon a cloth of snowy damask. Bottles of every shape, slender ones from the Rhine, stout fellows from Holland, sturdy ones from Spain, and quaint basket-woven flasks from Italy, absolutely littered the board. Drinking-glasses of evcry size and hue filled up the interstices, and the thirsty German fiagon stood side by side with the aerial bubbles of Venetian glass that rest so lightly on ther thread-luke stems An odor of luxury and sensuality floated through the apartment The lamps that burned in every direction seemed to diffuse a subtle incense on the air, and in a large vase that stood on the floor I saw a mass of magnolias, tuberoses, and jasmines grouped together, stıfing each other with their honeyed and beavy fragrance.

The inhabitants of my room seemed beings well suited to so sensual an atmosphere. The women were strangely beautuful, and all werc attured in dresses of the most fantastic devnces and brilliant bues Their figures were round, supple, and elastic; their eyes dark and languishing; their lips full, ripe, and of the nichest bloom. The three men wore halfmasks, so that all I could distinguish were heavg jaws, pointed beards, and brawny throats that rose like massive pillars out of their doublets All six lay reclining on Roman couches about the table, drinking down the purple wines in large draughts, and tossing back their heads and laughing wildly.

I stood, I suppose, for some three minutes, with my back against the wall staring vacantly at the bacchanal vision, before any of the revelets appeared to notice my presence At length, without any expression to indicate whether I had been observed from the beginning or not, two of the women arose from their couches, and, approaching, took each a hand and led me to the table I obeyed their motions mechanically. I sat on a coach between them as they indicated. I unresistingly pernitted them to wind their arms about my neck.
"You must drink," said one, pouring out a large glass of red wine, "here is Clos Vougeot of a rare vintage, and here,"
pushing a flask of amber-hued wine before me, "is Lachryma Christı"
"You must eat," said the other, drawing the silver dishes toward her "Here are cutlets stewed with olives, and here are slices of a filet stuffed with brused sweet chestnuts",and as she spoke, she, without waiting for a reply, proceeded to help me
The sight of the food recalled to me the warnings I had recerved in the garden This sudden effort of memory restored to me my other faculties at the same instant I sprang to my feet, thrustung the women from me with each hand.
"Demons!" I almost shouted, "I will have none of your accursed food I know you You are cannibals, you are ghouls, you are enchanters Begone, I tell youl Leave my room in peace!"
A shout of laughter from all six was the only effect that my passionate speech produced The men rolled on ther couches, and therr half-masks quivered with the convulsions of their murth The women shrieked, and tossed the slender wineglasses wildly aloft, and turned to me and flung themselves on my bosom farly sobbing with laughter
"Yes," I continued, as soon as the noisy morth had subsided, "yes, I say, leave my room mstantly! I will have none of your unnatural orgles here!"
"His room!" shrieked the woman on my right.
"His room"' echoed she on my left
"His room' He calls it his room'" shouted the whole party, as they rolled once more into jocular convulsions
"How know you that it is your room?" sad one of the men who sat opposite to me, at length, after the laughter had once more somewhat subsided
"How do I know?" I rephed, indignantly "How do I know my own room? How could I mistake 1t, pray? There's my fur-inture-my piano-"
"He calls that a prano!" shouted my neighbors
The pecular emphasis they lard on the word "piano" caused me to scrutinize the article I was indicating more thoroughly Up to this time, though utterly amazed at the entrance of these people into my chamber, and connecting them somewhat with the wild stones I had heard in the gar-
den, I still had a sort of indefinite idea that the whole thing was a masquerading freak got up in my absence, and that the bacchanalian orgy I was witnessing was nothing more than a portion of some elaborate hoax of which I was to be the victim But when my eyes turned to the corner where I had left a huge and cumbrous piano, and beheld a vast and sombre organ lifting its fluted front to the very ceiling, and convinced myself, by a hurried process of memory, that it occupied the very spot in which I had left my own instrument, the little self-possession that I had left forsook me. I gazed around me bewildered.

In like manner everything was changed In the place of that old haftless dagger, connected with so many histonc associations personal to myself, I beheld a Turkish yataghan dangling by its belt of crimson silk, while the jewels in the hult blazed as the lamplight played upon them In the spot where hung my cherished smoking-cap, memorial of a buried love, a knightly casque was suspended, on the crest of which a golden dragon stood in the act of springing That strange lithograph by Calame was no longer a lithograph, but it seemed to me that the portion of the wall which it had covered, of the exact shape and size, had been cut out, and, in place of the picture, a real scene on the same scale, and with real actors, was distinctly visible The old oak was there, and the stormy sky was there, but I saw the branches of the oak sway with the tempest, and the clouds drive before the wind The wanderer in his cloak was gone, but in his place I beheld a circle of wild figures, men and women, dancing with lunked hands around the bole of the great tree, chanting some wild fragment of a song, to which the winds roared an unearthly chorus The snowshoes, too, on whose snewy woof I had sped for many days amidst Canadian wastes, had vanshed, and in their place lay a pair of strange upcurled Turkısh slippers

All was changed Wherever my eyes turned they missed familar objects, yet encountered strange representatives Stull, in all the substitutes there seemed to me a reminiscence of what they replaced They seemed only for a tume transmuted into other shapes, and there lingered around them the atmosphere of what they once had been Thus I could have
sworn the room to have been mine, yet there was nothing in it that I could nightly claim
"Well, have you determined whether or not this is your room?" asked the gul on my left, proffering me a huge tumbler creaming over with champagne, and laughing wickedly as she spoke
"It is mine," I answered, doggedly, striking the glass rudely with my hand, and dashing the aromatic wime over the white cloth
"Hushl hush!" she said, gently, not in the least angered at my rough treatment. "You are excited Alf shall play something to soothe you"

At her signal, one of the men sat down at the organ. After a short, wild, spasmodic prelude, he began what seemed to me to be a symphony of recollections Dark and sombre, and all through full of quivering and intense agony, it appeared to recall a dark and dismal night, on a cold reef, around which an unseen but terribly audible ocean broke with eternal fury. It seemed as if a lonely parr were on the reef, one living, the other dead, one clasping his arms around the tender neck and naked bosom of the other, strivng to warm her into life, when his own vitality was being each moment sucked from him by the icy breath of the storm. Here and there a ternble wailing minor key would tremble through the chords like the shriek of seabirds, or the warnung of advancing death. While the man played I could scarce restran myself It seemed to be Blokeeta whom I listened to, and on whom I gazed That wondrous night of pleasure and pan that I had once passed listening to him seemed to have been taken up agan at the spot where it had broken off, and the same hand was continuing 1 t. I stared at the man called Alf There he sat with his cloak and doublet, and long rapier and mask of black velvet. But there was something in the arr of the peaked beard, a famulur mystery in the wild mass of raven harr that fell as if wind-blown over his shoulders, which niveted my memory. "Blokeetal Blokeeta!" I shouted, starting up furiously from the couch on which I was lying, and bursting the far arms that were linked around my neck as if they had been hateful chans,-"Blokeetal my friend! speak to me, I entreat youl Tell these hornd enchanters to leave me Say that

I bate them Say that I command them to leave my room."
The man at the organ stirred not in answer to my appeal. He ceased playing, and the dying sound of the last note be had touched faded off into a melancholy moan.
"Why will you persist in calling this your room?" said the woman next me, with a smule meant to be kind, but to me mexpressibly loathsome. "Have we not shown you by the furnuture, by the general appearance of the place, that you are mistaken, and that tbus cannot be your apartment? Rest content, then, with us"
"Rest content?" I answered madly; "live with ghosts! eat of awful meats, and see awful sights! Never, never!"
"Softly, softly!" sard another of the sirens "Let us settle this amicably This poor gentleman seems obstunate and mclened to make an uproar.
"Now," she contmued, "I have a proposition to make It would be ndiculous for us to surrender this room simply because this gentleman states that it is his, and yct I feel anxious to gratufy, as far as may be fair, his wild assertion of ownership A room, after all, is not much to us, we can get one easily enough, but still we should be loath to give this apartment up to so imperious a demand. We are willing, however, to rusk its loss That is to say,"-turneng to me, -"I propose that we play for the room. If you win, we will immedrately surrender it to you just as it stands, if, on the contrary, you lose, you shall bind yourself to depart."

Agonized at the ever-darkening mysteries that seemed to thicken around me, and despairing of being able to dissipate them by the mere exercise of my own will, I caught almost gladly at the chance thus presented to me.
"I agree," I cried, eagerly, "I agree. Anything to rid myself of such unearthly company!"

The woman touched a small golden bell that stood near her on the table, and it had scarce ceased to tinkle when a Negro dwarf entered with a siver tray on which were diceboxes and dice A shudder passed over me as I thought in thus stunted African I could trace a resemblance to the ghoullike black servant to whose attendance I had been accustomed.
"Now," said my neighbor, seizing one of the dice-boxes
and giving me the other, "the highest wins Shall I throw first?"

I nodded assent. She rattled the dice, and I felt an mexpressible load lifted from my heart as she threw fifteen
"It is your turn," she sald, with a mocking smile, "but before you throw, I repeat the offer I made you before Live with us Be one of us."

My reply was a fierce oath, as I rattled the dice with spasmodic nervousness and flung them on the board They rolled over and over again, and during that breef instant I felt a suspense, the intensity of which I have never known before or sunce At last they lay before me A shout of the same horrible, maddening laughter rang in my ears I peered in vain at the dice, but my sight was so confused that I could not distinguish the amount of the cast This lasted for a few moments Then my sight grew clear, and I sank back almost lifeless with desparr as I saw that I had thrown but twelvel
"Lost! Lost!" screamed my neighbor, with a wild laugh "Lost' Lost!" shouted the deep voices of the masked men. "Leave us, coward" they all cried; "you are not fit to be one of us Remember your promse, leave us!"

Then it seemed as if some unseen power caught me by the shoulders and thrust me toward the door In vain I resisted In vain I screamed and shouted for help In vain I screamed and twisted in despar In vain I mplored them for pity. All the reply I had was those mocking peals of merriment, while, under the invisible influence, I staggered like a drunken man toward the door As I reached the threshold the organ pealed out a wald, triumphal stran The power that impellèd me concentrated itself into one vgorous impulse that sent me blindly staggering out into the echoing corndor, and, as the door closed swiftly behind me, I caught one glimpse of the apartment I had left forever A change passed like a shadow over it. The lamps died out, the siren women and masked men had vanushed, the flowers, the fruits, the bright silver and bizarre furniture faded swiftly, and I saw again, for the tenth of a second, my own old chamber restored

The next instant the door closed volently, and I was left standing in the cormidor stunned and desparing

As soon as I had partally recovered my comprehension

I rushed madly to the door, with the dim idea of beating it in My fingers touched a cold and soltd wall There was no door! I felt all along the corridor for many yards on both sides There was not even a crevice to give me hope No one answered In the vestibule I met the Negro, I seized him by the collar, and demanded my room The demon showed his white and awful teeth, which were filed into a saw-like chape, and, extricating himself from my grasp with a sudden jerk, fled down the passage with a gbbering laugl. Nothing but echo answered to my desparing shriehs

Since that awful hour I have never found my room Everywhere I look for it, yet never see it. Shall I ever find 1 t?

## The Traitor

"Mr Lorenz! So nice you could come"
"Charming of you to mvite me" Lorenz held Mrs Van Nuys' hand briefly
"I predicted to Henry early in the week," she sald poutingly, "that you'd be off on one of those intermuable trips and we'd just receeve your regrets"
"You have so many," he sald, taking in the crowd, "you'd never miss me" Then he looked into her pleasant gray eyes "But it wasn't farr of you to say my trips probably meant I was being naughty because I was a bachelor "
Lorenz caught the slack amazement of her jaw
"But we were alone when I .." Then she had to go because Clyde, the butler, was announcing the arrival of the Hentzel-manns-he with his fourth wife, she with her fifth husband Each of the Hentzelmanns would meet a former spouse during dinner, and each would do a turn about the dark grounds for old times' sake with the old-tume mate It generally happened
Lorenz, rather short, with great breadth of shoulder, but runnong a hittle too fat around his middle, edged his way through a throng of exposed flesh dangerously contanned in plunging necklines He stood at the cocktal table and looked back toward the huge double doors to see Mrs Van Nuys whupenng to her husband About me, Lorenz told humself, I ought to resist those little temptations, they might prove embarrassing, even dangerous
They were both lookang his way, so he had to take up a dry martuin and raise it slightly in salutation When they turned to each other agan, he quikly spilled the dnnk mon the champagne punch.
"It won't last, mark my words" The woman standing near him spoke harshly, as though her words were solid things skadding over a rough surface "She's a veritable nympho-
maniac. One manl Hal Not for her." The woman's embonpoint once had been a feature that turned men's heads in admiration, it had developed to such that it now made them swivel with amazement. "My dear Lorenz," she grated loudly. "You don't favor us often. Skippy. Mr. Lorenz. Skippy Lowenthal "
"Oh, we know one another, Biffie" The young man was very tall and he took his eyes off the lady's façade only long enough to look down a long nose at Lorenz. Protected by a large potted plant behind them, he was resting his left hand on the curve of her back. Lorenz thought it could be that the cadavcrous youth needed to touch her bursting affluence in order to draw sustenance. "Have a cocktal?"

Lorenz shook his head. "One's my limit, and I've just had it."

## "Ulcer?"

Lorenz smiled, patted his stomach, and stole a sly glance at the encirclung arm as he moved off. They also consume each other, he thought; we are not alone in that.
"Damn that man!" She moved closer to the youth. "I have the queerest feeling he knows what you're thinking about. I don't know what you're thinking about." She nudged his thigh coarsely with hers "But I know what I'm thunkung about. Who is he, anyway?"

Skippy's pale eyes fixed in a stare and his jaw hung loose. "Don't really know. Does it matter?"
"Well, what does he do?" She moved him slowly toward the dark recesses of a flagged gallery.
"Nothing, I think Probably has means of his own." They were like Stamese twins sidlung through the throng. "Lives in town. That is, I think he does But now I stop to think, I haven't any idea where he lives. Travels a lot." They had reached the doorway. "He is strange Just realuzed that I've never seen hum in the daytime Only at things like this"

At dinner Lorenz found humself seated next to Mrs De Witt, mother of the Princess Giomale di Lorenzo. Currently, her hair was dyed a light blue and she was divorced Last season, she had been married and her hair was a delicate rose Always, in season and out, she was a woman who fought the encroaching years with all the techniques known to
beauty specialists and the spirtual descendants of Messalina
Lorenz was dabbling a spoon in the Vichyssoise to make it appear that some had been consumed when she leaned and favored hum with her predatory eyes
"I have a feeling," she whispered, intumately, "that you are of the great lune from which my son-in-law is descended The Medicis, you know" Lorenz murmured politely "Your name, for one thing The Pnnce-dear Giornalel-is directly from a cousin of the notorious Alexander de' Medici They called him Lorenzano because he was so small but enormously broad, like you Isn't that interesting?"

Interesting, but not true, thought Lorenz The blackguard Lorenzano was a wisp of a man in every way physically Stull, he had the vicious courage to murder the hicentious Alexander, only to die at the assassin's hand himself a short eleven years later What days of violence! he mused And then through the table flowers as though it blossomed like one of them he saw the lovely face

What in God's name . Instantly, an intolerable burning flamed at the butt of his tongue, his eyes flooded with tears of pain. As it slowly subsided, he tried to tell himself that it was not as sharp, as fierce, as the last tume he had incauthously used The Name Yes, he was almost sure of that.

But what in Hell, he thought, sensing at that moment the slyly proffered intimacy of the aging trull on his right, was such a badge of mnocence and vrignal beauty dong in the midst of this prurient cream of society? All about him, from up and down the table, criss-cross, athwart and fore-and-aft, like nuclear bombardment he sensed the coarse thoughts and adulterous speculation emanating from nearly all present.

Across from hum was a young, sweet face of astomshing punty A black aureole of hair, brows arching above dark eyes, a soft mouth, a tender chin that would surely tremble un terror and shame if she were assanled as he was by that radio-activity of unclean thought. Lorenz realized he was staring rudely, and he turned to speak to Mrs De Witt.
"Who is that lovely child directly across?"
Happy to use a whispered exchange to close the gap, she hissed into his ear "Viola Whitney An old family, I must admit, but do you think she's really pretty? Rather vacant,

I've always thought. No character, you know. And such a prudel My nephew rather took a shine to her. Just a bit of fun, if you know what I mean. He sard you'd think she'd been assaulted."

Lorenz looked from beneath his protruding brows to study the untouched quality of the face above the flowers. No bee, he thought, has yet alighted there.

Then he became conscious through the fog of his musing that Mrs. De Witt had decided he was a candidate in her campaign for sustained youth. She was speculating and becoming specific in her speculation Lorenz plucked it from behind the veil
"Not Thursday, I'm afraid," he said, quetly. "At least not this Thursday. I shall have to be out of town."

She started away from hum, as though stung.
"Thursdayl" Her eyes became glassy Her plump hand trembled over the forks "I . . I . . . I . . ." Then her fingers traved through the heavily-buttered filet of sole The mother of the Princess Giornale di Lorenzino created a minor furore of that Newport season by shding ungracefully to the floor in a dead faint.
"Something I said to her, no doubt," Lorenz murmured, apologetically. "But I can't thonk what. All the same I'm terribly sory."
"Not your fault, Im sure," said Van Nuys, uneasly wondenng whether it was or not. Mrs. Van Nuys interjected, "You were talking about . . ."
"Why I believe I asked her the name of the grl across the table . a Miss Whitney That could hardly .
"A lovely girl. So sort of-sort of "Mrs Van Nuys boggled at the word as though it were an obscenty, so Lorenz supplied it
"Virginal?".
"Yes" She looked startled again, then passed a hand over her eyes "God, I'm so tred, and rt's nearly dawn And they're scattered all over the place engaged in heaven knows what."

Lorenz glanced quickly toward the high windows in search of any sign of light.
"Dawn!" He stifled a small panic "An outrageous abuse of hospitality At least I can start the eut."
Mr and Mrs Van Nuys stood together, somewhat stupid from lack of sleep Clyde, the butler, later sald that no one left before Mrs Gunther Windsor, who was quite drunk and made what she thought was an unnoticed departure with Mr Whitestone Trevelyan But by that tume, Clyde was very sleepy.

It was perbaps a mark of what Lorenz liked to think of as his "advance" that he viewed bis colleagues in the cemetery mortuary as a gathering of Thungs. It was the ancient designation used by ternfied Carpathian peasants who feared to be more specific lest they invite reprisals
Lorenz knew, of course, that he was a Thing But ever since the sanguneous field of Waterloo had afforded a night of gory feasting among the dying and the dead, he had striven over the ensung one-and-a-third centuries for some sort of regeneration, some sort of abatement of his foul condition He did not know humself where the desure sprang from, but the rerulsion aganst his state was born even as he roved with the others, as sharp-toothed as any and careless of the gouts of blood that trickled down his chin and soaked his garments These Thungs of the night filted ghoulishly among the moaning soldiers of all the armues-English, French, Brunswicklans, Hanoverians, Dutch, Belgran-nothing mattered except that the living wounded were more to the taste than the cold dead. Fifty thousand were scattered over the black ground; some in ravines which piled human flesh made level with the plain. It was a Lucullan feast, an'd reminuscent of the longpast days when the Turk hammered at the Central European gates, leaving his dead and dying strewn along the Danube banks.

Oh , there had been other holocausts since, and greater ories, as man became more civilized and efficient But Lorenz had fought clear of most. True, he had weakened-at Shiloh, for instance, and on the Somme in 1916. These recurrent wars offered great temptations to a Thung of voracious appetute. But he had stayed away from the fields of the Crimea where peasant blood, thick and nich, ran in fountans for the
taking And the later places-well, they rather helped him in his resolve, for modern weapons wreaked such havoc on frall human flesh and left only a splashed resemblance of a man What the Devill Eyen a Thing was not a carrion feeder with the instincts of a hyena. It was live blood that was wanted, heart-pumped, not the squeezings of mashed corpses

Strangely, with the tapering off and a mere sip here and there, Lorenz had been putting on weight.
"I must say, Lorenz, ff you get much fatter, you're going to disqualify yourself from attendance here" Lord Rochford towered above hum, lean as a pole and jointed as freely as a six-foot folding rule "You're beginning to resemble one of those on the other side."

Lorenz looked into the saturnine face Incestuous beast! Some of us at least do not carry that through eternity He didn't answer, but made room beside him for the youth who had just insinuated himself through a door crevice and then broadened into his normal width
"Stull not used to matters around here," the young man sand, thuckly. "It's a hell of a change from Westchester County and my job with NBC"

Lorenz patted his knee "You'll get used to it Most of us are centuries ahead of you In fact, the recruiting fell off for a good many years It's only recently we've seen people from -from where you came from. Probably some sort of modern moral let-down," he added, softly.
"Who was the jerk just left?"
"Rochford Makes me sick You'll get to know him He was beheaded by Henry-the eighth Henry-for adultery with his own sister, Anne Boleyn But Hell, there were at least four others who went to the Tower for enjoying Anne's favors No reason why he should feel so exclusive."
"But he wouldn't be among this gang for a thing like that."
'No And I wish he wasn't But someone got to him in the Tower before the headsman When you are about to mount the block and go to Hell anyway, I suppose you're ready to accept any alternative-even this"
"Are you sorry?"
Lorenz studied bis fingernals Was he sorry? After sw hun-
dred years? He looked into the young face as yet unmarked by generations, centuries, of unremitting search for blood.
"I don't hnow," he said, softly "I'm trying something that I can't talk about. But I do know I'm tired-damned tred."

Thungs arrived with every moment. They slithered waferlike through window crevices and door cracks Then they materialized in the strange llumination of that place-the sulphurous flames which could be induced only by the very oldest of them who knew the secrets of the lights that burned, to the terror of peasants, in the dark passes and great plans of Transylvania on All Souls' Eve These Things emerged from crypts and tombs and sarcophagi of the dead whose last resting places they arrogantly usurped without so much as a "by your leave" to the legal tenant. The sinking of the sun was their signal, for they could not move between the rising and the setting But when the last rays died, there came the strirring and whispenng of sound that heralded the start of therr nightly roaming
"Damned bore, these long summer days Cramp one's style and cut down the tume" She was a tall, very beautiful girl whose body was sheathed in velvet as intimately as water flows over the stones of a brook.
The youth beside Lorenz drew breath sharply, then gave a low whistle "Could be nght out of the White Plans country club Wow, what a shape!"
"Not really one of us," sard Lorenz, with one of his rare laughs "But admitted hëre for reasons I don't know That pearl choker she wears covers the place where she slashed her tbroat."
"A suicide, and damned like the rest of us! Well, if it had to be, Im in favor of her making this a headquarters"

The Westchester youth stared, and Lorenz wondered what thoughts could be inspired by the gurl's loveliness in one so recently come from the other side of the Vell But he became conscious of a voice that wrenched his mind forcibly from all else.
"You ought to see her. No, you ought not to see her I saw her first. If ever there was a delicious morsel, full of nutri- ment, and as undefiled as snow on the highest mountain peak ${ }^{1}$ It was at a dinner of some Newport people the other might. I wasn't exactly there That is, I hadn't been invited "The long-beaked face turned its protruding eyes on Lorenz. "But he was Lorenz, hither, manl I saw you, sly onel Eyeng her as a cat eyes a fat mouse And such a mousel But she's mine. I shall make her mine You'll not compete, will you?"

Lorenz did not move, but smiled a non-committal smile He knew his man, and what a man! The voice went on, rich and fruity with remuniscence
"I have seen nothing like it sloce-since when? It was in Rome, about 1770 It is hard to be definte, there were so many But this one-Armellne. Ah, Armelline'" The vorce dropped to a stagy whisper. "She was in a sort of conventa charity place she could not leave except to marry Merrcuccio, her brother, helped me breach those walls by guile and wit Princess Santa-Croce obtained permission for the girl to go to the Opera And the rest? A citadel of virtue, I assure you But I stormed it and she succumbed to love when the sweet enemy attained the outer defenses "
"He is history's own har," sard Lorenz to the youth. "Beware of hum. The gurl he mentions had a chance to marry well-a handsome Florentine. This beast faciltated the marriage at his own price Armellne submitted because the only avenue of escape from that place lay through his bedroom."

The Venetian seducer again cast the sly glance of his frogcyes at Lorenz "This one would appear to be the reincarnation of my Armelline who had just entered her suxteenth year. A divne and ethereal form, whter skin nor blacker harr I have never seen And there was a sweetness of vorce and a naĩve sumplicity that chained me a slave to her chariot"

The willowy garl hung on to Casanova's words, her mouth open, one hand to her breast. Lord Rochford was bored with the tale of a rake's progress, but he stood in the circle and stared fixedly at the girl's slender neck, whetting his lips with a slow tongue.
"My appetites," mused the Venetian, "ran along dufferent lines then But one loves as one can" He displayed his long canue teeth in a wolfish grin. "This new Armelline is worthy to become one of our gallant band She'll vie with you, my
dear, in loveliness. And the preparation for her induction shall be my espectal delight."
"Casanoval" The Westchester youth looked puzzled "I had a privately pronted set of his Memoirs Had to keep them hidden from the mater. But it seems a bit queer that be should .."
"If you divide by half," said Lorenz, patiently, "the women he clams to have dallied with from the time he was twelve almost to the day of his death, his libido was still enormous" With an cffort, be shifted his gaze from a red scratch on the youth's hand. "A man of such enormous appethes is all unu, iling to give up life-anywhere He himself bewailed the weak humilation and misery of old age 'What causes the delights of my life,' he wrote, 'has nothing to do with the place where I dwell.' That in itself was almost an unvitation to one of us
"Then, I happen to know he wrote with great famularity of Caghostro, that charlatan, pseudo-chemist, alchemist, and self-styled master of magic who wound up in the hands of the Holy Inquisition of Rome and died in prison"

Lorenz held out his rather pudgy hands, spread the fingers, and seemed to be examinugg them for steadiness
"Imagne hum during his last years at the Castle of Count Waldstein It was in Northern Bohemia-a most likely place indeed His powers were wanng In that castle, is it not likely that there came to him in the night one of us to offer anOther way of life? A way to defeat the long blackness and the quet mold of the grave? It is the lusty ones on the human plane who are our most likely victims The zest for living is so strong, and they choose the foul blasphemy of this-" he gestured to melude them all-"to the predestuned slence of the tomb where one awaits-or does not await, according to one's beliefs-the summoning trumpet "

Abruptly, he got to his feet. Standing with head flung back, he seemed to grow in stature To the Westchester youth, he was like a man newly dedicating himself to something
"Those who choose voluntanly to enter into-minto this!" Lorenz shrugged. "They mvite damnation and they get it. But those who are thefted during the nught-those who are raned of the soul's right to sleep after death in promise of the
rising - they are the kidnaped ones who are then infected and become one with those who pillaged their immortality." Then, abruptly. "I must go."
"I, too," muttered the youth, who had listened with only half his mind. "It's damned hard to find There are so many prohubitions, so many obstacles and taboos And I'm new at the ruddy game Lorenz, you sound sometimes as though it wasn't worth the trouble. And you've been around a long tome"

## Lorenz said: "I must go."

The moon pras full in a cloudless sky, and it turned the flat roof into a place of sharply contrasting squares of white light and the dark shadows cast by the little structures that roofs bear. The building was one of those occupied by the rich, overlooking Central Park. Its height towered into the heav-ens-a narrow column with points of light scattered up its vertical length.

Over the edge of the roof coping on the avenue side a hand shd. Then there came another, and they paused there like discarded gloves on the illominated stone. But their disembodiment took life when Lorenz drew himself out from over the yawning abyss, skidded steways over the coping, and dropped to the roof.

For a foll minote he leaned against the coping wall His eyes were shut; sweat gleamed on his brow in the moon's light Finally, he turned and looked down. Thirty-five stories to the street! There was not even a setback.
"But I did its" he muttered, "I did it," and began to look about. "This is the way be will come It is hus style Even as a homan, he did not fear height. He escaped from the Leads by the roof-top This style of approach he couldn't resist."

Then he heard it-and it came from the abyss; he stepped quickly into the maw of a black shadow and it swallowed him instantly. Seconds later over the coping came other hands, then the face prith beak-like nose flanked by the hyperthyrod eyes But there was nothing of Lorenz's sweating sckness about this one Flattened to the stone like a lizard, he carne up to the coping and over it, and towered in the moonlight, a veritable giant of a man. Behind hum flared a
crmson-lined cape that might have been dyed in blood
Lorenz watched while the Venetian took his bearings, then glded toward the bulk of a cupola He heard the sharp splintering of wood and metal, a square of light silhouetted the tall figure Lorenz stepped out of his shadow, summoning up his ancient capacity to move over a horizontal surface without actually touching it, as a piston moves on a film of oil.

But the Venetian had moved fast. Lorenz found himself in a wide hall, lined with heavily-framed portrats and floored with a deep rug that muffled his footsteps Between the pictures were crossed weapons of various eras, and guarding the four corners of the place were surts of armor Fifteenth century-Maximilan the First, murmured Lorenz, automatıcally

There were great bronze doors at the far end of the hall; other doors, too, several of them He suddenly threw humself flat on the rug, pressed his nose into the nap, and skidded back and forth, much as a hound dog courses a field of stubble Then he slid in an unerring line, stopped and raised his head. Before him was a door colored a faint mauve Agamst the bottom crack he shoved his nose, and mhaled deeply of the tell-tale odor-the unmistakable smell of the grave-mold that clung there He scrambled to his feet and moved decisively

From the wall he plucked an African assagar with a heavy wood shaft and a pear-shaped spearhead, and then a broadbladed kukn such as the Gurkhas delight in at close quarters. He hefted the spear in his night, the heavy blade in his left hand, and paused to assay what he would do and how The mind of Lorenz was ancient, he was of the tıme of the Medicl, Giovannu, in the Florentine Republic circa 1360 His was the knowledge, the gule of six centuries' accumulation. The self-styled Chevalier de Seingalt on the other side of the mauve door was a tyro, the Venetian bastard of an eighteenth century actress and a theatre manager-deriving from an era that was but yesterday

Bending at the door he heard the sibilance of Casanova's voice
"Armellne! Sleep, my Armellnel"
Lorenz twisted the handle, pushed and saw the scene How
like it was to the tumes when he was one of the central figures tbrough the ages' Long, slender fingers drew back the lacy night garment to bare the columnar throat and lovely breast. The grl lay stll in beauty, breathing steadlly and deeply in the trancelke stupor which Lorenz well knew the Undead can induce so that he may undisturbedly tap the life-stream and start the soul toward his own foul Hell.
"Casanova!"
The Venetian whirled His long teeth, ready for the incision, were bared and sharp and yellow His llps writhed back in anticipation of the unholy feast, hus bulgng eyes flamed with hate and resentment
"You'" Then he saw the spear and the knife, and threw back his head in slent laughter "You would think to balk me with such earthly weapons? You fool! Get out! I'm thirsty for what throbs here"

He doesn't know, thought Lorenz, he is too young a Thing to know there is but one release for the Undead-the transfixing of the heart by wood, the severing of the head by cold steel He watched the cunning eyes
"But perhaps you came for the same reason as I" Casanova leered "In that case, I am not one to be piggish. She is young and there's enough for both. But I warn you She is not to be dramed the first time."
"Yes" Lorenz gripped his weapons hard "We can return again and agam before the end comes and she joms us"
"Exactly." The Venetian was relaxed "We shall make her last The blood is renewed surprisingly fast. It was that way with the fellow who sat with you tonght. A strong and healthy one who was a fine trough at which to drink-for a while"

For a second Lorenz closed his eyes to shut out the luscious sight of the girl on the bed-the watting throat, the lovely flesh, the delicate blue veins flowing with precious flurd.
"Venetian dog!"
He drew back his right arm and hurled the assagar straight through Casanova's heart. Even as the weapon flew, Casanova was unbelieving and unknowing - and the true death caught him with his mouth wide in laughter

Lorenz shifted the kukre to his right hand and it whistled
through the still air, slicing through bone and flesh, parting the head from the trunk
What followed left Lorenz shaking with awe Even as he struck he had a vision of the grll's room, delicately furnished in chintzes and lace, converted into a veritable slaughterhouse The Venetian had apparently fed well of late, for rich gouts of blood shot from hus wounds in crimson spouts

But even as the ruddy fountans gushed, they vanushed. The tall column of Casanova's body disintegrated before his eyes and settled to the floor in dust, as a stream of sand sifted through a child's fingers Lorenz stared at it-all that was left of a man, an insignificant little pile no greater than that a slipshod housemard might sweep under the carpet He stirred it with his foot, as a man scuffs cigar ash into the parlor rug
"I'd forgotten," he murmured "He died at Dux in 1798 This return to dust has been delayed a hundred and fifty years"

Ever afterwards, Lorenz knew he won his greatest victory when he approached the bed and gazed down at the loveliness stretched there Within him raged the foul mstinctive appetite of centuries But he bent, not to prerce the throat and tap the vein, but to touch his lips lightly to the vargn brow
On the roof again, his heart beat wildly when he mounted the coping He remembered ancient days when he had scaled lofty crags and the castle walls atop them in wild East Carpathia, strangled guards at the watch towers, and fed at noble throats merely because it was his fancy to vary the common fare sucked from peasantry

Now, he was sıck with vertigo as he dug has pudgy fingers moto mortar cracks a paltry three hundred feet up and slithered, head down, toward Fifth Avenue He was even too frightened to note the policeman who heard the scraping of the descent, looked up, and collapsed in a dead faint at the call box.

Lord Rochford was returning from his mightly foray Flitting at his side through paths between the tombstones was the shapely girl who wore the pearl choker A vagrant moon-
beam lighted her face momentarily. At the corner of her mouth blood dribbled thinly.
"I don't know that I liked the-liked it," she said.
"You will." Rochford put a hand on her arm and they paused He bent down, kissed her chin and sipped off the smear. "Mustn't let the others know."
"He is a very handsome man," she said, as they went on tbrough the graveyard "You know, I rather felt ashamed."
"Oh, nonsense!" Rochford was sharp. "We've gone over all that. It will enhance your beauty rather than otherwse. And when you are properly renewed and ready, I shall mintate you Then, only then, will you really come out of that shadowy existence of yours and live You will glory in the terrible strength and power of us You will know how to laugh at the grave"

Still talking, they writhed like smoke wisps through the door crevice of the mortuary
"We are more powerful than the-than the Devil" His eye fell on the youth from Westchester County, who sat brooding in distaste over the palms of his hands from which coarse har had begun to sprout
"And to think," cried Rochford, "that your friend Lorenz has turned trattor."

A dozen of them had already returned from the night's foraging on the sleeping city. Some, bloated about the eyes, had met with success and were gorged Others looked envious and pale, wracked by the knowledge of another night of fallure All turned to face Rochford.
"Lorenz! A trator?"
"A trator! A double-damned trator and a murderer!"
The company gasped in concert
"A murderer of whom?" asked the youth softly.
"Casanova"
"Casanova? How do you know?"
"He told me" Rochford bared his yellow fangs "I had it from his own lhps, and then he went-where I could not follow at the moment" Slowly, deliberately, he told them "He passed over a bridge of the East River and it was not the slack of the tide No true Undead can do that I myself felt the inexorable prohibition that held me fast at the river's edge"
"I don't understand " The speaker was one of the most distinguished of therr band, a dark, strong man who was even more ancient in origin than Lorenz, for he had ridden with Godefroy de Boullon to Constantinople in the first knightly crusade of the Middle Ages "Lorenz killed Casanova? How?"

Rochford wet his thin lips He seemed almost afrad to speak.
"I said he was a traitor, sire"
The nobleman's hand fluttered to his throat.
"And so ?"
"How else?" Rochford's voice rang through the vaulted crypt. "Thus venomous knave used his ancient knowledge to strike down a brother"
"The stake and the steell"
"Transfixing the heart and severing the head"
An awful wall floated through the chamber, like that of the lost souls in Hell's innermost circle A trator was loose, one who had learned to cross runnung water and the Devil knew what else And one who knew the chink in their almost invulnerable and unholy armor

Just then, the first faint hint of the imminent dawn touched the far horizon
As though at a command, the fearful company vanushed through cracks and crevices Rochford was the last to go, and he rustled out as a letter is pushed under a door.

## Charles R. Tanner

## Angus ffacAuliffe and the Gowden Tooch

It was a hot afternoon in August, and because Angus MacAuliffe's house faced east, he sat on the front porch in the shade and smoked his pipe Angus smoked vigorously to keep the pipe lit, but in spite of his puffing, the pipe persisted in going out, and before he had finished the first pipeful, a dozen or more burnt matches were scattered about the rocking chair in which he sat. He noticed the accumulation after a while, studied them soberly and then sighed. He got up, went into the house and came back with his pipe refilled He lit the second pipeful, his eyes gazing up and down the street as he did so.

Thus pipe problem was an old one with Angus He usually moistened his tobacco to keep it from burning too fast, but his economical nature tempted him to moisten it so much that the expense of the matches to keep it lit became a new problem For years he had debated as to which was the more economical-to save on matches and waste tobacco or to save on tobacco and waste matches. It was a "sair problem" and Angus had not yet solved it.

His attention was attracted by the approach of the mailman, Mr Alexander Graham Mr. Graham was the only other Scotchman in the town, and as such, it is little wonder that he and Angus were bosom companions. So Angus watched his approach with interest and when Mr. Graham was within hallng distance, took his pipe from his mouth and said, "Ah' Sandy!" and put his pipe back again. Mr. Graham said "Ah!" and contnued his dellvery of the mail

At last his course brought him to Angus' own porch He fumbled in his bag and brought out a package, a cylunder about five unches in diameter and a foot long He read the address carefully and handed the package to Angus.
"'Tis frae yer ooncle," he said shortly and a little coldly. Angus frowned and scanned the return address. "The auld me the noo?"
"I ha' no doobt he's sendin' ye trooble!" Mr Graham commented sagely. "Happen I had a weezard for an ooncle, I'd theenk twice befoor I opened ony boondle he sent me"

Angus stared at the package with increasing dubiety "I theenk yer richt, Sandy," he decided "I'm a God-fearın' mon, and a streect member o' the kirk, and sic an ane should ha' no traffeec wi' weetches and warlocks Ye joost tak' this package and sheep it back to the auld boggle "

Mr Graham drew back, making no attempt to take the package extended to hum "Nae, nae, Angus," he exclarmed 'T'll no be handlin' onytheeng belongn' to that ane Mon, eef I'd ha' known 'twas frae heem, I'd ne'er ha' brocht it to ye in the farst place"

He turned his back on Angus and resolutely strode down the walk to the sidewalk. Then, remembering something, he turned and walked back
"Ye hae also a letter," he announced, and drew from his bag a long, legal-looking missive, depositing it in Angus' hand as mpressively as if he, himself, were the lawyer who had written 1 t.

Angus scanned the envelope and sard, "Hm-m" He took a puff or two from his pipe and Mr Graham stood and shufted from one foot to the other
"'Tis frae the same toon as the package," Mr Graham hazarded after a moment.
"Aye," sard Angus
"'Tis frae yer ooncle, too, nae doobt?"
"'Tis frae a pack o' lawyers" Angus volunteered the mformation generously, overlookıng Mr Graham's recent scathing denunciation of a member of his family "'Tis frae Goldberg, Silverstem, Shapiro and MacDonald, attorneys, of the same toon me ooncle lives in"
"Poor MacDonald," sympathized Sandy "Noo what micht a pack o' lawyers frae yer ooncle's toon be wantin' wi' you, Angus?"
"When I open the letter, happen I'll find oot," answered Angus dryly He put his pipe back in his mouth and puffed
slowly, enjoying the curiosity on his frend's face After two or three puffs, he slowly opened the letter and perused its contents Then, very carefully and deliberately, he folded it and put it back in the envelope.
"Trooble?" quened Mr. Graham, a little anxiously.
"I canna say." Angus puffed futilely at his pree and tapped the envelope on the arm of hus chair. "Ye see, ma ooncle was buried, last Tuesday "
"Dead?" asked Mr Graham in amaze.
"I hope so," answered Angus " 'Twad ha' been a mean treek to play on heem if he wasna'. But ye ne'er can tell aboot warlocks, ye ken Onyhow, he was pronounced dead and his forchoon is noo in the hands o' his attoorneys And the letter says that they're sendim' me a package wheech he left me in his weel, a package wheech, they say he said, could only be left safely wr' a teetotaler like masel'. Noo what wad he mean by that, I wonder?"

His eyes suddenly opened wide and he picked up the package which he had placed beside him on the porch.
"Why, that'll be this, Sandy," he exclaımed. "That'll be this vurra package ye joost brocht me, the noo"
"Aye!" ejaculated Mr Graham "The vurra same And what d'ye theenk'll be in $1 t$, Angus?"
Angus made no answer. He picked up the package and started to tear off the paper. Even before the package was opened, it became plain that it contamed a bottle, and sure enough, when the paper and cardboard were entrely removed, the contents were revealed as a quart bottle of Scotch It was an old bottle, you could tell at a glance that it had lain around in some attuc or some cellar for several dec-ades-the glass had that dusty look that comes to bottles that have lain long forgotten. Mr Graham stepped closer for a better look, his fear of the warlock's gift forgotten in the interest aroused by an old bottle of whiskey.
"Cutty Sark!" he whispered. "Bottled in 1913! 'Tis a rare treat ye hae there, Angus"
"And me a teetotalerl" snarled Angus. "The auld divvle knew I ha' no tooched a drap sin' 1930 I micht ha' known he'd never be sendin' me owt I could use"

He raised the bottle as if to hurl it aganst the sidewalk,
but Mr Graham frantically seized his arm and held it back.
"Noo, Angus, restrain yersel', mon!" he cried "Can ye no use the potion, mind ye, there's mony who can If ye wish, I'll joost relieve ye of this breath o' John Barleycorn, masel'. What d'ye say?"

Angus eyed Mr Graham, cannıly.
"Ye'd like to, would ye no?" he chuckled "Aye, ye'd like to, Sandy Graham, warlock's geeft or no But I'll no be puttin' in yer way the temptation to get droonk 'Twould be as great a sin as dreenkin' it masel' On yer way, Sandy, and I'll be keepin' this divvle's brew for medeecinal poorposes That way, 'twill no hurt ony one, and happen 'twill kill the coorse wheech I doobt no ma ooncle has laid on it."

Mr. Graham looked indignant, but he said nothing and after a moment, he shrugged his shoulders and started down the walk again Angus watched him a while and then, chuckling, arose and entered his cottage He placed the bottle of Cutty Sark on the table and went about getting bis supper.

Several tumes during the preparation of the meal, Angus eyed the bottle on the table speculatively For twenty years Angus had been a teetotaler, as he had told Mr Graham, but he had resisted temptation by avoiding it, and now it was staring him in the face

Memories of the days of his youth-when he had sarled the seven seas and went on rare benders, when Cutty Sark and Duggan's Dew, and even, when naught else was available, Haig and Harg, had poured like water down his throat-came back to tempt hum He smacked his lips thirstıly, and took a drnk of water, but alas, it wasn't that kind of thurst that was assailing hum, so at last he sighed and put the bottle out of his sight in the medicine chest.

Then he proceeded with his supper, but if anyone had been present to observe hum, they would have noticed that his eyes turned ever so often to the chest, as he ate his meal And while he was washing the dishes a decision was made When finally the last dish was put away, he went to the chest and took the bottle out.

He studied it for a long while, turning it over and over, and reading the label At last he broke the seal He had forgotten
"I ha' no sae mooch as droonk a drap in yon twenty year," rephed Angus, and then drew back fearfully at the scowl which appeared on the hitherto bland features of the god
"A teetotaler!" snapped Bacchus "Justa like yer uncle. One o’ dose sanctımonious, longa-faced, dried-up-Looka, keed, dat stuff's no good, see? Dat's wat was wrong wit' yer uncle Back ina 1920, he's call me up, and whan I appear, he's say, 'Bacchus, alla de world is lyin' enslaved in de chains of de Demon Rom! Deesa your fault' Now Prasident Weelson is signa dees grand amandment, dees new pro'bition law. No more stronga dreenk. Eef you stay free, dees new law ain't gonna work, see?" Den he's grab an old wheeskey bottle, he's say some words, and bangI I'm inside de bottle Now,' he's say, 'no more Demon Rom, no more John Barleycorn, no more Bacchus, and de tamptations all past. People no more wanta dreenk-dey forget you, Bacchus Wat you theenk of dat?' "

The god spat angrily.
"Thirty-one year, I'm stucka in dat damma bottle, keedo You theenk I llike whan someone say he's teetotaler?" He stopped, and then looked curiously at Angus "How's it go dees days, anyhow? Nobody dreenkin' any more, eh?" Angus snorted again
"Proheebrtion has been done awa' wi' for seventeen year," he sard "And-I opened oop the bottle, ye ken."

Bacchus looked blank for a moment and then winked.
'Dat's right, keedo," he admitted. "You did hopen de bottle Whicha reminds me- Wat you like as a reward for hopemin' dat bottle, eh? I gotta lotta power yet, I give you lots for hopenin' dat bottle, eh?"

Angus started. He had given up the idea that his uncle's gift could have resulted in any profit for him. Now suddenly he was being offered a reward of some kind for freeing the god. He grew canny. He pulled out his pipe and lit it slowly, and as he puffed the first puffs of smoke, a thought formed slowly in his mind.

At last he spoke "D'ye ken Keeng Midas?" he asked.
"Midas!" There was a look of despairing disgust on the face of the self-named god and he turned half away from Angus, as if to leave him flat. "Keedo, I sure do know Midas.

Ill always remamber dat Midas Eeef I'm leevin' a million year, I dun't forget Mudas. You know why? I'll tallun' you why Avery sunce dat day when I geeve dat golden touch to old Keeng Midas, I can't ever offer a geeft to anybody but wat dey holler fer dat golden touch. More'n a dozen guys has been grven dat golden touch, and wat good does it do dem? In a day or two, dey're hollerin' I should take back dees geeft agan"
"Noo watt" commanded Angus "Tm no like Keeng Mudas. I can larn frae his oxpeerience, d'ye ken. I'll no be askin' ye to change ever'theeng I tooch to gowd. I'll poot it thees way-Suppose ye feex it so ever'theeng I tooch wi' ma richt hand tooms to gowd and ever'theeng I tooch wi ma left hand toorns back again."
The god eyed Angus admiringly.
"I gotta hand it to you, keedo," he said. "Dat system would be justa wanderful. Fer all de rest of yer life, you'd be setton' pretty. But-I'd be de busiest little god since dey built Olympus All day longa, I'd be swappin' things back and fort'. No t'anks, keed, it would be justa too much. Try agau."
Angus eyed hum dubiously.
"I hae ma doobts ye kn do onytheeng at $a$ ', ye mis-named boggle," he grunted. "Tm askan' ye for the gowden tooch, but $\bar{\prime} l l$ no be takn' it like Midas did If I canna hae a way to toorn things back agam, Ill nae be askn' yer geeft at a'."
Bacchus sat down and buned his chin in his hands He thought for a while and then looked up, brightly.
"Howsa dees, keedo?" he asked. "Tm de god of wine and stronga dronk, y'unnerstan' So I can fix it dat ya kan have de golden touch whan you're drunk and have de odder kand whan you're sober. How's dat work, eh?"
" Twad mean me gom' off the waterwagon, ye ken," said Angus in a dubious tone, but Bacchus only grinned and said, "Yeahl" and Angus saw what he meant.
"Aweel," he said judiciously. "Tis no a bad compact, at that. I could mak' a' the gowd I need wi' ane gurd bender"

Bacchus monked agan. "Keedo," he sard. "Dat's a noble rasolution. If you km do dat, you're a batter man dan Midas or any 0 ' de odders Ho K , den, dat's de agreement. Whan you're really drunk, averyt'mg you touch tumis to cold. Whan
you're sober, averyt'ing you want to turn back, turas back at a touch."

He extended a hairy hand, and Angus touched it gingerly. The god said, "Well, I guess dat's all So longa, keedo," and as Angus muttered a "gurd-bye" be set his wreath at a jaunty angle over his brow, waved his hands mysteriously in the arr and began to fade away luke the Cheshure cat in Alice in Wonderland

A sudden thought came to Angus "Ane minute," he called, and Bacchus solidufied again, with a sort of a testy frown on his black brows.

Angus picked up the empty bottle from which the god had emerged.
"This bottle-" he said. "Twas supposed to contain a fair quart o' Cutty Sark. Ye wouldna' be wantn' to cheat me oot $o^{\prime}$ th' contents, would ye?"

Bacchus grinned "You musta had relatives in Scotland," he said "Ho K, though, here's yer likker."

He crooked a forefinger, inserted it in the bottle like a spigot and did something to the knuckle of that finger From the end of $1 t$, liquor spilled forth and in a moment the bottle was filled. Bacchus winked a final wink and incontinently vanished. And all that remained of the strange visitation was a strong smell of fine liquors that pervaded the room for some tume afterward.

Angus sat down in the chair vacated by the mysterious visitant and tried to digest the events of the hour He picked up the bottle and wet his lips, assuring himself that the contents were the best Scotch. He lit his prpe and smoked it out while he pondered over his adventure. At last he rose, went to the cupboard, got out a glass and poured himself a dnnk He had defintely embarked on an attempt to prove whether his experience had been reality or merely some strange dream.

Now Angus MacAulffe had not tasted strong dnok for nearly twenty years But Angus MacAulffe was Scotch and as such, he had been endowed by nature with a stomach with a copper lening and glass tubing when he had finshed the first glass (and a sizable glass it was, too), he reached out and
gingerly touched the sugar bowl which was standing on the table Nothing happened, of course, Angus didn't even feel the effects of the liquor yet, himself

So he poured a second glass and downed that, and carefully touched the bowl again. Still nothing happened Angus arose and went to the cupboard and took out all the dishes and knives and forks He sat these in a row along the table, in close proximity to his chair Then he poured out a therd dnak
After the fifth bowl, he reached out and gingerly touched the sugar glass which was standing on the table Evidently he was still sober in the eyes of Bacchus, for in spite of the fact that his head was beginnung to spun the utensil remanned sumple arthenware
He took a sixth drink. He no longer made any attempt to Sip appreciatively at the hqquor, he simply closed his eyes and tossed it off like a cowboy on payday As he sat down the sixth touch, he gingerly tabled the sugar glass which was standing on the bowl. Then, hardly glancing at it to see if his touch had any effect, he poured out another This tume, when he finushed the ginger, he reached out and sugarly bowled the touch which was tabling on the stand And for a moment it seemed that a yellow flush came over the object, before it cleared in his eyes and became a sumple earthenware dish again.

Excitedly, Angus tossed the glass from him and picked up the bottle and drained it of its remaning contents He let out his breath with a tremendous "Foosh!" and slapped his hand down on the sugar bowl for the final tume And the sugar bowl flashed and sparkled with the glorious gleam of polished gold!
"Hoots!" ejaculated Angus joyfully " Twas a' reall Ma forchoon's madel" He reached out and began touching the various articles which lay on the table, and one after another they turned to bright, gleaming gold. His hand fumbled once and he touched the table cloth, and 15 , too, turned immediately to gold.

As he went down the lune, touching one artcle after another, he noticed a stuffness about his movements that prevented hum from reaching the farther objects, and glancing down he saw that his clothong, every article from necktie to
shoes, was gleaming as brightly as the kitchen utensils "Noo!" he ejaculated, testily "I maun be carefu' what I tooch, the micht. Remember Midas, Angus, ye auld fool."

He drew his hands back with some difficulty and dropped them to the arms of his chair. Pure gold is a soft metal and a heavy one, and so the chair, suddenly transmuted, immedrately collapsed beneath hum and deposited him on the floor, a floor which was as suddenly covered with a gleaming rug of cloth of gold, Angus lay there for a moment and uttered Scotch oaths He tried to pick himself up, and fanled The liquor was beginning to get to his head in a big way, by now, and the golden clothes hampered hum as much physically as the liquor ddd, mentally. It became evident that he was going to require some sort of support if he got on his feet again.

He decided that it was the clothes which hampered him. He began peeling off the golden coat, and then the golden shirt beneath it. He had more trouble with the golden pants, and most of all with the shoes They were heavy, and in his condition an object of intense annoyance. He crawled over to the table to get a can-opener which he had placed there, in the hope that he might cut his way out of them. He had to hold on to the table leg in order to raise himself to the table top, and the table gleamed brightly as he touched it, but Angus never noticed 14 , so intent was he on getting the canopener.

He grasped it at last, but when he attempted to use it, it was entrely too soft, for it was gold, too. Angus tossed it away with an exclamation of disgust and collapsed to the floor agan, his vagrant mind still intent on the problem of removing the shuming shoes He got them off at last, by literally tearing the soft metal from his feet, and then attempted to stand up again.

It was a precarious job, and when he finally succeeded in standing upnght, he was several feet from the table on which the few unchanged articles stlll lay. He stood swaying, and in his dazed mind, the necessity of "aurifying" those last few objects assumed enormous importance He took a dubrous step forward, swayed night and left, and felt hus balance leaving hum For a moment, his arms thrashed so wildly
that any boy scout could have preced out a message in semaphore code, and then he crashed to the floor agam.
Now Angus was a frugal soul and a bachelor to boot, and so, long ago, his rug had ceased to be a thing of beauty and a joy To be perfectly frank, there were several spots where the rug had ceased to be, entirely, and as Angus collapsed, his left hand fell across one of these holes and touched the bare floor beneath

Even a maple floor is put to a stran trying to hold up a ton or two of gold. Not that it couldn't, if the gold was evenly spread out over the whole floor, but a thousand pound chair and a table that weighs a ton, these strain even a good maple floor But a golden floor-

The floor forthwith collapsed and deposited the contents of the room into the basement. The golden rug, the golden table and charr, the golden utensils on the table and-oh yes- the anguished Angus There were a few other things in the room that had not yet been transmuted, but apparently all of these things struck Angus on the way down and fell to the basement floor with a "thunk" that told plainly of their sudden transmutation into precious metal
Angus was only broused slightly, but he was convinced that he was kulled enturely. He lay groanng amudst his untold wealth for nearly ten minutes He was afrad to move, not only because he thought any move would be agony but because he was afraid he would touch something else and turn it to gold And Angus was quite convinced that he had enough gold for one evening, already.

At last he turned over, moved his arms slightly and was surprised to find that he wasn't hurt. He flexed a leg, wated, and then flexed another Stll no pan. He turned over and cautiously began the busmess of rising to his feet. A dim light showed hum where the cellar door was, and he began climbing over the shattered floor boards and rumed furmture to make his way toward it. The fact that the floor boards and the furnture were all of soft metal made it easy for him to bend them out of his way, and there was hardly a step where he didn't have something to hold on to

He made it to the door, one of those slanting cellar doors that open out and back, and touched it gingerly It collapsed inward at once and Angus was richer by another three or four hundred thousand dollars. But, what was far more important in Angus' eyes, the way was clear to get out of the cellar and around to the front of the house The one thought in his mind was to get to bed and sleep-sleep off this curse of Midas He made his way around the house, and as he walked, the mud which his feet prcked up turned to gold and gave hum a crude parr of slippers Now his feet ceased to touch the earth and so the footprints which he left when he first came out of the cellar were no longer in evidence He staggered up the porch, careful not to touch anything ("Praise the Laird it has no turned to gowd, too'") and threw open the door The doorknob instantly gleamed, brighter than it ever had before, but Angus was careful not to touch the door itself.

And so, at long last, he came to his bedroom and sank upon hus bed A golden bed with a golden mattress and golden bedclothes is not the most comfortable couch ever designed for sleeping, but Angus was in no position to quibble The alcohol in his veins was getting in its best licks now, and no sooner had he thrown humself over the bed than he passed out completely.

It was the custom of Mr Alexander Graham to get to work early If he was at the post office by seven in the morning, he could often get all his deliveries made by two-thurty or three in the afternoon And because Angus MacAulffe didn't have to be at work till eight, it had become the custom of Mr. Graham to awaken his friend each morning at about a quarter to seven

So, the next momung with the burds beginning to sung in the trecs and the flowers nodding in the breeze, Mr. Alexander Graham came string down the street and turned mto Angus' yard As he approached the house, a gleam in the sand at the right of the path caught the comer of his eye and he glanced down curiously $A$ spot of the sand glistened with a surprising yellow. Mr Graham stooped over with a sudden ejaculation of interest. He picked a pebble out of the gleaming spot and examuned it carefully. He bit it and then examined it agan.
"Blood o' Wallace!" he swore under hus breath "Tıs gowd or ma name's no Alexander Grahaml"

He looked around wildly. Not far away he saw another gleaming spot. He went over and picked up a bit of the sand from that location In a few minutes he had found a dozen pockets of the gleaming metal. He gathered a nugget or a bit of dust from each, and placed them carefully in his bandkerchief. Then, furtuvely, like a thief in the night, he stole from the yard and literally ran down the strect in the direction of the post office. He made no attempt to enter the post office itself, but climbed the stars to the second floor and stopped at the door that was marked "Government Assayer."

It was too early, of course, the assayer never got down to work until about nine o'clock, but Mr Grabam was a patient soul and this morning he was sure that he was goung to be the first to see John Barbour, the assayer

Barbour came at last, a tall, gangling man who mught have been copred from Irving's "Ichabod Crane," and Mr. Graham followed hum into his office They were only in there fifteen or twenty minutes, and then Mr Graham came out and hurried away with a fantastic gleam in his eyes He had ascertaned that the nuggets were really gold, and he had verified the fact that in this state the old law that gold is where you find it was still in effect.

But-no sooner had he gone when Mr Barbour burst out of the office himself, and dashed down to the front of the post office There was a bench there and nearly always half a dozen or so townsmen would be seated there, talking over the affars of the world On these phulosophers, Mr Barbour suddenly descended like a block-buster
"Gold!" he shouted "Old man Graham's discovered gold!"
"What?" "Where?" "What d'ye mean?" shouted seven voices, sımultaneously
"I don't know where Some place right here in town, I think He intimated he'd just found it this morning"
"Where's he at?" "Where'd he go?" "Where is the old goat?"
Barbour pointed at the distant figure of Mr Graham, not yet out of sight, hurrying back in the direction of Angus' house, and seven men, like a male chorus in a musical comedy, rose from the bench and started off in pursult.

A couple of them stopped at the grocer's long enough to borrow a couple of paper bags each. Three stopped at the hardware store and bought sbovels and picks. One optumst stopped at the coal yard and then went on with a big burlap sack. And all of them broke into a run and did therir best to catch up with the hurrying Mr. Graham. And as they went, they talked, and those who heard them dropped whatever they were doing and took out after them.

While this was going on, Angus MacAuliffe slept the slecp, not of the just-but of the soused. He was awakened at last by an uproar outside of his house, and sat up wondering He lay down again at once, and pressed his hands to his throbbing temples He lay there awhile longer but there was no surcease from the agony of the hangover There couldn't be with all that noise going on Presently he began to wonder what all the shouting and thumping was about, and he sat up and looked out the window.

One glance told him all His garden, the walk and the yards on both sides of his own looked as if they had been gone over by an atom bomb, a flood and a construction gang Men were digging, quarreling and scrambling all over the place. Men were shouting, arguing and singing-in fact the gold rush was on in full swing Angus took one horrified glance and turned back into the room To his surprise, the bed was an ordinary bed, covered with ordinary bedclothes He thought for a moment and then gugerly touched a tumbler on the stand by his bed.

Nothing happened. He was sober and the golden touch was temporarily in abeyance Evidently as he sobered, during the ought, his touch on the bed and bedclothes had turned them back He hastened into the living room and glanced into the runs of the kutchen Gold was everywhere-at least it was everywhere in the basement, which could be seen planly through the ruins of the floor Angus heaved a sigh of relef, and then gave a gasp of anxiety as he rcallzed what might happen if that mob outside ever got a glimpse of the basement He hurriedly slipped on some clothes and went out.

In the turmoil he passed unnoticed, and hastily brought some boards and boarded up the place where the cellar door
had been Then, convnced that his treasure in the house had not been seen, he went back in, lowered himself carefully into the basement and began to touch the things that he didn't want to remain gold

He was canny about 1 t, and although it hurt his Caledonan spirit to re-transmute so much of the "guid gowd," he solaced humself with the thought that if he needed more he could always down another quart of Scotch At last, with the floor and the furniture turned back to normal agan, with most of his clothes in their natural state and with things straightened up considerably, he began to collect and assemble the objects he intended to remang gold

He had a parr of fire-tongs and he used these to pick up his golden objects and thus kept them from turning back agan. At last, about noon, he got things into a state that satisfied him.

Now Angus was confident that none of the wild men outside had been at all interested in what was going on within the house, and his confidence was justufied But all this turmonl had attracted a bunch of the boys of the town, and their curnosity was not limited to the outside of the house One of them had peeked into the place before Angus had ever started to turn the floor and the furmiture back, and he had immediately called his pals as witnesses of his discovery.
He had started to tell the wonderful news, but the prospectors were so absorbed in therr own busmess that they pard no attention to hum and it wasn't untl he got back to town that he found someone who listened to hum and showed signs of interest.
The interested one was a stranger in town, a certan Mr George Standifer, and although the townsmen were blissfully unaware of 1 t, he carned a gold badge secreted on his person, a badge that was the credentials of the Treasury Department's Secret Service He listened to the boys for a few minutes and then strode casually off in the direction of Angus' home
He saw at a glance, when he arnved there, that gold could not possibly have been a natural part of the sandy loam on which Angus' house was built. This interested him exceedingly, especially when he saw some of the nuggets which the
prospectors found. And he decided that Mir Angus MacAulffe was a man whom it would be quite necessary to see.

Angus answered the door at Standifer's ring and opened it, wondering what the man wanted Standifer showed his badge and Angus felt a little throb of fear as he looked at it. He'd have to be aye canny, the noo, he decided, and searched about in hus mind for some kind of tale to tell the T-man. Then he smiled suddenly and offered his vistor a seat.
"Ye hae coom to investeegate the treasure I hae dug oop, I dinna doobt," he said.

Standifer affected a puzzled look. "Treasure, Mr. MacAuliffe?" he questioned.
"Aye The auld pirate's gowd. You'd be wantin' to ken a' aboot that, would ye no?"
"I guess that's night At least, I'm here to find out about this sudden plethora of yellow metal that seems to have excited the town. What can you tell me, Mir. MacAuliffe?"
"Aweel, it's like this," said Angus, choosing his words carefully. "Ma auld ooncle dee'd a week or twa syme and left me an auld map It had an ' $x$ ' on it that showed whaur some prates had buried they gowd. I dug it oop yestere'en and brocht it here last nucht Happen I speeled soom, bringin' it inta the hoose, and that's what they've found ootside"
" $\mathrm{Hm}-\mathrm{m}$. What did this treasure consist of?"
"Gowden deeshes and knives and foorks, cloth o' gowd and a gowden chair. There was aye a bit o' doost, ye ken, gowden doost in a sack. Happen 'twas this stoof that I speelt ootside."
"Quite likely. Would you say, Mir. MacAuliffe, that this nugget is a prece of the treasure?" Standifer took a prece of metal from his pocket and held it out to Angus. Angus made no effort to take $1 t$, he merely peered closely at it and then sighed
"There was a muckle o' gowd, ye'll ken," he said slowly. "I couldna identeefy ev'ry piece, havin' only seen it once But I theenk I remember soom scarf pin carvit luke yon piece"

Standifer looked closely at the piece in his hand. He slipped it unconcernedly in his pocket then, and sard, "Would you mind showing me the treasure, Mr. MacAuliffe?"
"I see no reason why I shouldna," responded Angus, and
led the way to his bedroom where be had laid all the golden objects on his bed Standifer looked them all over carefully and then turned to Angus with a pained look on hus face.
"You dug all this up out of the ground Is that so, Mr. MacAulffe?"
"Aye," insisted Angus
"Well, sir, I hate to tell you this, but Fil have to declare this a treasure trove, and as such, nnety per cent of it is the property of the United States Government!"

Angus looked at him vaguely for a second or two, and then let out a wall of despar
'Ye wouldna tak' ma gowd frac me, after a' the trooble I had, would ye?" he cried "Why, mon, 'twould leave me no but a dab"
"I'm sorry, Mr MacAulffe, but that's the law And, of course, there'll be a pretty stuff income tax on what you have left."
"Ye mean ye'll tak' mair than munety pair cent?" screamed Angus "Ye willna leave me e'en a sma' tithe?"
"That's the law," answered the mexorable Standifer "And you'll have to sell thus gold to the government at its own price, too That's the law."

For a moment, Angus reached the depths of despair He sank on the bed and it seemed to him that the United States Government, in the person of Mr George Standifer, towered over hum and gloated. His desparr turned to anger-and then he realized how petty this matter really was
"Tak' yer mnety pair cent," he snorted angrily "Tak' it $a$ '. There's lots mar whaur that came frae "
"What do you mean by that?" snapped Standifer quickly
Angus shook his head cannly 'Ne'er ye mind what I mean," he repled "But ye canna run me wi' yer taxes I can get a' the gowd I need "

Standifer reached into hus pocket and took out the nugget agan
"Mr MacAuliffe," he satd solemnly "I want you to look at this carefully This nugget is not a scarf pun and never was one It is an exact-and I might say microscopically exact, for I've examuned it with a lens-copy of a fossil that's rather
common in this neighborhood. Don't you think it's a little strange that you should find a thing like that among your purate's treasure?"

Angus said nothing Standifer picked up a golden salt shaker from the bed.
"This salt shaker," he said. "It's an exact copy, in gold, of a shaker they sell in the ten cent store, here in town. I wouldn't think that so strange, but it has 'Made in Occupred Japan' stamped on the bottom in gold letters And," he unscrewed the top and poured something into his hand, "rt's half full of golden crystals-cubic crystals, Mr. MacAuliffe, exactly mitating salt crystals!"

Angus had crouched lower and lower as Standifer had proceeded and now his chin was practically on his knees Mr. Standifer suddenly cried, "Catch!" and tossed Angus the salt shaker. Angus instinctively seized it-and then a slow flush of red stole over his features and the sides of his mouth began to droop down like those of a scolded chuld Standifer picked up the china salt shaker and held it out accusingly.
"Aye," said Angus desparingly. "'Twas a' pack o' hes I hae the gowden tooch o' Keeng Midas That's how I toorned a' yon theengs to gowd."
"I guessed as much when I saw the fossil," said Standifer. "It was too perfect. I was sure it had been common sandstone, originally." He sat down beside Angus and looked at the salt shaker curnously. "But your touch seems to be working in reverse now. I guessed that, too, when you wouldn't touch the fossil. Suppose you tell me all about it."

Angus sighed again and nodded. "Tll be vurra glad to do so," he said meekly. "'Tis a boorden to ma vurra sowl."

While all about them lay the glistening evidence that Angus was telling the truth, while outside the prospectors stull scrabbled and quarreled over the dust that sparkled in Angus' yard, while Standifer shook his head again and again in amazement that his wald theory had actually turned out to be true, Angus related the entire events of the previous evening
When he had finished and Standifer had quizzed him awhule longer, the T-man said, "Angus, this gift of yours is a big thing. I thunk you should come to Washington with me This

# Charles R. Tanner Angus MacAuliffe And The Gowden Tooch 

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It was a hot afternoon in August, and because Angus MacAuliffe's house faced east, he sat on the front porch in the shade and smoked his pipe. Angus smoked vigorously to keep the pipe lit, but in spite of his puffing, the pipe persisted in going out, and before he had finished the first pipe full, a dozen or more burnt matches were scattered about the rocking chair in which he sat. He noticed the accumulation after a while, studied them soberly and then sighed. He got up, went into the house and came back with his pipe refilled. He lit the second pipe full, his eyes gazing up and down the street as he did so.

This pipe problem was an old one with Angus. He usually moistened his tobacco to keep it from burning too fast, but his economical nature tempted him to moisten it so much that the expense of the matches to keep it lit became a new problem. For years he had debated as to which was the more economical-to save on matches and waste tobacco or to save on tobacco and waste matches. It was a "sair problem" and Angus had not yet solved it.

His attention was attracted by the approach of the mailman, Mr. Alexander Graham. Mr. Graham was the only other Scotchman in the town, and as such, it is little wonder that he and Angus were bosom companions. So Angus watched his approach with interest and when Mr. Graham was within hailing distance, took his pipe from his mouth and said, "Ah! Sandy!" and put his pipe back again. Mr. Graham said "Ah!" and continued his delivery of the mail.

At last his course brought him Angus' own porch. He fumbled in his bag and brought out a package, a cylinder about five inches in diameter and a foot long. He read the address carefully and handed the package to Angus.
"'Tis frae yer ooncle," he said shortly and a little coldly.
Angus frowned and scanned the return address. "The auld warlock!" he muttered under his breath. What's he sendin' me the noo?" "I ha' no doobt he's sendin' ye ooble!" Mr. Graham commented sagely. "Happen I had a weezard for an ooncle, l'd theenk twice befoor I opened ony boondle he sent me."

Angus stared at the package with increasing dubiety. "I theenk yer richt, Sandy," he decided. "I'm a God-fearin' mon, and a streect member o' the kirk, and sic an ane should ha' no traffeec wi' weetches and warlocks. Ye joost tak' this package and sheep it back to the auld boggle."

Mr. Graham drew back, making no attempt to take the package extended to him. "Nae, nae, Angus," he exclaimed. "I'll no be handlin' onytheeng belongin' to that ane. Mon, eef l'd ha' known 'twas frae heem, l'd ne'er ha' brocht it to ye in the fairst place."

He turned his back on Angus and resolutely strode down the walk to the sidewalk. Then, remembering something, he turned and walked back.
"Ye hae also a letter," he announced, and drew from his bag a long, legal looking missive, depositing it in Angus' hand as impressively as if he, himself, were the lawyer who had written it.

Angus scanned the envelope and said, "Hm-m." He took a puff or two from his pipe and Mr. Graham stood and shifted from one foot to the other.
"Tis frae the same toon as the package," Mr. Graham hazarded after a moment.
"Aye," said Angus.
"'Tis frae yer ooncle, too, nae doobtt?"
"'Tis frae a pack o' lawyers." Angus volunteered the information generously, overlooking Mr. Graham's recent scathing denunciation of a member of his family. "Tis frae Goldberg, Silverstein, Shapiro and MacDonald, attorneys, of the same toon me ooncle lives in."
"Poor MacDonald," sympathized Sandy. "Noo what micht a pack o' lawyers frae yer ooncle's toon be wantin' wi' you, Angus?"
"When I open the letter, happen I'll find oot," answered Angus dryly. He put his pipe back in his mouth and puffed slowly, enjoying the curiosity on his friend's face. After two or three puffs, he slowly opened the letter and perused its contents. Then, very carefully and deliberately, he folded it and put it back in the envelope.
"Trooble?" queried Mr. Graham, a little anxiously.
"I canna say." Angus puffed futilely at his pipe and. tapped the envelope on the arm of his chair. "Ye see, ma ooncle was buried, last Tuesday."
"Dead?" asked Mr. Graham in amaze.
"I hope so," answered Angus. "Twad ha' been a mean treek to plaji on heem if he wasna'. But ye ne'er can tell aboot warlocks, ye ken. Onyhow, he was pronounced dead and his forchoon is noo in the hands o' his attoorneys. And the Jetter says that they're sendin' me a package wheech he left me in his weel, a package wheech, they say he could only be left safely wi' a teetotaler like masel'. Noo what wad he mean by that, I wonder?"

His eyes suddenly opened wide and he picked up the package which, he had placed beside, him on the porch.
"Why, that'll be this, Sandy," he exclaimed. "That'll be this vurra package ye joost brocht me, the noo."
"Aye!" ejaculated Mr. Graham. "The vurra same. And what d'ye theenk'll be in it, Angus?"
Angus made no answer. He picked up the package and started to tear off the paper. Even before the package was opened, it became plain that it contained a bottle, and sure enough, when the paper and cardboard were entirely removed, the contents were, revealed as a quart bottle of Scotch. It was an old bottle; you could tell at a glance that it had lain around in some attic or some cellar for several decades-the glass had that dusty look that comes to bottles that have lain long forgotten. Mr. Graham stepped closer for a better look, his fear of the warlock's gift forgotten in the interest aroused 'by an old bottle of whisky.
"Cutty Sark!" he whispered. "Bottled in 1913! 'Tis a rare treat ye hae there, Angus."
"And me a teetotaler!" snarled Angus. "The auld divvle knew I ha' no tooched a drap sin' 1930. I, micht ha' known he'd never be sendin' me owt I could use."

He raised the bottle as if to hurl it against the sidewalk, but Mr. Graham frantically seized his arm and held it back.
"Noo, Angus, restrain yersel', mon!" he cried. "Can ye no use the potion, mind ye, there's mony who, can. If ye wish, l'll joost relieve ye of this breath o' John Barleycorn, masel'. What d'ye say?"

Angus eyed Mr. Graham, cannily
"Ye'd like to, would ye no?" he chuckled. "Aye, ye'd like to, Sandy Graham, warlock's geeft or no. But l'll no be puttin' in yer way the temptation to get droonk. 'Twould be as great a sin as dreekin' it masel'. On yer way, Sandy, and l'll be keepin' this divvle's brew for medeecinal poorposes. That way, 'twill no hurt ony one, and happen 'twill kill the coorse wheech I doobt no ma ooncle has laid on it.

Mr. Graham looked indignant, but he said nothing-and after a moment, he shrugged his shoulders and started down the walk again. Angus watched him awhile and then, chuckling, arose and entered his cottage. He placed the bottle of Cutty Sark on the table and went about getting his supper.

Several times during the preparation of the meal, Angus eyed the bottle on the table speculatively. For twenty years Angus had been a teetotaler, as he had told Mr. Graham, but he had resisted temptation by avoiding it, and now it was staring him in the face.

Memories of the days of his youth - when he had sailed the seven seas and went on rare benders, when Cutty Sark and Duggan's Dew, and even, when naught else was available, Haig and Haig, had poured like water down his throat - came back to tempt him. He smacked his lips thirstily, and took a drink of water, but alas, it wasn't that kind of thirst that was assailing him, so at last he sighed and put the bottle out of his sight in the medicine chest.

Then he proceeded with his supper, but if anyone had been present to observe him, they would have noticed that his eyes turned ever so often to the chest, as he ate his meal. And while he was washing the dishes a decision was made. When finally the last dish was put away, he went to the chest and took the bottle out.

He studied it for a long while, turning it over and over, and reading the label. At last he broke the seal. He had forgotten that these old imported bottles had corks instead of caps, so he was forced to rise and go in search of a corkscrew. All during the search, he kept up a mumbled conversation with himself, attempting to justify the deed he was about to commit.
'Tis no as if I were aboot to get droonk," he insisted. "'lll joost be takin' a wee nip to ward off a cold the nicht" He picked the bottle up and inserted the corkscrew carefully. "A rare veentage like this same is no for dreenkin' like water. l'll joost take mayhap ane or twa sma' swallows and then I'll poot it awa'."

He pulled at the cork and was rewarded by a loud "pop" as it came out of the bottle. "No mair than three sma' glasses at the vurra most-" he began, and then he dropped the bottle with a yelp of surprise and did a backward leap that did credit to one of his years.

For smoke was coming out of the bottle, a thick, white glutinous smoke-if you can imagine a smoke that is glutinous. It was rising in the air and hanging there, without any attempt at dissipating, and as more and more of it poured from the bottle it gradually began to gather into itself.
"I micht ha' known," muttered Angus in a whisper that mingled awe and disgust. 'Tis mair o' that auld warlock's business, for sure. 'Tis some boggle that he's sealed up in yon bottle, like the genie in the stoory."

And indeed, as the smoke continued to pour from the bottle, it began to be seen that Angus' surmise was correct. The top of the column of smoke gathered together and became a head, a head with a cloud of curly black hair and a very red nose. And presently a neck formed and a chest, and arms and a waist-

The creature said "Oopsl" very distinctly and suddenly dissolved into smoke and was sucked back into the bottle, from which it immediately emerged again, this time wearing a wreath of grape leaves about its head and with its body covered with a decorous costume not unlike that seen in pictures of the ancient Greeks.

The thing grew more and more solid and at last it was-real. A man stood before Angus, a short, pot-bellied man with a red nose and a blue chin, with heavy, black eyebrows and curly, black hair, clad in a wreath of grape leaves and a short chiton that failed miserably in covering the hairy bowed legs that appeared beneath it. The man gathered up the last trail of smoke that emerged from the bottle and incorporated it into his being. Then he grinned and waved jovially to Angus.

Moch obliched, keedo," he said pleasantly. Moch obliched for hopening op de bottle."

Angus eyed him sourly and dubiously.
"That's a fey brogue ye ha' on ye," he said with a scowl.
"A fey brogue-? Wat's de matter, keedo, dun't ya spik de Eenglish?" The creature from the bottle eyed Angus in a superior manner and seated himself in Angus' favorite chair.
"I maun say ye ha' a strange dialect," said Angus carefully. "Ye dinna speak like ony fameeliar o' ma ooncle Donald."
"Nottin' strange about dat, my frand," said the mysterious one. "I never learned dis talk from yer uncle. Dis dialect is good Grik dialect wat I learned from fruit paddlers and candy store men. Hall us Griks gotta hang together, you know."
"Happen you're a Greek, then, eh?"
"You sad it, keed. I'm Grik from way back. Hall de Griks used to split a dreenk wit' me avery time dey take wan. I used to he Grik god in dem days. Name's Bacchus. Mebbe you hear about me before, wat?"

Now it happened that Angus MacAuliffe had heard of Bacchus before. Although in his sequestered life, the name would hardly have occurred normally, yet when he was a young man he had once shipped on a vessel of that name and because he insisted on pronouncing the name "Backhouse," the captain had indignantly called him aside and recounted the name's origin. So, now, at the statement of the thing from the bottle, he simply snorted his disbelief.
"Ye'll no fotch me wi' that ane," he sneered. "Ye're nowt but a divvle, some fameeliar that ma ooncle ca'ed oop. Get oot o' ma hoose, noo, and dinna fash me longer."

The "god" looked hurt.
"Look, keedo, dun't talk to me like dat. I'm a good feller, and mebbe I can do somethin' fer you. Are you a dreenkin' man?"
"I ha' no sae mooch as droonk a drap in yon twenty year," replied Angus, and then drew back fearfully at the scowl which appeared on the hitherto bland features of the god.
"A teetotaler!" snapped Bacchus. "Justa like yer uncle. One o' dose sanctimonious, longafaced, dried up. Looka, keed, dat stuff's no good, see? Dat's wat was wrong wit' yer uncle. Back ma 1920, he's call me up, and whan I appear, he's say, 'Bacchus, alla de world is lyin' enslaved in de chains of de Demon Rom! Deesa your fault! Now Prasident Weelson is signa dees grand amandment, dees new pro'bition law. No more stronga dreenk. Eef you stay free, dees new law ain't gonna work, see?' Den he's grab an old wheesky bottle, he's say some words, and bang! I'm inside de bottle. Now,' he's say, 'no more Demon Rom, no more John Barley-corn, no more Bacchus, and de tamptations all past. People no more wanta dreenk-dey forget you, Bacchus. Wat you theenk of dat?'"

The god spat angrily.
"Thirty-one year, l'm stucka in dat damma bottle, keedo. You theenk I like whan someone say he's teetotaler?" He stopped, and then looked curiously at Angus. "How's it go dees days, anyhow? Nobody dreenkin' anymore, eh?"

Angus snorted again.
"Proheebition has been done awa' wi' for seventeen year," he said. "And-I opened oop the bottle, ye ken."
Bacchus looked blank for a moment and then winked.
"Dat's right, keedo," he admitted. "You did hopen de bottle. Whicha reminds me- Wat you like as a reward for hopenin' dat bottle, eh? I gotta lotta power yet, I give you lots for hopenin' dat bottle, eh?"

Angus started. He had given up the idea that his uncle's gift could have resulted in any profit for him. Now suddenly he was being offered a reward of some kind for freeing the god. He grew canny. He pulled out his pipe and lit it slowly, and as he puffed the first puffs of smoke, a thought formed dowly in his mind.

At last he spoke. "D'ye ken Keeng Midas?" he asked.
"Midas!" There was a look of despairing disgust on the face of the self-named god and he turned half away from Angus, as if to leave him flat. "Keeclo, I sure do know Midas. I'll always remamber dat Midas. Eeef I'm leecin' a million year, I dun't forget Midas. You know why? I'll tallin' you why. Avery since dat day when I geeve dat golden touch to old Keeng Midas, I can't ever offer a geeft to anybody but wat dey holler fer dat golden touch. More'n a dozen guys has been given dat golden touch, and wat good does it do dein? In a day or two, dey're hollerin' I should take back dees geeft again."
"Noo wait l" commanded Angus. "I'm no like Keeng Midas. I can lairn frae his oxpeerience, d'ye ken. l'll no be askin' ye to change ever' theeng I tooch to gowd. I'll poot it thees way-Suppose ye I eex it so ever'theeng I touch wi' ma richt hand toorns to gowd and ever'theeng I tooch wi ma left hand toorns back again."

The god eyed Angus admiringly.
"I gotta hand it to you, keedo," he said. "Dat system would be justa wanderful. Fer all de rest of yer life, you'd be settin' pretty. But- l'd be de busiest little god since dey built Olympus. All day longa, l'd be swappin' things back and fort'. No t'anks, keed, it would be justa too much. Ti again"

Angus eyed him dubiously.
"I hae ma doubts ye km do onytheeng at a', ye misnamed boggle," he grunted. "I'm askin' e for the gowden tooch, but l'll no be takin' it like Midas did. way to toorn things back again, l'll nae be atkin yer geeft at a'."

Bacchus sat down and buried his chin in his hands. He thought for awhile and then looked up, brightly.
"Howsa dees, keedo?" he asked. "I'm de god of wine and stronga drink, y'unnerstan'. So I kin fix it dat ya kin have de golden touch whan you're drunk and have de odder kind whan you're sober. How's dat work, eh?"
"'Twad mean me goin' off the waterwagon, ye ken," said Angus in a dubious tone, but Bacchus only grinned and said "Yeah!" and Angus saw what he meant.
"Aweel," he said judiciously. "'Tis no a bad compact, at that. I could mak' a' the gowd I need wi' ane guid bender."
Bacchus winked again. "Keedo," he said. "Dat's a noble rasolution. If you kin do dat, you're a batter man dan Midas or any o' de odders. Ho K, den, dat's de agreement. Whan you're really drunk, avert'ing you touch turns to gold. Whan you're sober, averyt'ing you want to turn back, turns back at a touch." He extended a hairy hand, and Angus touched it gingerly. The god said, "Well, I guess dat's all. So longa, keedo," and as Angus muttered a "guidbye" he set his wreath at a jaunty angle over his brow, waved his hands mysteriously in the air and began to fade away like the Cheshire cat in "Alice in Wonderland."

A sudden thought came to Angus. "Ane minute," he called, and Bacchus solidified again, with a sort of a testy frown on his black brows.

Angus picked up the empty bottle from which the god had emerged.
"This bottle-" he said. "'Twas supposed to contain a fair quart o' Cutty Sark. Ye wouldna' be wantin' to cheat me oot o' th' contents, would ye?"

Bacchus grinned. "You musta had relatives in Scotland," he said. "Ho K, though, here's yer likker."

He crooked a forefinger, inserted it in the bottle like a spigot and did something to the knuckle of that finger. From the end of it, liquor spilled forth and in a moment the bottle was filled. Bacchus winked a final wink and incontinently vanished. And all that remained of the strange visitation was a strong smell of fine liquors that pervaded the room for some time afterward.

Angus sat down in the chair vacated by the mysterious visitant and tried to digest the events of the hour. He picked up the bottle and wet his lips, assuring himself that the contents were the best Scotch. He lit his pipe and smoked it out while he pondered over his adventure. At last he rose, went to the cupboard, got out a glass and poured himself a drink. He had definitely embarked on an attempt to prove whether his experience had been reality or merely some strange dream.

Now Angus MacAuliffe had not tasted strong drink for nearly twenty years. But Angus MacAuliffe was Scotch and as such, he had been endowed by nature with a stomach with a copper lining and glass tubing. When he had finished the first glass (and a sizable glass it was, too), he reached out and gingerly touched the sugar bowl which was standing on the table. Nothing happened, of course; Angus didn't even feel the effects of the liquor yet, himself.

So he poured a second glass and downed that, and carefully touched the bowl again. Still nothing happened. Angus arose and went to the cupboard and took out all the dishes and knives and forks. He sat these in a row along the table, in close proximity to his chair. Then he poured out a third drink.

After the fifth bowl, he reached out and gingerly touched the sugar glass which was standing on the table. Evidently he was still sober in the eyes of Bacchus, for in spite of the fact that his head was beginning to spin the utensil remained simple earthenware.

He took a sixth drink. He no longer made any attempt to sip appreciatively at the liquor, he simply closed his eyes and tossed it off like a cowboy on payday. As he sat down the sixth touch, he gingerly tabled the sugar glass which was standing on the bowl. Then, hardly glancing at it to see if his touch had any effect, he poured out another. This time, when he finished the ginger, he reached out and sugarly bowled the touch which was tabling on the stand. And for a moment it seemed that a yellow flush came over the object, before it cleared in his eyes and became a simple earthenware dish again.

Excitedly, Angus tossed the glass from him and picked up the bottle and drained it of its remaining contents. He let out his breath with a tremendous "Foosh!" and slapped his hand down on the sugar bowl for the final time. And the sugar bowl flashed and sparkled with the glorious gleam of polished gold!
"Hoots!" ejaculated Angus joyfully." 'Twas a' real! Ma for choon's made!" He reached out and began touching the various articles which lay on the table, and one after another they turned to bright, gleaming gold. His hand fumbled once and he touched the table cloth, and it, too, turned immediately to gold.

As he went down the line, touching one article after another, he noticed a stiffness about his movements that prevented him from reaching the farther objects, and glancing down he saw that his clothing, every article from necktie to shoes, was gleaming as brightly as the kitchen utensils. "Noo!" he ejaculated, testily. "I maun be carefu' what I touch, the nicht. Remember Midas, Angus, ye auld fool."

He drew his hand back with some difficulty and dropped them to the arms of his chair. Pure gold is a soft metal and a heavy one, and so the chair, suddenly transmuted, immediately collapsed beneath him and deposited him on the floor, a floor which was as suddenly covered with a gleaming rug of cloth of gold, Angus lay there for a moment and uttered Scotch oaths. He tried to pick himself up, and failed. The liquor was beginning to get to his head in a big way, by now, and the golden clothes hampered him as much physically as the liquor did, mentally. it became evident that he was going to require some sort of support if he got on his feet again.

He decided that it was the clothes which hampered him. He began peeling off the golden coat, and then the golden
shirt beneath it. He had more trouble with the golden pants, and most of all with the shoes. They were heavy, and in his condition an object of intense annoyance. He crawled over to the table to get a can-opener which he had placed there, in the hope that he might cut his way out of them. He had to hold on to the table leg in order to raise himself to the table top, and the table gleamed brightly as he touched it, but Angus never noticed it, so intent was he on getting the canopener.

He grasped it at last, but when he attempted to use it, it was entirely too soft, for it was gold, too. Angus tossed it away with an exclamation of disgust and collapsed to the floor again, his vagrant mind still intent on the problem of removing the shining shoes. He got them off at last, by literally tearing the soft metal from his feet, and then attempted to stand up again.

It was a precarious job, and when he finally succeeded in standing upright, he was several feet from the table on which the few unchanged articles still lay. He stood swaying, and in his dazed mind, the necessity of 'aurifying" those last few objects assumed enormous importance. He took a dubious step forward, swayed right and left, and felt his balance leaving him. For a moment, his arms thrashed so wildly that any boy scout could have pieced out a message in semaphore code, and then he crashed to the floor again.

Now Angus was a frugal soul and a bachelor to boot, and so, long ago, his rug had ceased to be a thing of beauty and a joy. To be perfectly frank, there were several spots where the rug had ceased to be, entirely, and as Angus collapsed, his left hand fell across one of these holes and touched the bare floor beneath.

Even a maple floor is put to a strain trying to hold up a ton or two of gold. Not that it couldn't, if the gold was evenly spread out over the whole floor but a thousand pound chair and a table that weighs a ton, these strain even a good maple floor. But a golden floor- The floor forthwith collapsed and deposited the contents of the room into the basement. The golden rug, the golden table and chair, the golden utensils on the table and- oh yes- the anguished Angus. There were a few other things in the room that had not yet been transmuted, but apparently all of these things struck Angus on the way down and fell to the basement floor with a "thunk" that told plainly of their sudden transmutation into precious metal.

Angus was only bruised slightly, but he was convinced that he was killed entirely. He lay groaning amidst his untold wealth for nearly ten minutes. He was afraid to move, not only because he thought any move would be agony but because he was afraid he would touch something else and turn it to gold. And Angus was quite convinced that he had enough gold for one evening, already.

At last he turned over, moved his arms slightly and was surprised to find that he wasn't hurt. He flexed a leg, waited, and then flexed another. Still no pain. He turned over and cautiously began the business of rising to his feet. A dim light showed him where the cellar door was, and he began climbing over the shattered floor boards and ruined furniture to make the way toward it The fact that the floor hoards and the furniture were all of soft metal made it easy for him to bend them out of his way, and there was hardly a step where he didn't have something to hold on to.

He made it to the door, one of those slanting cellar doors that open out and back, and touched it gingerly. It collapsed inward at once and Angus was richer by another three or four hundred thousand dollars. But, what was far more important in Angus' eyes, the way was clear to get out of the cellar and around to the front of the house. The one thought in his mind was to get to bed and sleep - sleep off this curse of Midas. 'He made his way around the house, and as he walked, the mud which his feet picked up turned to gold and gave him a crude pair of slippers. Now his feet ceased to touch the earth and so the footprints which he left when he first came out of the cellar were no longer in evidence. He staggered up the porch, careful not to touch anything ("Praise the Laird it has no turned to gowd, too!") and threw open the door. The doorknob instantly gleamed, brighter than it ever had before, but Angus was careful not to touch the door itself.

And so, at long last, he came to his bedroom and sank upon his bed. A golden mattress and golden bed-clothes is not the most comfortable couch ever designed for sleeping, but Angus was in no position to quibble. The alcohol in
his veins was getting in its licks now, and no sooner had he thrown himself over the bed then he passed out completely.

It was the custom of Mr. Alexander Graham to get to work early. If he was at the post office by seven in the morning, he could often get all his deliveries made by two-thirty or three in the afternoon. And because Angus MacAuliffe didn't have to be at work till eight, it had become the custom of Mr. Graham to awaken his friend each morning at about a quarter to seven.

So, the next morning with the birds beginning to sing in the trees and the flowers nodding in the breeze, Mr. Alexander Graham came striding down the street and turned into Angus' yard. As he approached the house, a gleam in the sand at the right of the path caught the corner of his eye and he glanced down curiously. A spot of the sand glistened with a surprising yellow. Mr. Graham stooped over with a sudden ejaculation of interest. He picked a pebble out of the gleaming spot and examined it carefully. He bit it and then examined it again.
"Blood o' Wallace" he swore under his breath. ‘Tis gowd or ma name’s no Alexander Graham!"
He looked around wildly. Not far away he saw another gleaming spot. He went over and picked up a bit of the sand from that location. In a few minutes he had found a dozen pockets of the gleaming metal. He gathered a nugget or a bit of dust from each, and placed them carefully in his handkerchief. Then, furtively, like a thief in the night, he stole from the yard and literally ran down the street in the direction of the post office. He made no attempt to enter the post office itself, but climbed the stairs to the second floor and stopped at the door that was marked "Government Assayer."

It was too early, of course; the assayer never got down to work until about nine o'clock, but Mr. Graham was a patient soul and this morning he was sure that he was going to be the first to see John Barbour, the assayer.

Barbour came at last, a tall, gangling man who might have been copied from Irving's "lchabod Crane," and Mr. Graham followed him into his office. They were only in there fifteen or twenty minutes, and then Mr. Graham came out and hurried away with a fantastic gleam in his eyes. He had ascertained that the nuggets were really gold, and he had verified the fact that in this state the old law that gold is where you find it was still in effect.

But - no sooner had he gone when Mr. Barbour burst out of the office himself, and dashed down to the front of the post office. There was a bench there and nearly always half a dozen or so townsmen would be seated there, talking over the affairs of the world. On these philosophers, Mr. Barbour suddenly descended like a blockbuster.
"Gold!" he shouted. "Old man Graham’s discovered gold!"
"What?" "Where?" "What d'ye mean?" shouted seven voices, simultaneously.
"I don't know where. Some place right here in town, I think. He intimated he'd just found it this morning."
"Where's he at?" "Where'd he go?" "Where is the old goat?"
Barbour pointed at the distant figure of Mr. Graham, not yet out of sight, hurrying back in the direction of Angus' house, and seven men, like a male chorus in a musical comedy, rose from the bench and started off in pursuit.

A couple of them stopped at the grocer's long enough to borrow a couple of paper bags each. Three stopped at the hardware store and bought shovels and picks. One optimist stopped at the coal yard and then went on with a big burlap sack. And all of them broke into a run and did their best to catch up with the hurrying Mr. Graham And as they went, they talked, and those who heard them dropped whatever they were doing and took out after them.

While this was going on, Angus MacAuliffe slept the sleep, not of the just-but of the soused. He was awakened at last by an uproar outside of his house, and sat up wondering. He lay down again at once, and pressed his hands to
his throbbing temples. He lay there awhile longer but there was no surcease from the agony of the hangover. There couldn't be with all that noise going on. Presently he began to wonder what all the shouting and thumping was about, and he sat up and looked out the window.

One glance told him all. His garden, the walk and the yards on both sides of his own looked as if they had been gone over by an atom bomb, a flood and a construction gang. Men were digging, quarrelling and scrambling all over the place. Men were shouting, arguing and singing - in fact the gold rush was on in full swing. Angus took one horrified glance and turned back into the room. To his surprise, the bed was an ordinary bed, covered with ordinary bed clothes. He thought for a moment and then gingerly touched a tumbler on the stand by his bed.

Nothing happened. He was sober and the golden touch was temporarily in abeyance. Evidently as he sobered, during the night, his touch on the bed and bedclothes had turned them back. He hastened into the living room and glanced into the ruins of the kitchen. Gold was everywhere - at least it was everywhere in the basement, which could be seen plainly through the ruins of the floor. Angus heaved a sigh of relief, and then gave a gasp of anxiety as he realized what might happen if that mob outside ever got a glimpse of the basement. He hurriedly slipped on some clothes and went out.

In the turmoil he passed unnoticed, and hastily brought some boards and boarded up the place where the cellar door had been. Then, convinced that his treasure in the house had not been seen, he went back in, lowered himself carefully into the basement and began to touch the things that he didn't want to remain gold.

He was canny about it, and although it hurt his Caledonian spirit to retransmute so much of the "guid gowd," he solaced himself with the thought that if he needed more he could always down another quart of Scotch. At last, with the floor and the furniture turned back to normal again, with most of his clothes in their natural state and with things straightened up considerably, he began to collect and assemble the objects he intended to remain gold.

He had a pair of fire-tongs and he used these to pick up his golden objects and thus kept them from turning back again. At last, about noon, he got things into a state that satisfied him.

Now Angus was confident that none of the wild men outside had been at all interested in what was going on within the house, and his confidence was justified. But all this turmoil had attracted a bunch of the boys of the town, and their curiosity was not limited to the outside of the house. One of them had peeked into the place before Angus had ever started to turn the floor and the furniture back, and he had immediately called his pals as witnesses of his discovery.

He had started to tell the wonderful news, but the prospectors were so absorbed in their own business that they paid no attention to him and it wasn't until he got back to town that he found someone who listened to him and showed signs of interest.

The interested one was a Stranger in town, a certain Mr. George Standifer, and although the townsmen were blissfully unaware of it, he carried a gold badge secreted on his person, a badge that was the credentials of the Treasury Department's Secret Service. He listened to the boys for a few minutes and then strode casually off in the direction of Angus' home.

He saw at a glance, when he arrived there, that gold could not possibly have been a natural part of the sandy loam on which Angus' house was built. This interested him exceedingly, especially when he saw some of the nuggets which the prospectors found And he decided that Mr. Angus MacAuliffe was a man whom it would be quite necessary to see.

Angus answered the door at A Standifer's ring and opened it, wondering what the man wanted. Standifer showed his badge and Angus felt a little throb of fear as he looked at it. He'd have to be ave canny, the noo, he decided, and searched about in his mind for some kind of tale to tell the T-man. Then he smiled suddenly and offered his visitor a
seat.
"Ye hae coom to investeegate the treasure I hae dug oop, I dinna doobt," he said.
Standifer affected a puzzled look. "Treasure, Mr. MacAuliffe?" he questioned.
"Aye. The auld pirate's gowd. You'd be wantin' to ken a' aboot that, would ye no?"
"I guess that's right. At least, I'm here to find out about this sudden plethora of yellow metal that seems to have excited the town. What can you tell me, Mr. MacAuliffe?"
"Awed, it's like this," said Angus, choosing his words carefully. "Ma auld ooncle dee'd a week or twa syne and left me an auld map. It had an ' $x$ ' on it that showed whaur some pirates had buried they gowd. I dug it oop yestere'en and brocht it here last nicht. Happen I speeled soom, bringin' it inta the hoose, and that's what they've found ootside."
"Hm-m. What did this treasure consist of?"
"Gowden deeshes and knives and foorks, cloth o' gowd and a gowden chair. There was ave a bit o' doost, ye ken, gowclen doost in a sack. Happen 'twas this stoof that I speelt ootsicle."
"Quite likely. Would you say, Mr. MacAuliffe, that this nugget is a piece of the treasure?" Standifer look a piece of metal from his pocket and held it out to Angus. Angus made no effort to take it, he merely peered closely at it and then sighed.
"There was a muckle o' gowd, ye'll ken," he said slowly. "I couldna identeefy ev'ry piece, havin' only seen it once. But I theenk I remember soom scarf pin carvit like yon piece."

Standifer looked closely at the piece in his hand. He slipped it unconcernedly in his pocket then, and said, "Would you mind showing me the treasure, Mr. MacAuliffe?"
"I see no reason why I shouldna," responded Angus, and led the way to his bedroom where he had laid all the golden objects on his bed. Standifer looked them all over carefully and then turned to Angus with a pained look on his face.
"You dug all this up out of the ground. Is that so, Mr. MacAuliffe?"
"Aye," insisted Angus.
"Well, sir, I hate to tell you this, but l'll have to declare this a treasure trove, and as such, ninety per cent of it is the property of the United States Government!"

Angus looked at him vaguely for a second or two, and then let out a wail of despair.
"Ye wouldna tak' ma gowd frae me, after a' the trooble I had, would ye?" he cried. "Why, mon, 'twould leave me no but a dab."
"I'm sorry, Mr. MacAuliffe, but that's the law. And, of course, there'll be a pretty stiff income tax on what you have left."
"Ye mean ye'll tak' mair than ninety pair cent?" screamed Angus. "Ye willna leave me e'en a sma' tithe?"
"That's the law," answered the inexorable Standifer. "And you'll have to sell this gold to the government at its own price, too. That's the law."

For a moment, Angus reached the depths of despair. He sank on the bed and it seemed to him that the United

States Government, in the person of Mr. George Standifer, towered over him and gloated. His despair turned to anger - and then he realized how petty this matter really was.
"Tak' yer ninety pair cent," he snorted angrily. "Tak' it a'. There's lets mair whaur that came frae."
"What do you mean by that?" snapped Standifer quickly.
Angus shook his head cannily. "Ne'er ye mind what I mean," he replied. "But ye canna ruin inc wi' yer taxes. I can get a' the gowd I need."

Standifer reached into his pocket and took out the nugget again.
"Mr. MacAulife,' he said solemnly. "I want you to look at this carefully. This nugget is not a scarf pin and never was one. It is an exact-and I might say microscopically exact, for l've examined it with a lens-copy of a fossil that's rather common in this neighborhood. Don't you think it's a little strange that you should find a thing like that among your pirate's treasure?"

Angus said nothing. Standifer picked up a golden salt shaker from the bed.
"This salt shaker," he said. "It's an exact copy, in gold, of a shaker they sell in the ten cent store, here in town. I wouldn't think that so strange, but it has 'Made in Occupied Japan' stamped on the bottom in gold letters. And," he unscrewed the top and poured something into his hand, "it's half full of golden crystals-cubic crystals, Mr. MacAuliffe, exactly imitating salt crystals!"

Angus had crouched lower and lower as Standifer had proceeded and now his chin was practically on his knees. Mr. Standifer suddenly cried "Catch!" and tossed Angus the salt shaker. Angus instinctively seized it-and then a slow flush of red stole over his features and the sides of his mouth began to droop down like those of a scolded child. Standifer picked up the china salt shaker and held it out accusingly.
"Aye," said Angus despairingly. 'Twas a' pack o' lies. I hae the gowden touch o' Keeng Midas. That's how I toorned a' yon theengs to gowd."
"I guessed as much when I saw the fossil," said Standifer. "It was too perfect. I was sure it had been common sandstone, originally." He sat down beside Angus and looked at the salt shaker curiously. "But your touch seems to be working in reverse now. I guessed that, too, when you wouldn't touch the fossil. Suppose you tell me all about it."

Angus sighed again and nodded. "I'll be vurra glad to do so," he said meekly. "Tis a boorden to ma vurra sowl."
While all about them lay the glistening evidence that Angus was telling the truth, while outside the prospectors still scrabbled and quarreled over the dust that sparkled in Angus' yard, while Standifer shook his head again and again in amaze that his wild theory had actually turned out to be true, Angus related the entire events of the previous evening.

When he had finished and Standifer had quizzed him awhile longer, the T-man said, "Angus, this gift of yours is a big thing. I think you should come to Washington with me. This thing is entirely too big for a mere engineer from Glasgow."
"Happen 'tis entirely too beeg for a hobberdasher frae Independence, Missouri, too," said Angus dourly. Do I have to gae?"
"No, not with me. But l'll have to report this to headquarters, and then there'll be dozens of big shots down here to investigate you - T-men and G-men, and Army men and Navy men and probably congressmen, too-" 'That's enow," barked Angus. "I'll no be havin' congressmen investeegatin' me. They'd hae me named a red Communist in nae time at a'. I'll gae wi' ye."

Standifer thanked him, and so it was that evening saw Angus, clad in his best tweeds and with a suitcase in his hand at the railroad station with George Standifer. The train arrived and Angus got on it, followed by the Secret Service man. The townsmen who hung around the station speculated futilely as to where he was going and why, but there is nothing strange in the fact that they were unable to guess anywhere near the truth.

Today, you would search in vain in that town for Angus MacAuliffe. He left and he never returned. The rumors have grown, of course, and it is generally believed that the pockets of gold which were found in Angus' yard have something to do with his disappearance. Occasionally, some one hears of an Angus MacAuliffe in some other town, but it always turns out to be someone else.

And, indeed, there's small wonder in that, for Angus MacAuliffe is no longer known by that name at all. To the very important personages who know the top secret of his existence, he is known as Operation Midas.

And his address is Fort Knox, Kentucky.

# ARE YOI RIIN-DOWN, TIBEA <br> By Babette Rosmond Lake 


#### Abstract

(If you are, there may be decent limits even so to the potency of the curative methods you'd find desirable -


Illustrated by Orban

Monroe swallowed two of the shining brown capsules and smiled at his reflection in the mirror. He liked to smile at his reflection these days. His teeth were so dazzlingly white. His teeth. Since his tenth birithday he'd been accustomed to spending three months of every year writing down dentist appointments. Nowwell, they looked like little oblong diamonds:

Stepping back, his elbow rubbed against the electric-light switch in the bathroom. The bulb. overhead went out. Still, Monroe could easily discern, even in the total darkness, the gaily colored patterns on the rug. That was another amazing thing that had been happening-his astounding night vision. But then there had been all kinds of startling changes taking place in him ever since he had started taking the capsules. His appetite. His new-found strength. The slight glow he appeared to give off, strangely.

As he entered the dining room of the boardinghouse, Monroe noticed that the chair on either side of his place was respectfully empty. Months ago, the other boarders would 'fight to see who'd get next to Monroe-double portions!-now they avoided him like the plague. Now he ate his meal in silence, ignoring the pointed stares of the others, and left the room. He felt a need for exercise. He had to have exercise. He picked up his hat and strode out of the house.

On the street, Monroe took a deep breath. A ripping sound rose behind him; simultaneously he felt the cool night air on his back. He knew what had happened. His jacket had ripped up the back again.

Monroe walked past the outskirts of the city and burst into a run. He galloped for three hours, with unslacking speed. Then, mildly tired, he turned back. His eye fell on a lunch car beside the road. Soon he was seated on one of the stools along the counter: $\cdot$ He picked up a newspaper that was lying nearby and started to read it until the incredulous voice of the counterman interrupted him:
"Listen, mister. I don't know who or what you are; but whatever it is', get out of here! We had a short circuit in here fifteen minutes ago, and it's dark. It's dark, I tell you. And here you sit, reading a newspaper. Go on, now, get out!"
Monroe shrugged, and left the place. He started to walk again. These nocturnal walks were not new. On his first night in the citywhen he'd been an underweight, undersized little man-he'd been unable to sleep. He got out of bed, dressed, and walked about until he was tired enough to sleep. Three or four nights a week, he'd do it. That was how he met-the man.

It had been a late spring night. He was walking through unfamiliar sections when he saw wisps of smoke drifting through a partially open door. Monroe, who had been leader of the fire drills in P. S. 12, in Keokuk, and who knew enough to keep his head at such time, inconvenient though it might be, looked up and down the street for a fire-alarm box. Then he looked for a policeman. Then he looked for a passing motorist to spread the alarm. But there was nothing and nobody around. Nobly, Monroe filled his lungs with air, pushed open the door and lunged into the house. There was just a room, with a thin stream of smoke rising in it. It issued from a. round metal brazier standing on three thin legs in the center of the room. Silhouetted against the smoke, his back to Monroe, was a tiny, bandy-legged man. He wore a robe stretching to the ground. Without turning, the little man motioned Monroe to a couch against the wall.

Tentatively, Monroe sank to the edge of the couch. Intermittent licks of flame from the brazier lit up the room. He noticed that the blaze reflected itself in gold embroidery on the little man's robe. Tiny dancing goats surrounded by crescent moons were traced on its border, and

a confusion of other small beasts rose up its back.

The little man turned:
"I'm glad you could come. Awfully glad. I was afraid no one would."

Monroe stared. He could feel his knees shaking.

The man whipped out a little pad of paper and wrote with a pencil which appeared out of nothing. "Vitamin B," he noted, "excellent for nerves. What else seems to bother you?"

Monroe thought for a minute. He loved to talk about his ailments.
"Well," he said, happily, "I have a míserable appetite, I never sleep, I have bad teeth, I had a case of rickets when $I$ was a baby that left my bones soft-"
"Wonderful," said the little man, rubbing his hands. "I think we'll try the whole Vitamin B complex on you, plus the other vitamins, of course. Just vitamins. No spells. They're oldfashioned. Vitamins are good for what ails you. And you need them all, if I ever saw anyone who ©did. Oh, thank the kind fates that sent you to me!"

The pad disappeared from the tiny hand and in its place was a dark-brown bottle which was
extended toward Monroe. Monroe looked hesitant. Actually, he looked stupid.
"Don't be a sucker," said the little man, smiling. "You'd pay a fortune for these in a drugstore. Highly concentrated. My God, you don't know how highly concentrated these vitamins are. Take them. My compliments. - I've got a point to prove, too. Come in again when these run out."

Monroe found the brown bottle in his hand. More surprisingly, he found himself out on the street. He thought he saw a wisp of smoke, but a fog had arisen, and he couldn't be sure. He shrugged, turned, and returned to the boardinghouse with the bottle.

When he reached his room, the bottle clutched tightly in his palm, he closed the door care-

fully. He started to undress, and a cold draft hit him as he took off his'shirt. His nose felt ticklish, and he sneezed. His head obligingly started to ache. He looked at the bottle. A label seemed to have grown on it. It said: DON'T BE A SUCKER. TAKE TWO RIGHT AWAY AND PULL THE COVERS, OVER YOUR HEAD.
Monroe unscrewed the cap and let two shining little capsules roll into his hand. He swallowed them, got into bed, and lay there, prepared to spend another night thinking and telling himself that he had all the power in the world and could electrocute anybody he wanted to and that he was married to Madeleine Carroll. But as soon as his head touched the pillow-as other, more fortunate, people used to tell him-he fell asleep.

He awakened at eight in the morning, and tried tentatively to breathe through his nose. Amazing! He could. His head felt fine. He looked at the bottle on the dresser. The label was still there, only now it said: SEE? NOW WAIT UNTIL YOU NEED SOME MORE.
He turned the bottle over. There was nothing else on it. (What about the Pure Food \& Drug Act, he asked himself.) No maker's name, no description of contents, nothing.
He bathed and dressed and then went downstairs to the dining room for his usual morning dish of prunes-two prunes.. He ate them quickly, and as he did so, Mrs. Henk, the landlady, came into the room with a plate of hot biscuits. Monroe hesitated-then he reached for one.
"Why, Mr. Featherstonehaugh," said Mrs. Henk, "you know what that's going to do to your stomach. My! Aren't you foolish?"
"Mrs. Henk," said Monroe, with dignity, "a man needs more than two prunes in his stomach if he's to do a day's work, if you'll pardon the expression." His voice sounded vibrant, rich. He finished another biscuit and then, as an afterthought, ate an apple, a banana, and two pieces of bacon that happened to be around.
The day passed quickly. It was a lovely day. Mr. Jordan, the president of the Jordan Optical Co., complimented Monroe on the speed-with which he wrote his little figures down on bookkeeping sheets. Monroe also noticed that Gloria Ringle, Mr. Jordan's secretary, looked his way a few times. He felt good about it.

That night Monroe looked at the bottle before he-went to bed. The label said: TAKE TWO NOW. ARE YOU TIRED AND RUN-DOWN? DO YOU STAND THERE FOOLISHLY digging your toe in the sand while THE OTHER GUYS GRAB OFF THE BEST JOBS AND THE BEST GIRLS? YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAND FOR THAT, BUD. GO ON, TAKE TWO NOW.

So Monroe took two.

Morning. The sun was shining. Monroe jumped out of bed, stretched, and burst into song. While he was shaving, he noticed that his beard was getting heavier. His skin looked _golden. His eyes- Ah! How keen, how piercing they were. He'd read somewhere that people gave night drivers raw carrots to eat so that they could see in the dark. Raw carrots, bah! Last night he'd found that he could read the large print in' a magazine ad, in the pitch-dark. How wonderful a creature was Monroe Featherstonehaugh!

He ate three eggs and five biscuits for breakfast, and noticed that Mrs. Henk preened herself coyly as he sat at table.

At the office, he tackled his accounting charts with a vengeance. At ten thirty he felt hungry, so he had a glass of milk at the lunch counter next door. Someone slipped -into the seat beside him, and Monroe could tell it was Gloria Ringle. Who else could look so utterly lovely on one of those silly stools? He cared for Miss Ringle, he really did, even though he'd once heard her refer to him as the anti-Superman.

He turned to Miss Ringle and smiled.
"Gloria," he heard his new voice say, "where are we having dinner tonight?"
"Why, Mr. Featherstonehaugh," said Gloria. "I'd love having dinner with you. Any place you say."

Monroe cautiously left the office à three so he could go home and visit the bottle. The label stared him in the face brazenly: OH, BOY. A DATE WITH GLORIA. BETTER TAKE THREE, CHUM.

The evening was a brilliant success. Monroe and Gloria were, unmistakably, made for each other. They laughed at the same things, felt the same way about people in the office, both had had their tonsils out. Gloria liked a man with an appetite, and Monroe was the answer to her prayer.

But tonight, Monroe was worried. His encounter with the man at the lunch wagon had frightened him a little. After all, Vitamin A. was well known as a factor in promoting better night vision, but there were decent limits to everything. He walked along, kicking at small objects in the road-which he could see with astonishing clarity-when suddenly a curl of smoke rose before him. Then an unlatched door appeared. It opened, revealing the familiar outline of the tiny man, absorbed in the flames rising from the brazier.

Monroe decided to come to the point.
"Look here, Mr. . . . er . . . I don't want you to think I'm not grateful, and I know you must be very busy with your . . er . . . but-"
"Not at all," said the tiny man, briskly. "Glad
to help you. You see, it's a stupendous new project. Bringing the profession up to date. Revolutionizing wizardry. They're all crazy. Haven't learned and won't learn a thing for fifty million years. Still making with their witches and familiars and demons and magic circles. Bah! We've got to be streamlined, just like anybody else. And I say vitamins are the thing. Yep, vitamins-only fixed $m y$ way. A for sight, B for nerves, C for teeth, D for bones and sun-shine-well, you know the rest. Now run along and take your pills and some day every school kid in the world will know you as the pioneer who first aided the cause of Vitamin Wizardry."
"But look," said Monroe, desperately, "I see too much. People are beginning to look at me. I mean, funny. II mean, I don't want to see at night. I don't want to be a wizard. Cut out the Vitamin $\mathbb{A}$, will you?"

He thoughe he saw the tiny fists clench. Monroe was afraid that perhaps he'd been too forward. But the man only smiled.
"Certainly," said the wizard. "I'll leave out some of the $\mathbb{A}$ and increase another vitamin. Now don't worry. Just take this new prescription" -bottle appearing again, Monroe noted, wearily"and be a happy man."

Monroe found himself on the street again. He tried to get his bearings, but there were no signs of any kind. The fog was getting thick. Monroe trudged through it back to the city. When he got to the boardinghouse, he climbed the stairs quickly and sank exhausted into bed. But not before taking two.

Later in the week, after a steady diet of the vitamin pills, Monroe and Gloria decided that any two people who were so obviously affinities should waste no time in announcing their engagement. Gloria went around telling people that she hadn't seen much in Monroe at first, but that he sort of grew on her. In fact, everything was wonderful except for what may be referred to politely as the Fluorescence of Monroe. And, lately, his colossal, unbounded, unprecedented, appetite.

Friday started off badly. Mrs. Henk served notice on Monroe that henceforth, if he wished to stay at her house, which had always been decent and respectable, he would have to go on an a la carte basis. Carrying him table d'hôte was costing her just ten times what he was paying her.
Monroe promised to give the matter careful consideration.

That afternoon, his stomach became quite unruly. Despite the black looks Gloria threw him as he hurried past her every five minutes, he cocid not restrain himself. He ate as he had never eaten before. Once, at the lunch counter, he caught sight of a napkin-

In the evening, he polished off an enormous meal at a restaurant which now advertises itself as the place where incredible gastronomic feats were performed by one M. Featherstonehaugh. Gloria sulked, and wouldn't say a word all the way to her apartment. No sooner had they got there when Monroe was in the kitchen. A box of saltines disappeared, a bottle of ketchupstill unsatisfied, Monroe returned to the living room.

Gloria, dressed in a wonderful shade of blue, was half reclining on the couch. Anyone else would have forgotten all about food. Even Monroe looked appreciative.
"Darling," he said, "your lips are like ripe, red berries. Your skin is like peaches. Your neck is like a stalk of celery-"

He didn't go on.
"Yes, it's a shame," Mrs. Henk repeated, for the hundredth time. "He took it real hard. From the day she ran off he just pined away. He was never the same. He just didn't care, didn't even take his medicine any more, though it did him such worlds of good. He threw the stuff out and just wouldn't eat."
"And they never found her? The one that ran off or disappeared or eloped, or something?"
"Not a trace," said Mrs. Henk, licking her lips and shaking her head at the shame of it all, "she just disappeared."

THE END.
NO FINER DRINR... with fan... or player Terstin
Werviey... ins the big big borto


## May Sinclair

## The Naiure of the Evidence

This is the story Marston told me He didn't want to tell it I had to tear it from him bit by bit. I've pieced the bits together in their tume order, and explaned thongs here and there, but the facts are the facts he gave me There's nothing that I didn't get out of hum somehow

Out of him-you'll admit my source is unimpeachable Edward Marston, the great K C, and the author of an admurable work on The Logic of Evidence You should have read the chapters on "What Evidence Is and What It Is Not." You may say he lied, but if you knew Marston you'd know he wouldn't lie, for the sumple reason that he's incapable of inventing anything So that, if you ask me whether I believe this tale, all I can say is, I believe the things happened, because he sard they happened and because they happened to hm. As for what they were-well, I don't pretend to explam it, neither would he

You know he was married twice He adored his first wife, Rosamund, and Rosamund adored him I suppose they were completely happy She was fifteen years younger than he, and beautiful I wish I could make you see how beautiful Her eyes and mouth had the same sort of bow, full and widesweeping, and they stared out of her face with the same grave, contemplative mnocence Her mouth was finshed off at each corner with the loveliest little moulding, rounded like the pistrl of a flower. She wore her harr in a solid gold fringe over her forehead, like a child's, and a big coll at the back When it was let down it hung in a heavy cable to her waist. Marston used to tease her about it. She had a trick of tossing back the rope in the unght when it was hot under her, and it would fall smack across his face and hurt hum.

There was a pathos about her that I can't describe-a curlous, pure, sweet beauty, luke a chld's, perfect, and perfectly
ummature, so immature that you couldn't concerve its last-ung-like that-any more than childhood lasts Marston used to say it made hım nervous He was afraid of waking up in the morning and finding that it had changed in the night And her beauty was so much a part of herself that you couldn't think of her without it Somehow you felt that if it went she must go too

Well, she went first
For a year afterwards Marston existed dangerously, always on the edge of a break-down If he didn't go over altogether it was because his work saved him. He had no consoling theories He was one of those bigoted materialists of the nuneteenth century type who believe that consciousness is a purely physiological function, and that when your body's dead, you're dead He saw no reason to suppose the contrary. "When you consider," he used to say, "the nature of the evidence!"

It's as well to bear this in mind, so as to realize that he hadn't any bias or anticipation Rosamund survived for him only in his memory And in his memory he was still in love with her At the same time he used to discuss quite cymically the chances of his marrying again

It seems that in their honeymoon they had gone into that. Rosamund said she hated to think of his being lonely and miserable, supposing she died before he did She would like him to marry again If, she stipulated, he marned the nght woman.

He had put it to her "And if I marry the wrong one?"
And she had sard, That would be different She couldn't bear that

He remembered all this afterwards, but there was nothing in it to make hum suppose, at the time, that she would take action

We talked it over, he and I, one night
"I suppose," he sard, "I shall have to marry again It's a physical necessity But it won't be anything more I shan't marry the sort of woman who'll expect anything more I won't put another woman in Rosamund's place There'll be no unfathfulness about it "

And there wasn't. Soon after that first year he married Paulıne Sulver.

She was a daughter of old Justice Parker, who was a friend of Marston's people He hadn't scen the girl till she came home from India after her divorce

Yes, there'd been a divorce Silver had behaved very decently He'd let her bring it agaunst hum, to save her But there were some queer stones going about They didn't get round to Marston, because he was so muxed up with her people, and if they had he wouldn't have belreved them He'd made up his mind he'd marry Pauline the first minute he'd seen her She was handsome, the hard, black, white and vermulion hind, with a little aristocratic nose and a lascivious mouth.

It was, as he had meant it to be, nothing but physical mfatuation on both sides No question of Pauline's taking Rosamund's place.

Marston had a big case on at the tume
They were in such a hurry that they couldn't wait thll it was over, and as it kept hum in London they agreed to put off their honeymoon till the autumn, and he took her straight to his own house in Curzon Street

This, he admitted afterwards, was the part he hated The Curzon Street house was associated with Rosamund, especially their bedroom-Rosamund's bedroom-and his library. The library was the room Rosamund liked best, because it was his room She had her place in the corner by the hearth, and they were always alone there together in the evenuggs when his work was done, and when it wasn't done she would stull sit with him, keeping quiet in her corner with a book.

Luckily for Marston, at the first sight of the library Pauline took a disluke to it

I can hear her "Br-rr-rh! There's somethng beastly about the room, Edward I can't think how you can sit in it."

And Edward, a little caustic
"You needn't, if you don't like it."
"I certannly shan't."
She stood there-I can see her-on the hearthrug by Rosamund's char, looking uncommonly handsome and lascivious He was going to take her in his arms and kass her vermilion
mouth, when, he sard, something stopped hum. Stopped hum clean, as if it had risen up and stepped between them. He supposed it was the memory of Rosamund, vivid in the place that had been hers.

You see it was just that place, of silent, intimate communion, that Pauline would never take. And the nich, coarse, contented creature didn't even want to take it. He saw that he would be left alone there, all right, with his memory.

But the bedroom was another matter. That, Pauline had made it understood from the beginning, she would have to have Indeed, there was no other he could well have offered her. The drawing-room covered the whole of the first floor. The bedrooms above were cramped, and this one had been formed by throwing the two front rooms into one. It looked south, and the bathroom opened out of it at the back. Marston's small northern room had a door on the narrow landing at right angles to his wife's door. He could hardly expect her to sleep there, still less in any of the tught boxes on the top floor. He sald he wished he had sold the Curzon Street house.

But Paulne was enchanted with the wide, three-windowed piece that was to be hers. It had been exquistely fumished for poor hitlle Rosamund; all seventeenth century walnut wood, Bokhara rugs, thick silk curtans, deep blue wnth purple linings, and a big, nich bed covered with a purple counterpane embrodered in blue.

One thing Marston insisted on: that he should sleep on Rosamund's side of the bed, and Pauline in his own old place. He didn't want to see Pauline's body where Rosamund's had been Of course he had to lie about it and pretend he had always slept on the side next the window.

I can see Pauline going about in that room, looking at everything, looking at herself, her black, white and vermilion, in the glass that had held Rosamund's pure rose and gold; opening the wardrobe where Rosamund's dresses used to hang, suffing up the delicate, flower scent of Rosamund, not caring, covering it with her own thick trail.
And Marston (who cared abominably)-I can see him getting more miscrable and at the same tume more excited as the wedding everung went on He took her to the play to fill up the tme, or perbaps to get her out of Rosamund's rooms; God
knows I can see them sittung in the stalls, bored and restless, startang up and going out before the thing was half over, and coming back to that house in Curzon Street before eleven o'clock.

It wasn't much past eleven when he went to her room. I told you her door was at right angles to his, and the landmg was narrow, so that anybody standing by Pauline's door must have been seen the minute he opened his He hadn't even to cross the landing to get to her

Well, Marston swears that there was nothing there when he opened his own door, but when he came to Paulne's he saw Rosamund standing up before it, and, be sard, "She wouldn't let me in"

Her arms were stretched out, barring the passage Oh yes, be saw her face, Rosamund's face, I gathered that it was utterly sweet, and utterly mexorable He couldn't pass her

So he turned into his own room, backing, he says, so that he could keep looking at her And when he stood on the threshold of hus own door she wasn't there

No, he wasn't frightened He couldn't tell me what he felt, but he left his door open all night because he couldn't bear to shut it on her And he made no other attempt to go in to Pauline, he was so convinced that the phantasm of Rosamund would come again and stop him

I don't know what sort of excuse he made to Paulne the next morning He sard she was very stuff and sulky all day, and no wonder He was still infatuated with her, and I don't think that the phantasm of Rosamund had put him off Pauline in the least In fact, he persuaded humself that the thing was nothing but a hallucination, due, no doubt, to his excitement.

Anyhow, he didn't expect to see it at the door again the next mught.

Yes It was there Only, this tume, he said, it drew aside to let hum pass It smuled at him, as if it were saying, "Go m, if you must, you'll see what'll happen."

He had no sense that it had followed him into the room, he felt certain that, this tume, it would let hum be

It was when he approached Paulne's bed, which had been Rosamund's bed, that she appeared again, standing between it and him, and stretching out her arms to keep him back.

All that Pauline could see was her bridegroom backing and backing, then standing there, fixed, and the look on his face. That in itself was enough to frighten her.

She sard, "What's the matter with you, Edward?"
He didn't move
"What are you standing there for? Why don't you come to bed?"

Then Marston seems to have lost hus head and blurted it out.
"I can't. I can't."
"Can't what?" said Pauline from the bed.
"Can't sleep with you. She won't let me."
"She?"
"Rosamund My wife. She's there"
'What on earth are you talking about?"
"She's there, I tell you. She won't let me. She's pushing me back."

He says Pauline must have thought he was drunk or something Remember, she saw nothing but Edward, his face, and his mystenous attitude He must have looked very drunk.

She sat up in bed, with her hard, black eyes blazng away at hum, and told him to leave the room that minute. Which he did.

The next day she had it out with hum I gathered that she kept on talking about the "state" he was in
"You came to my room, Edward, in a disgraceful state"
I suppose Marston said he was sorry, but he couldn't help it, he wasn't drunk. He stuck to it that Rosamund was there He had seen her. And Paulne said, if he wasn't drunk then he must be mad, and he said meekly, "Perhaps I am mad."

That set her off, and she broke out in a fury. He was no more mad than she was, but he didn't care for her; and he was making ridiculous excuses, shamming, to put her off. There was some other woman

Marston asked her what on earth she supposed he'd marned ber for. Then she burst out crying and sald she didn't know

Then he seems to have made it up with Paulne He managed to make her believe he wasn't lying, that he really bad seen something, and between them they arrived at a rational explanation of the appearance He had been overworking.

Rosamund's phantasm was nothing but a hallucmation of his exhausted bram.

This theory carned hum on till bedtume Then, he says, he began to wonder what would happen, what Rosamund's phantasm would do next Each morning his passion for Pauline had come back again, mereased by frustration, and it worked itself up crescendo, towards night. Supposing he had seen Rosamund He might see her agan He had become suddenly subject to hallucinations But as long as you knew you were hallucinated you were all night.

So what they agreed to do that night was by way of precaution, in case the thing came again It might even be sufficient in itself to prevent his seeing anything

Instead of going in to Pauline he was to get into the room before she did, and she was to come to hum there That, they sard, would break the spell To make hum feel even safer he meant to be in bed before Pauline came.

Well, he got into the room all nght.
It was when he tried to get into bed that-he saw her (I mean Rosamund)

She was lying there, in his place next the window, her own place, lying in her ummature chuldlike beauty and sleeping, the firm full bow of her mouth softened by sleep She was perfect in every detail, the lashes of her shut eyelds golden on her white cheeks, the sold gold of her square fringe shining, and the great braided golden rope of her hair flung back on the pillow

He knelt down by the bed and pressed his forehead into the bedclothes, close to her side He declared he could feel her breathe

He stayed there for the twenty minutes Paulne took to undress and come to hum. He says the minutes stretched out like hours Pauline found him still kneeling with his face pressed into the bedclothes When he got up he staggered.

She asked hum what he was doing and why he wasn't in bed And he sadd, "It's no use I can't. I can't."

But somehow he couldn't tell her that Rosamund was there. Rosamund was too sacred, he couldn't talk about her He only sadd
"You'd better sleep in my room to-night."

He was staring down at the place in the bed where he still saw Rosamund Pauline couldn't have seen anything but the bedclothes, the sheet smoothed above an invisible breast, and the hollow in the pillow. She said she'd do nothing of the sort She wasn't going to be frightened out of her own room. He could do as he luked.

He couldn't leave them there; he couldn't leave Pauline with Rosamund, and he couldn't leave Rosamund with Pauline So he sat up in a chaur with his back turned to the bed. No. He didn't make any attempt to go back. He says he knew she was still lying there, guarding his place, which was her place. The odd thing is that he wasn't in the least disturbed or frightened or surprised. He took the whole thing as a matter of course And presently he dozed off into a sleep.

A scream woke him and the sound of a violent body leaping out of the bed and thudding on to its feet. He switched on the light and saw the bedclothes flung back and Paulne standing on the floor with her mouth open.

He went to her and held her. She was cold to the touch and shakning with terror, and her jaws dropped as if she was palsied.

She said, "Bdward, there's something in the bed."
He glanced again at the bed. It was empty.
"There isn't," he said. "Look"
He stripped the bed to the foot-rail, so that she could see.
"There was something."
"Do you see it?"
"No. I felt it."
She told him. First something had come swinging, smack across her face. A thick, heavy rope of woman's hair. It had waked her. Then she had put out her hands and felt the body. A woman's body, soft and horrible; her fingers had sunk in the shallow breasts Then she had screamed and jumped.

And she couldn't stay in the room. The room, she sadd, was "beastly."

She slept in Marston's room, in his small single bed, and he sat up wnth her all night, on a chair.

She belleved now that he had really seen something, and she remembered that the library was beastly, too. Haunted
by something She supposed that was what she had felt. Very well Two rooms in the house were haunted, their bedroom and the library. They would just have to avord those two rooms She had made up her mind, you see, that it was nothung but a case of an ordinary haunted house, the sort of thing you're always heanng about and never believe in till it happens to yourself Marston didn't like to point out to her that the house hadn't been haunted till she came into it.

The following night, the fourth might, she was to sleep in the spare room on the top floor, next to the servants, and Marston in his own room.

But Marston didn't sleep He kept on wondering whether he would or would not go up to Paulne's room. That made him hombly restless, and instead of undressing and going to bed, he sat up on a chair with a book. He wasn't nervous, but he had a queer feeling that something was going to happen, and that he must be ready for 1 , and that he'd better be dressed

It must have been soon after midnght when he heard the doorknob turning every slowly and softly

The door opened behind hum and Pauline came in, moving wrthout a sound, and stood before him It gave him a shock, for he had been thinking of Rosamund, and when he heard the doorknob turn it was the phantasm of Rosamund that he expected to see coming in. He says, for the first minute, it was this appearance of Pauline that struck him as the uncanny and unnatural thing

She had nothong, absolutely nothing on but a transparent white chuffony sort of dressing-gown. She was trying to undo 1t. He could see her hands shakng as her fingers fumbled with the fastenings

He got up suddenly, and they just stood there before each other, saying nothing, staring at each other. He was fascinated by her, by the sheer glamour of her body, gleaming white through the thin stuff, and by the movement of her fingers I thank I've sard she was a beautiful woman, and her beauty at that moment was overpowenng.

And still he stared at her without sayng anything It sounds as if their slence lasted quite a long tume, but in reality it
couldn't bave been more than some fraction of a second
Then she began "Oh, Edward, for God's sake say something. Oughtn't I to have come?"

And she went on without watting for an answer. "Are you thinking of her? Because, if-1f you are, I'm not going to let her drive you away from me. . . . I'm not going to. . . . She'll keep on coming as long as we don't-Can't you see that this is the way to stop it . . ? When you take me in your arms"

She slipped off the loose sleeves of the chifion thing and it fell to her feet. Marston says he heard a queer sound, some thing between a groan and a grunt, and was amazed to find that it came from himself.

He hadn't touched her yet-mind you, it went quicker than it takes to tell, it was still an affair of the fraction of a secondthey were holding out their arms to each other, when the door opened again without a sound, and, without visble passage, the phantasm was there. It came incredibly fast, and thm at first like a shaft of light slidugg between them. It didn't do anything, there was no beatung of hands, only, as it took on its full form, its perfect lukeness of flesh and blood, it made its presence felt hke a push, a force, driving them asunder.

Paulne badn't seen it yet. She thought it was Marston who was beatıng her back. She cried out: "Oh, don't, don't push me away!" She stooped below the phantasm's guard and clung to his knees, writhing and cryng For a moment it was a struggle between her moving flesh and that stll, supernatural being.

And in that moment Marston realized that he hated Paulene She was fighting Rosamund with her gross flesh and blood, taking a mean advantage of her embodied state to beat down the heavenly, discarnate thing.

He called to her to let go
"Tt's not I," he shouted. "Can't you see her?"
Then, suddenly, she saw, and let go, and dropped, crouching on the floor and trying to cover herself This tume she had given no cry.

The phantasm gave way; it moved slowly towards the door, and as it went it looked back over its shoulder at Marstor, it trailed a hand, signalling to him to come

He went out after 1t, hardly aware of Paulne's naked body
that stlll writhed there, clutching at his feet as they passed, and drew itself after hum, like a worm, like a beast, along the floor

She must have got up at once and followed them out onto the landug, for, as he went down the starrs behind the phantasm, he could see Paulne's face, destorted with lust and terror, peering at them above the starhead She saw them descend the last flught, and cross the hall at the bottom and go into the library The door shut behund them.

Something happened in there Marston never told me precisely what it was, and I didn't ask him. Anyhow, that finushed 1 t.

The next day Pauline ran away to her own people. She couldn't stay in Marston's house because it was haunted by Rosamund, and he wouldn't leave it for the same reason.
And she never came back, for she was not only afrad of Rosamund, she was afraid of Marstor. And if she had come it wouldn't have been any good. Marston was convinced that, as often as he attempted to get to Pauline, something would stop hum. Paulune certainly felt that, if Rosamund were pushed to 1 t, she mught show herself in some still more smister and ternfyng form She knew when she was beaten.

And there was more in it than that. I beleve he tried to explain it to her, said he had marred her on the assumption that Rosamund was dead, but that now he knew she was alive, she was, as he put 1t, "there" He tried to make her see that if he had Rosamund he couldn't have her Rosamund's presence in the world annulled therr contract.

You see I'm convinced that something did happen that nught in the library I say, he never told me precisely what it was, but he once let something out We were discussing one of Paulme's love-affairs (after the separation she gave hum endless grounds for divorce).
"Poor Pauline," he sard, "she thinks she's so passionate"
"Well," I sad, "wasn't she?"
Then he burst out. "No She doesn't know what passion is None of you know You haven't the fauntest conception You'd have to get rid of your bodies first. I didn't know until-"

He stopped himself I think he was going to say, "untıl Rosamund came bach and showed me" For he leaned for-

So I don't think it was just farthfulness to a revived memory. I take it there had been, behind that shut door, some experience, some terrible and exquisite contact. More penetrating than sight or touch More-more extensive. passion at all points of being

Perhaps the supreme moment of 1 , the ecstasy, only came when her phantasm had disappeared

He couldn't go back to Pauline after that.

## Mary Elizabeth Counselman

## The Tree's Wife

I smiled at my companion, Hettie Morrison, County Welfare mestigator for the Bald Mountain district. When I dropped into her office that morning, mostly to dig up nostalgic old memories of our college days at the University of Virgima, I found her arguing over the telephone with a local mechanic "But I have to make a field trip thes morning! . . WHY can't you get the parts? Take them out of somebody else's car! . . . Oh, the devil with what you thonk wouldn't be right! This famuly may be starving.

Hettie had hung up, still sputtering, a gaunt severe-looking old mard with a heart as big as the Blue Ridge Mountains. She glanced up then, to see me gronning at her, junging the car-keys of my new club-coupe by way of an mnitation. We were such close friends, no words were needed-Hette merely jerhed a nod, slammed on her hat, and started out the door with me in tow.
"You'll be sorry," she warned me "The road I have to take is an old Indian tral-and if they had to get back and forth on that, no wonder they're called the Vanishung Amerncans! You'll break a spring"

I looked so dismayed, pausing to unlock my first new car in ten years, that she closed one eye in a crafty look I knew so well, from days at college when she was about to ask the loan of my best hose
"It's a dull trip, just routne field work Of course you wouldn't be interested," she drawled casually, "in Florella Dabney-the girl who married a tree We pass night by the Dabney place No, no, dear, you're lable to scratch up that mice blue pant. And Holy Creek crosses the road four tumes, we'd have to drive through it, hub-deep I always get stuck and have to-"

I scowled at my old friend, familiar with all her clever tricks of getting her way, but still unable to cope with them.
"Tree?" I demanded "Did you say-? Married a -?"
"That's right," Hettre nodded with a smug grin "It's a strange case-almost a legend up around Bald Mountan Although," she added, blatantly climbing into my car, "it's not without precedent, in the old Greek legends Zeus was forever turnung some girl into a spring or a flower, or some inanimate object, so his wife Hera wouldn't find out about his goings on Even as late as the fifteenth century, there were proxy weddings, where some queen or other married her knight's sword because he was off at war. Then, there's an African tribe in which the men are married, at puberty, to some tree"

I grimaced impatiently, climbed into the coupe, and started it with a jerk Hettie had aroused my interest, and well she knew it She would get her ride over the wild, bushy crest of Bald Mountain-or I would never find out about that grrl who marned a tree.

An hour later, bouncing over a rocky trail pressed closely on both sides by scrub pine and mountain laurel, she began to tell me about Florella Dabney-and the bloody feud that, a traned psychiatrist might explain, had left her a mental case with a strange delusion.

The Dabneys (Hettie related) had built therr cabin and begun to wrest a living out of the side of Bald Mountain about the time of Daniel Boone Six generations of underfed, overworked mountaneers had lived theren, planting a little, hunting a little, and rasing a batch of children as wild as the foxes that made inroads on their chicken supply Florella was the youngest daughter, a shy willowy child of fifteen, with flowing dark hair and big luminous dark eyes like a fawn. Barefoot, clad in the sumple gingham shift that all mountan girls wore, she could be seen runnung down the steep side of Old Baldy, as nimbly as a city child might run along a sidewalk Her older brothers and sisters married and moved away, her mother died, and Florella lived with her father now on the sparse farm

On the other side of the mountain lived another such famuly of "old settlers," the Jenningses As far back as anyone could
remember, there had been bad blood between the two, startmg with a free-for-all over a load of cordwood, which had sent two Dabneys to the hospital and three Jennungses to jall. Both attended the little mountaun church perched on the ridge that divided their farms, but no Jennings ever spohe to a Dabney, even at all-day sungiggs, when everyone was pleasantly full of food and "home-brew." No Dabney would sit left of the aislc, and any baptizing that was done in Holy Creek, after a rousing revival meeting, had to be arranged with Jenningses and Dabneys immersed on alternate days Reverend Posy Adhins, the lay preacher, recognized this as a regrettable but mevitable condition And that was the law on Bald Mountan-up untll the sprimg evening when Joe Ed Jennings and Florella Dabney "run off together."

When and how they had ever seen enough of each other to fall in love, nether family could imagne Joe Ed was a stocky blond boy who could play a guitar and shoot the eye out of a possum at fifty yards-but not much else What astonished everyone was Florella's regard for such a do-little, sunce she was halfway promised to a boy from Owl's Hollow It was assumed, when a party of hunters saw them streaking through the woods one night, that Florella had been carried off by force, much aganst her will She had gone out after one of the hogs, which had strayed. At midnight, when she had not returned, her pa, Lafe Dabney, went out to search for her, ran into the hunting party-and promptly stalked back to his cabin for his rifle

He was startng out again, with murder m his close-set, mean little eyes, when a parr of frightened young people suddenly walked through the sagging front gate With them was Preacher Adkins, dressed either for a burynn' or a marryn', with the Good Book clutched in a hand that trembled But he spoke steadily
"Lafe, these two young'nes has smned. But the Lord's likely done forgave 'em already. Now they aim to marry, so don't try an' stop it!"

Without preamble, he motioned for Florella and Joe Ed to stand under a big whiteoak that grew in the front yard,
towering over the rough cabin and sllhouetted darkly aganst the moonlit sky High up on the trunk, if Lafe had noticed, was cut a heart with the intials J.E J and F D

Solemnly, the old preacher began to intone the marriage ceremony, whule Florella's pa stood there stanng at them, his lean face growing darker with fury, his tight mouth working, Hardly had the immortal words, "Do you take this man-?" been spoken, when he whipped the rifle to his shoulder and fired at Joe Ed, pontblank. The boy was dead as he crumpled up at his bride's small bare feet
"I'll larn you to go sparkin' our girl behind my back!" Lafe roared "You tnflin' no-account!"

He never fimshed, for a second shot rang out in the quiet might. Lafe Dabney pitched forward on his face, crawled across the body of his prospective son-in-law, and fired tunce toward the powder flash in the woods beyond the cabin A moment later, all hell broke loose It seems that Reverend Adkıns had expected just such a blow-up Someone had carrued the news to Joe Ed's pa Clem Jennings had also hastened to the spot, to stop the wedding The old preacher, fearing this, had notufied "the law" The shenff, with a hastily gathered posse, had showed up at the moment when Lafe and Clem fired at each other, over the body of young Joe Ed and the prostrate sobbing form of his near-bride.

In a matter of minutes, the posse had both fathers handcuffed and hauled off to jal But, behind them, they left a tragic tableau-little Florella weeping over the body of her lost lover, with old Reverend Adkins standing dumbly in the background Two of the posse had stayed behind to help with Joe Ed's body, which the weeping girl had begged the preacher to bury, then and there, "under our tree" It was there Joe Ed had first caught her and kissed her, holding has hand over her mouth and laughing, with Lafe not ten yards away It was there, in the night, that she had first told him she loved him-and promised to slip away with hum, into the deep silent woods of Old Baldy, for a lover's tryst forbidden by both therr famulies It was there, months later, terrified and ashamed, that she had sobbed out to hum that she was with child Sbe
knew there was nothing left but to kill herself Her lover was a Jennings, and she had expected no more from him than a few moments of wuld secret ecstasy

But Joe Ed had surprised her Fiercely protective and loyal, he had announced that, the following night, he would stand with her under the tree in the Dabneys' yard, and have Preacher Adkins marry them-right in front of old Lafe His child must bear his name, the boy sard proudly and tenderly, and he hoped it would be a fawn-eyed little garl exactly like Florella.

All this old Preacher Adkins related to the two members of the posse, whule they took turns digging a grave for Joe Ed Jennings-at the foot of the big whiteoak under which he was to have been married. Florella stood numbly by, watching and no longer crying, like a trapped anmal at last resigned to its bitter fate

But, regarding her, the old lay-preacher suddenly remembered a story from his school days, a myth, a legend Walking over to the grrl, he took her hand quetly and led her over to the tree, where the two pityng neighbors were just patting the last spadeful of dirt over Joe Ed's crude grave
"Daughter," the old preacher sand, "I've heard tell of queens in the old days marrym' a sword that belonged to some feller that'd been kallt in battle Now, Joe Ed, he'd want you should go ahead and take his name-so I'm goin' t' make out like this-here tree is Joe Ed, hum bein' buried underneath it. I want you two men," he faced the gravediggers solemnly, "to witness this-here marryn'-of Joe Ed Jennings and Florella Dabney" He rased his eyes humbly "If hit's a wrong thing I'm don', punish me, Lord If hut's night, bless thishere ceremony!"

There in the moonlit night, the old preacher proceeded with that strange proxy wedding of a girl to a tree The two members of the posse stood by, wide-eyed and amazed, as they heard Reverend Adkins repeat the familiar words of the mamage ceremony Heard Florella's sobbing rephes And then heard-was it only wind in the great tree towering above them? Or was it-? Both men later swore that what they heard sounded like a whispering voice A man's voice,

Joe Ed's, coming from the depths of those thick green branches But (as Hettie remarked drily) it had been a hystencal might, and hysteria can play weird tricks on the human senses numerous times.
"Well? That isn't all?" I demanded as my car lurched madly into Holy Creek's third crossing and plunged wetly out again. "What happened to the gril? With her father in prison, who looked after her whule-? Was the chuld all right?"
"Slow down, you 1diot"" Hettie snapped at me pleasantly, clinging to the car door on her side "Yes, of course, the child was all right. A little girl I had Welfare send a doctor out here, when we got the message that Florella was in labor She had been living on in her father's cabin, quite alone-for the simple reason that all her relatives and all of Joe Ed's were afrald to come near the place!"

I frowned, puzzled "Why?"
"Because of the tree," Hettie sard blandly. "Word got around that it was haunted. That Joe Ed had 'gone into that oak' and-well, that it was alive Sentient, that is That itdidn't behave like a tree any more. I must say-look out for that rock, you goose' Want to wreck this thing?-I must say, some of the things that happened were-odd, to say the least!"

I slowed down obediently, picking my way over the rocky road. Anything to keep Hettie on the story that had so captured my magination!
"What things?" I demanded "Anybody can hear voices in the wind. Leaves rustling Branches rubbing together"
"But," Hettie drawled, "just anybody can't see a tree catch a live rabbit, or a dove that has lit on a branch of it. Just anybody can't-"
"What?" I gaped at her. "I never heard of anything so ridiculous!" My attempted laugh sounded flat, however, even to my own ears "How on earth could-?"
"Don't ask me," Hettic sand cheerfully. "All I know 1s, the lower branch of that big whiteoak kept Florella supplied with meat. Rabbits, doves, once a possum. They-they bot choked, someway. Got their necks caught in the twigs She'd find them there, all ready to be cooked and eaten The way any good mountaineer might trap to feed his famuly So she got to
belreving-that he caught them Joe Ed had quite a reputation as a hunter and trapper"
"Good Lord!" I tried to laugh agann "You're not hintung-? The poor kid," I broke off pityingly "But an experience like that would naturally affect her mind Living there all alone, too, with a baby!"
"Then," Hettie went on pleasantly, "there was the fall day, real cold, when a neighbor woman dropped in Nosey old sister Just wanted to say something spiteful to Florella about the baby. When she was leaving, though-well," Hettre chuckled, "it seems her coat got tangled in a tree branch that dipped down over the gate It yanked the coat right off her back, the way she told it. She lit out of there, screaming bloody-murder, and told everybody that Joe Ed took her coat for Florella! When the grl tried to return it to her, she wouldn't touch it. Said it wasn't her best coat, anyhow, and she wasn't going to argue with a tree!"
"Oh no!" I shook my head, laughing-but still trying to ignore a small shiver that kept running down my spine "These mountain people are awfully superstritious, aren't they? Naturally, it was just the woman's fear that made her think-"
"Maybe," Hettie sald drily, "but it wasn't fear that snatched my new hat off last spring, when I happened to walk under that tree Checking up on Florella-she's a hardship case, of course Yessir," she satd in a queer tone "Big limb swooped down and snatched that bonnet right off my head I couldn't reach it, and Florella couldn't climb up and get it. Too soon after the baby's arrival, poor girl was still kind of weak. But the way she giggled, and started talkng to that tree like it was a person! Honestly, it made my flesh crawl, she was so matter of fact about itl 'Joe Ed, you rascal,' she said, 'give Miss Hettie back her bonnet, nowl I don't need no fancy clothes Me and the baby's don' just fine' "Hettre peered at me, sheepishly "Way she said it made me feel like-like a selfish old turkey-gobbler! Besides, a hat luke that was too pretty for an old hatchet-face like me But it did give me a turn, I'll'have to admitl When-" she gulped slightly, "when I told Florella she could have the hat, it-it mmediately fell out of the tree Plopl Right smack on that grl's headl I must say," she added crossly, "it was very becoming Probably the
first one she ever owned, poor little thing' Lafe was a stingy old coot, Florella's mother never had a rag she didn't weave herself!"

I turned the steering wheel sharply to avoid a raccoon ambling across the tra1l. Then I peered at Hettic.
"Go on," I sard grimly. "Tell me how the tree shed its wood in stacks, so Florella wouldn't have to chop any!"

Hettie chuckled "Oh, no Mountain men take it for granted that their wives must work like mules All they do is feed 'em, shelter 'em, and protect 'em-with an occasional pretty thrown in when they feel in a generous mood That's what Florella expected from her tree-husband, and that's what she got. Though I suppose a psychologist would say her delusion gave her a sense of security that merely made her able to fend for herself. Lots of people need a crutch for their self-confi-dence-ff it's only a lucky coin they carry around. Comerdence and superstition, hm?"
"Well," my friend smuled, "I am obliged to you for the lift, We had a message that Kurby Marsh, a farmer who lives near the Dabney place, got in a fight with somebody and crawled home, pretty banged up His wife is bedridden, so they'll need help of he's sernously injured You were a life-saver to bring me. This is the turn"; she broke off abruptly, gnnoung at me with a sly twnokle in her eye. "The Dabney farm is just around this bend."

I slowed down, feeling again that cold shiver run down my spine as we rounded the curve An old cabin of square-hewn logs perched on the mountanside a few yards above the road, mith the usual well in the yard and the usual small truckgarden in back. A huge whiteoak towered over the gate of a sagging rail fence Its sturdy trunk leaned a bit toward the house in a curiously protective manner, shading the worn front stoop with its thick dark-green folage

I braked the car outside the gate, and Hettie grinned at my expression
"There it is," she announced drily. "There's where the girl lives who married a tree And that's the tree That's him"

I got out of the coupe and walked warly to the gate Hettie climbed out stufly, and called, in her pleasantly harsh voice.
"Hello? Hello the house?" in traditional mountain style
There was no answer, but all at once I saw a quilt pallet spread under the oak Hettie had indicated as "hum" A far-harred baby gurl was sprawled on the folded quilt, gurgling and cooing She looked to be about two years old, with the sturdy good health of most mountan children, despite their skumpy diet and constant exposure to the elements

I stood watching her for a moment, charmed by the picture she made Then I frowned.
"She's too young to be left alone," I muttered. "Where's her mother?"
"Oh, out picking blackberries, I guess" Hettie shrugged. "Josie's all right, though Her father's minding her," she added with another impish gron at my expression. "Hellol" she called agan "Florella!"

At that moment a lovely slender girl came running around the house, her feet bare, her dark haur flying There was a sprig of laurel over her ear, and blackberry stains on her brown fingers I stared at her, thinking how luke a dryad she looked-wnld, free, and happily unafrand
"Oh! Howdy, Miss Hettıe!" she greeted my friend warmly. "Come in and set. Who's that with ye? Kinfolk?"

Hettre introduced me as a school chum, with no mention of the fact that I wrote stories of the supernatural for my bread and butter We entered the gate, and Hette stooped over to pat the baby, proffenng a peppermint from the endless supply she always seems to carry around. I fidgeted beside her, at a loss for conversation with this pretty normal-looking young mother who, from all Hettie had told me, was as crazy as a coot. Once, nervously, I started as a lumb of the great tree under which we stood brushed my shoulder, plucking at my scarf. On impulse, I took it off and gave it to the girl, who beamed and thanked me shyly, then ted it proudly around her own neck. I caught Hettue's eye at that momentand flushed as she grinned, wnoked, and glanced up at the grant tree.

Then she turned to Florella, lovelier than ever in my blue chuffon scarf-and with no more madness in her face than in mune
"I got word that Krrby Marsh was hurt in a fight," my
friend said conversationally. "Anybody over there looking after his wife and kids? Heard the doctor came, and took Kirby to the hospital with concussion and a sprained shoulder. Must have been some fight, to have-"

Hettie broke off, noticing the girl's sudden expression of regret beyond the politeness expected of a neighbor Florella ducked her head suddenly, with a rueful little smile
"Yes, ma'am," she said simply "He come over here to our place late last night, and went to pesterin' me Oh, not that Kurby ain't a real nice feller," she apologized for her neighbor gently, "exceptın' when he's likkered up I told him to leave go o' me," she added with wifely dignity "Told him Joe Ed wouldn't like it But he wouldn't listen So I run out to Joe Ed, with it a-stormin' awful He'd been a'bangin' on the roof, to warn Kırby, but he likely thought 'twas only the wind "

I gulped, racked with pity, and threw a glance at my friend.
"Then-?" Hettie prompted softly, in an odd tone "You ran out into the yard? Kurby ran after you, and-?"
"And Joe Ed, he whanged him over the head," the grl finished, half apologetıc, half proud, as any other woman might speak of a husband who had stoutly defended her honor. "He like to busted Kurby's scull whde open But he hadn't ought to've tried to kiss me," she defended primly. "Ought he, Miss Hettie? And me a married woman with a young'ne""
"No, dear," Hettie answered, in the gentlest voice I have ever heard her use "No-Joe Ed did the right thing I don't think Kurby was badly injured, but somebody has to look after his folks while he's in the hospital Did you go over and see bus wife today?"
"Yes ma'am," the grl said quietly "But they wouldn't let me in I reckon, on account they was scared I mean, of Joe Ed But he wouldn't hurt nobody less'n they was botherin' me or the baby! He's real good-hearted "
"Yes," my friend said softly. "I understand Well-don't worry about it, dear. Next time Kirby will know better! I rather imagne," she chuckled, "that this experience will keep hum sober for some tume!"

The garl nodded shyly, and bent to pick up the child But small Josie toddled away from her and ran around the great tree to where a low limb dipped almost to the ground.
"Pal" she chirped suddenly, holdıng up her chubby arms to the giant oak. "Fing baby! Fing high, Pal"

Florella laughed, shaking her head mildly and calling: 'No! No, now, Joe Ed-you're liable to drop that young'un! Don't ye-"

But as I stared, that low limb dipped down as under unseen pressure The chuld, Josie, seized it and, as I gasped at the spectacle, was tossed ten feet off the ground, as if a gust of wind had blown the branch skyward, it had scooped up the baby, swinging her high above us Then, as gently, it let her down agan, while the young mother shook her head agan in laughing reproof My scalp crawled at her matter-of-fact, unself-conscious manner.
"Joe Ed's always a-doin' that," she sard pleasantly. "She loves it. Why, Miss Hettuel" she broke off, pouting as I sidled pontedly back toward the gate, "I thought you-all would stay for dinner! Joe Ed caught me a rabbit, and I was just fixun' to fry it real nuce and brown Cain't ye stay?"

But I was out the gate and clumbing into my car by that tme, shaking my head covertly and beckoning for Hettie to come away For some reason-which I will always firmly deny-my teeth were clicking like castanets And I kept glancing up nervously at that tall spreading oak tree, brooding over the little mountan cabin, and the woman and chuld who lived there alone.

Alone-?
"Pitful case, isn't it?" Hettie murmured cheerfully, as she clumbed into the car and waved goodbye to Florella Dabneyor "Mrs Joseph Edward Jennings," as she was listed in the Welfare files "I mean," my friend expanded, "the way tbat poor girl hves, with her baby. From hand to mouth, and the prey of -well, men like Kirby. She'd be so lonely and frightened if it weren't for that pathetic delusion of hers And she's got the child to believing it now! Guess you noticed her swinging on that tree-she called it 'Pal' Stout branch, to pick up a chuld that heavy, wasn't it?" she drawled carelessly. "Wind
blew it, I guess-luke the other night, when it whacked Kurby Marsh over the bead Awful windy up bere on Old Baldy." She peeked at me slyly, lips twitching

I glared at ber and stepped on the gas, aware of the cold perspiration that had sprung out on my forchead. Because it was not windy. It was close and very still-and beside me, Hettie was chuckling softly as I glanced back at the barten little farm Except for one low lumb of that giant oak treeagain tossing that happy child playfully into the air while its mother looked on, lifting it gently, like a man's strong protective arms-not a leaf was sturning as far as we could see over the rugged mountanside.

## E. Nesbit

## The Pavilion

There was never a moment's doubt in her own mind So she sald afterwards And everyone agreed that she had concealed her feelings with true womanly discretion Her friend and confidant, Amelsa Davenant, was at any rate completcly deceived. Amelia was one of those featureless blondes who seem born to be overlooked She adored her beautuful friend, and never, from first to last, could see any fault in her, except, perhaps, on the evening when the real things of the story happened. And even in that matter she owned at the tume that it was only that her darling Ernestine did not understand.

Emestine was a prettyish girl with the ars, so irresistible and misleading, of a beauty, most people sard that she was beautiful, and she certanly managed, with extraordinary success, to produce the illusion of beauty. Qute a number of plamish grls achieve that effect nowadays The freedom of modern dress and coiffure and the increasing confidence in herself which the modern girl experiences, ard her in fostering the illusion, but in the sixties, when everyone wore much the same sort of bonnet, when your choice in coiffure was lumited to bandeaux or ringlets, and the crinolne was your only wear, something very like genius was needed to decerve the world in the matter of your personal charms Ernestune had that genrus, hers was the smuling, rongletted, dark-bared, dark-yed, sparkling type.

Amelia had blond bandeaux and kand appealing blue eyes, rather too small and rather too dull, her hands and ears were beautiful, and she kept them out of sight as much as possible. In our tumes the blond harr would have been puffed out to make a frame for the forehead, a little too high; a certan shade of blue and a certan shade of boldness would have her eyes effective And the beautiful hands would have learned that flower-like droop of the wnst so justly and so universally admired. But as it was, Amelia was very nearly plain, and in
her secret emotional self-communings told herself that she was ugly It was she who, at the age of fourteen, composed the remarkable poem beginning:

## I know that I am ugly did I make <br> The face that is the laugh and jest of all?

and goes on, after disclaiming any personal responsibility for the face, to entreat the kind earth to "cover it away from mocking eyes," and to "let the daisies blossom where it lies."

Amelia did not want to die, and her face was not the laugh and jest, or indeed the special interest, of anyone. All that was poetic license Amelia had read perhaps a little too much poetry of "Quand je suls morte, mes ames, plantez un saule au cimetière", but really life was a very good thing to Amelia, especially when she had a new dress and someone paid her a complıment. But she went on writing verses extolling the advantages of The Tomb, and grovelling metrically at the feet of One who was Another's until that summer, when she was nineteen, and went to stay with Ernestine at Donicourt Then her Muse took flight, scared, perhaps, by the possibility, suddenly and tbreateningly presented, of being asked to inspire verse about the real things of life

At any rate, Amelia ceased to write poetry about the time when she and Ernestine and Ernestine's aunt went on a visit to Doricourt, where Frederick Powell lived with his aunt. It was not one of those hurried motor-fed excursions which we have now, and call week-ends, but a long leisurely visit, when all the friends of the static aunt called on the dynamic aunt, and both returned the calls with much state, a big barouche and a parr of fat horses There were croquet parties and archery parties and little dances, all pleasant informal little gaieties arranged without ceremony among people who lived within driving distance of each other and knew each other's tastes and incomes and family history as well as they knew their own The habit of importing huge droves of strangers from distant counties for brief harrying raids did not then obtain. There was instead a wide and constant circle of pleasant people with an unflagging stream of gatety, mild indeed, but delightful to unjaded palates.

And at Doricourt life was delightful even on the days when there was no party It was perhaps more delightful to Ernestine than to her friend, but even so, the one least pleased was Ernestine's aunt
"I do think," she sard to the other aunt whose name was Julia-"I daresay it is not so to you, being accustomed to Mr W Frederick, of course, from his childhood, but I always find gentlemen in the house so unsettling, especially young gentlemen, and when there are young ladies also One is always on the qui vive for excitement "
"Of course," sald Aunt Jula, with the arr of a woman of the world, "living as you and dear Ernestine do, with only females in the house
"We hang up an old coat and hat of my brother's on the hatstand in the hall," Aunt Emmeline protested
" The presence of gentlemen in the house must be a little unsettling For myself, I am inured to it Frederick has so many friends Mr Thesıger, perhaps, the greatest I believe him to be a most worthy young man, but pecular" She leaned forward across her bright-tinted Berlin woolwork and spoke impressively, the needle with its trailing red poised in arr "You know, I hope you will not think it indelicate of me to mention such a thing, but dear Frederick your dear Ernestine would have been in every way so suitable"
"Would have been?" Aunt Emmelne's tortose-shell shuttle ceased its swift movement among the white loops and knots of her tatting
"Well, my dear," sad the other aunt, a little shortly, "you must surely have noticed
"You don't mean to suggest that Amela . . . I thought Mr. Thesiger and Amelia
"Amelia! I really must sayl No, I was alluding to Mr. Thesiger's attentions to dear Ernestine Most marked In dear Frederick's place I should have found some excuse for shortening Mr Thesiger's visit But, of course, I cannot interfere Gentlemen must manage these things for themselves I only hope that there will be none of that tnfling with the most holy affections of others which "

The less voluable aunt cut in hotly with: "Ernestine's incapable of anything so unladylike "
"Just what I was saying," the other rejoined blandly, got up and drew the blind a little lower, for the afternoon sun was glowing on the rosy wreaths of the drawing-room carpet.

Outside in the sunshıne Frederick was going his best to arrange his own affars He had managed to place himself beside Miss Ernestine Meutys on the sione steps of the paviion, but then, Mr Thesiger lay along the lower step at her feet, a very good position for looking up into her eyes. Amelia was beside lim, but then it never seemed to matter whom Amelia sat beside.

They were talking about the pavilion on whose steps they sat, and Amelia who often asked uninteresting questions had wondered how old it was It was Frederick's pavilion after all, and he felt this when his friend took the words out of his mouth and used them on his own account, even though he did give the answer in the form of an appeal.
"The foundations are Tudor, aren't they?" he said. "Wasn't it an observatory or laboratory or something of that sort in Fat Henry's time?"
"Yes," said Frederick, "there was some story about a wizard or an alchemist or something, and it was burned down, and then they rebuilt it in its present style"
"The Italian style, isn't it?" said Thesiger, "but you can hardly see what it is now, for the creeper."
"Virginia creeper, isn't it?" Amelia asked, and Frederick said "Yes, Virginia creeper." Thesiger said it looked more like a South American plant, and Ernestine said Virginia was in South America and that was why "I know, because of the war," she said modestly, and nobody smiled or answered. There were manners in those days
"There's a ghost story about it surely," Thesiger began again, looking up at the dark closed doors of the pavilion.
"Not that I ever heard of," said the pavilion's owner. "I think the country people invented the tale because there have always been so many rabbits and weasels and things found dead near it And once a dog, my uncle's favourite spanel But of course that's simply because they get entangled in the Virgina creeper-you see how fine and big it is-and can't get out, and die as they do in traps. But the villagers prefer to think it's ghosts"
"I thought there was a real ghost story," Thesiger persisted
Ernestune sald "A ghost story. How delicious! Do tell it, Mr Doricourt. This is just the place for a ghost story. Out of doors and the sun shining, so that we can't really be frightened "

Doricourt protested again that he knew no story.
"That's because you never read, dear boy," said Eugene Thesiger "That library of yours There's a delightful bookdid you never notice it?-brown tree calf with your arms on $1 t$, the head of the house writes the history of the house as far as he knows it. There's a lot in that book. It began in Tudor tumes- 1515 to be exact."
"Queen Elizabeth's time," Ernestine thought that made it so much more interesting "And was the ghost story in that?"
"It isn't exactly a ghost story," sard Thesiger "It's only that the pavilion seems to be an unlucky place to sleep in"
"Haunted?" Fredenck asked, and added that he must look up that book
"Not haunted exactly Only several people who have slept the night there went on sleeping"
"Dead, he means," sad Ernestine, and it was left for Amelua to ask
"Does the book tell anything particular about how the people died? What killed them, or anything?"
"There are suggestions," said Thesiger, "but there, it is a gloomy subject I don't know why I started it. Should we have time for a game of croquet before tea, Doricourt?"
"I wish you'd read the book and tell me the stories," Ernestune said to Frederick, apart, over the croquet balls
"I will," he answered fervently, "you've only to tell me what you want."
"Or perhaps Mr Thesiger will tell us another tume-in the twilhght Since people like twilhght for ghosts Will you, Mr Thesiger?" She spoke over her blue muslin shoulder

Frederick certainly meant to look up the book, but he delayed till after supper, the half-hour before bed when he and Thesiger put on their braided smoking-jackets and their braided smoking-caps with the long yellow tassels, and smoked the cigars which were, in those days still, more of a luxury
than a necessity. Ordinarily, of course, these were smoked out of doors, or in the smoking-room, a stuffy little den littered with boots and guns and yellow-backed railway novels But to-might Frederick left his friend in that dingy hutch, and went alone to the library, found the book and took it to the circle of light made by the colza lamp.
"I can skam through it in half an hour," he said, and wound up the lamp and IIghted his second cigar. Then he opened the shutters and windows, so that the room should not smell of smoke in the morning. Those were the days of consideration for the ladies who had not yet learned that a cigarette is not exclusively a male accessory like a beard or a bass voice

But when, his preparatıons completed, he opened the book, he was compelled to say "Pshaw!" Nothing short of thes could releve his feelings (You know the expression I mean, though of course it isn't pronounced as it's spelt, any more than Featherstonehaugh or St Maur are.)
"Pshawl" sard Frederick, fluttering the pages His remark was justified The earler part of the book was written in the beautiful script of the early sixteenth century, that looks so plain and is so impossible to read, and the later pages, though the bandwritung was clear and Italian enough, left Fredenck helpless, for the language was Latin, and Frederick's Latin was limuted to the particular passages he had "been through" at his private school He recognsed a word here and there, mors, for instance, and pallidus and pavor and arcanum, just as you or I mught; but to read the complicated stuff and make sense of it . . . I Frederick sald something just a shade stronger than "Pshaw!"-"Botherationl" I think it was; replaced the book on the shelf, closed the shutters and turned out the lamp He thought he vould ask Thesiger to translate the thing, but then again he thought be wouldn't. So he went to bed wishing that he had happened to remember more of the Loun so painfully beaten into the best years of hus bojhoot

And the ason of the pavilion vas, after all, told by Thesiger. There uas a little dance at Doricourt nert evening, a carFO dince, they cilled it The furniture was pushed bact it in: the wath, ard the tightly stretched Axminster car-
pet was not so bad to dance on as you might suppose That, you see, was before the days of polished floors and large rugs with loose edges that you can catch your fect in A carpet was a carpet in those days, well and truly lard, conscientiously exact to the last least recess and fitting the floor like a skin And on this quite tolerable surface the young people danced very happily, some ten or twelve couples The old people did not dance in those days, except sometimes a quadrille of state to "open the ball." They played cards in a room provided for the purpose, and in the dancingroom three or four kindly middle-aged ladies were considered to provide ample cbaperonage You were not even expected to report yourself to your chaperon at the conclusion of a dance It was not like a real ball And even in those far-off days there were conservatorics

It was on the steps of the conservatory, not the steps leading from the dancing-room, but the steps leading to the garden, that the story was told The four young people were sitting together, the girls' crinolined flounces spreading round them like huge pale roses, the young men correct in their high-shouldered coats and white cravats Ernestune had been very kind to both the men-a little too kind, perhaps, who can tell? At any rate, there was in their eyes exactly that light which you may magine in the eyes of rival stags in the mating season It was Ernestine who asked Frederick for the story, and Thesiger who, at Amelia's suggestion, told it
"It's quite a number of stories," he sard, "and yet it's really all the same story The first man to sleep in the pavil$10 n$ slept there ten years after it was built He was a friend of the alchemist or astrologer who built it He was found dead in the morning There seemed to have been a struggle His arms bore the marks of cords No, they never found any cords He died from loss of blood There were curious wounds That was all the rude leeches of the day could report to the bereaved survivors of the deceased"
"How funny you are, Mr Thesiger," said Ernestine with that celebrated soft low laugh of hers When Ernestine was elderly, many people thought her stupid When she was young, no one seems to have been of this opmion.
"And the next?" asked Amelia
"The next was sixty years later. It was a visitor that tume, too. And he was found dead with just the same marks, and the doctors said the same thing And so it went on There have been eight deaths altogether-unexplaned deaths Nobody has slept in it now for over a hundred years People seem to have a prejudice against the place as a sleeping apartment. I can't think why."
"Isn't he simply kulling?" Ernestine asked Amelia, who said:
"And doesn't anyone know how it happened?" No one answered till Ernestine repeated the question in the form of: "I suppose it was just accident?"
"It was a cunously recurrent accident," sard Thesiger, and Frederick, who throughout the conversation had sald the right things at the right moment, remarked that it did not do to belheve all these old legends Most old famules had them, he believed. Frederick had inherited Doricourt from an unknown great-uncle of whom in life he had not so much as heard, but he was very strong on the family tradition. "I don't attach any importance to these tales myself "
"Of course not. All the same," sard Thesiger deliberately, "you wouldn't care to pass a night in that pavilion."
"No more would you," was all Frederick found on his lips
"I admit that I shouldn't enjoy it," said Eugene, "but I'll bet you a hundred you don't do it."
"Done," said Frederick.
"Oh, Mr. Doricourt," breathed Ernestine, a Ittle shocked at betting "before ladies"
"Don'tl" sard Amelia, to whom, of course, no one pard any attention, "don't do it."

You know how, in the midst of flower and leafage, a snake will suddenly, surprisingly rear a bead that threatens? So, amid friendly talk and laughter, a sudden fierce antagomsm sometumes looks out and vanishes again, surprising most of all the antagomsts This antagonism spoke in the tones of both men, and after Amelia had sad, "Don't," there was a currously breathless little silence Ernestune broke it. "Oh," she sad, "I do wonder which of you wrill win. I should hike them both to win, wouldn't you, Amelia? Only I suppose that's not always possible, is it?"

Both gentlemen assured her that in the case of bets it was very rarely possible
"Then I wish you wouldn"," said Ernestine "You could both pass the nught there, couldn't you, and be company for each other? I don't thinh betting for such large sums is quite the thing, do you, Amelia?"

Amelia sard No, she didn't, but Eugene had already begun to say
'Let the bet be off then, if Miss Meutys doesn't like it. That suggestion is invaluable But the thing itself ncedn't be off Look here, Doncourt I'll stay in the pavilion from one to three and you from three to five Then honour will be satisfied How will that do?"

The snake had disappeared
"Agreed," said Frederick, "and we can compare impressions afterwards That will be quite interesting"

Then someone came and asked where they had all got to, and they went in and danced some more dances Ernestine danced twice with Frederick and drank iced sherry and water and they said good-night and lighted their bedroom candles at the table in the hall
"I do hope they won't," Amelia sard as the grls sat brushing their hair at the two large white musin frilled dressingtables in the room they shared
"Won't what?" said Ernestine, vigorous with the brush
"Sleep in that hateful pavilion I wish you'd ask them not to, Ernestune They'd mind, if you asked them."
"Of course I will if you like, dear," sald Ernestine cordially She was always the soul of good nature "But I don't think you ought to believe in ghost stories, not really"
"Why not?"
"Oh, because of the Bible and gomg to church and all that," sald Ernestine "Do you really think Rowland's Macassar has made any dufference to my har?"
"It is just as beautiful as it always was," sard Amelia, twisting up her own little ashen-blond handful. "What was that?"

That was a sound coming from the little dressing-room There was no light in that room Amelia went into the little room though Ernestune sad "Oh, don'tl how can you? It
mught be a ghost or a rat or something," and as she went she whispered "Hush!"

The window of the little room was open and she leaned out of it. The stone sill was cold to her elbows through her print dressing-jacket.

Ernestine went on brushing her hair. Amelia heard a movement below the window and listened. "To-might will do," someone sard.
"It's too late," said someone else.
"If you're afraid, it will always be too late or too early," said someone. And it was Thesiger.
"You know I'm not afraid," the other one, who was Doricourt, answered hotly.
"An hour for each of us will satisfy honour," said Thesiger carelessly "The gurls will expect it. I couldn't sleep. Let's do it now and get it over. Let's see. Oh, damn itl"

A faint click had sounded.
'Dropped my watch I forgot the chain was loose. It's all right though; glass not broken even. Well, are you game?'
"Oh, yes, if you insist. Shall I go first, or you?"
"I will," sard Thesiger. "That's only fair, because I suggested it. I'll stay till half-past one or a quarter to two, and then you come on. See?'
"Oh, all right. I think it's silly, though," said Fredenck.
Then the voices ceased. Amelia went back to the other girl.
"They're going to do it to-night."
"Are they, dear?" Ernestine was placid as ever. "Do what?"
"Sleep in that hormble pavilion."
"How do you know?"
Amelra explained how she knew.
"Whatever can we do?" she added.
"Well, dear, suppose" we go to bed," suggested Ernestine helpfully "We shall hear all about it in the morning"
"But suppose anything happens?"
"What could happen?"
"Oh, anything," sard Amelia. "Oh, I do wish they wouldn'tl I shall go down and ask tbem not to."
"Amelial" the other grl was at last aroused. "You couldn't.

I shouldn't let you dream of doing anything so unladylke. What would the gentlemen think of you?"
The question silenced Amelia, but she began to put on her so lately discarded bodice.
"I won't go if you thunk I oughtn't," she said.
"Forward and fast, auntie would call 1 t ," said the other. "I am almost sure she would"
"But I'll keep dressed I shan't disturb you I'll sit in the dressing-room. I can't go to sleep while he's running into this awful danger"
"Which he?" Ernestine's voice was very sharp. "And there isn't any danger"
"Yes, there is," said Amelia sullenly, "and I mean them. Both of them"

Ernestine sard her prayers and got into bed She had put her haur in curl-papers which became her luke a wreath of white roses.
"I don't thank auntie will be pleased," she sard, "when she hears that you sat up all nught watching young gentlemen. Good-night, dear!"
"Good-nıght, darling," said Amela. "I know you don't understand. It's all night."

She sat in the dark by the dressing-room window There was no moon, but the starlight lay gray on the dew of the park, and the trees massed themselves in bunches of a darker gray, deepening to black at the roots of them. There was no sound to break the stlllness, except the little cracklings of twigs and rusthings of leaves as birds or little night wandering beasts moved in the shadows of the garden, and the sudden creakings that furniture makes if you sit alone with it and listen in the night's slence

Amelia sat on and listened, listened The pavilon showed in broken streaks of pale grey aganst the wood, that seemed to be clingung to it in dark patches But that, she reminded herself, was only the creeper. She sat there for a very long tme, not knowing how long a tume it was For annety is a poor chronometer, and the first ten minutes had seemed an hour She had no watch. Ernestne had-and slept with it under her pillow. The stable clock was out of order, the man had been
sent for to see to it There was nothing to measure time's flight by, and she sat there rigid, straining her ears for a footfall on the grass, straining her eyes to see a figure come out of the dark pavilion and across the dew-grey grass towards the house And she heard nothing, saw nothing

Slowly, imperceptibly, the grey of the sleeping trees took on faint dreams of colour The sky turned faint above the trees, the moon perhaps was coming out The pavilion grew more clearly visible It seemed to Amelia that something moved along the leaves that surrounded it, and she looked to see hm come out But he did not come
"I wish the moon would really shine," she told herself And suddenly she knew that the sky was clear and that this growing light was not the moon's cold shiver, but the growing light of dawn.

She went quickly into the other room, put her hand under the pillow of Ernestine, and drew out the little watch with the diamond " $E$ " on it
"A quarter to three," she said aloud Ernestine moved and grunted

There was no hesitation about Amelia now Without another thought for the ladylike and the really suitable, she lighted her candle and went quickly down the stars, paused a moment in the hall, and so out through the front door She passed along the terrace The feet of Fredenck protruded from the open French window of the smoking-room. She set down her candle on the terrace-it burned clearly enough in that clear ar-went up to Frederick as he slept, his head between his shoulders and his hands loosely hanging, and shook him
"Wake up," she said-"Wake up' Sometbing's happened! It's a quarter to three and he's not come back."
"Who's not what?" Frederick asked sleepily.
"Mr Thesiger The pavilion"
"Thesiger?-the . You, Miss Davenant? I beg your pardon I must have dropped off "

He got up unsteadily, gazing dully at this white apparition stall in evening dress with pale hair now no longer wreathed
"What is it?" he sard "Is anybody ill?"
Briefly and very urgently Amelia told him what it was, m-
plored him to go at once and see what had happened If he
had been fully awake, her voice and her cyes would have told hum many things.
"He sald he'd come back," he said. "Hadn't I better wat? You go back to bed, Miss Davenant. If he doesn't come in half an hour ."
"If you don't go this minute," sard Amelia tensely, "I shall."
"Oh, well, if you insist," Frederick said "He has simply fallen asleep as I did Dear Miss Davenant, return to your room, I beg In the morning when we are all laughing at this false alarm, you will be glad to remember that Mr. Thesiger does not know of your anxucty."
"I hate you," sard Amelia gently, "and I am going to see what has happened Come or not, as you like"
She caught up the sllver candlestick and he followed its wavering gleam down the terrace steps and across the grey dewy grass
Half-way she paused, lifted the hand that had been hidden among her muslin flounces and held it out to hum with a big Indian dagger in it
"I got it out of the hall," she sand "If there's any real danger Anything living, I mean I thought . . . But I know I couldn't use it. Will you take it?"
He took it, laughing kandly
"How romantic you are," he sard admuringly and looked at her standing there in the mingled gold and grey of dawn and candlelight. It was as though he had never seen her before.

They reached the steps of the pavilion and stumbled up them. The door wastlosed but not locked And Amelia noticed that the tralls of creeper had not been disturbed, they grew across the doorway, as thick as a man's finger, some of them.
"He must have got in by one of the windows," Frederick sard. "Your dagger comes in handy, Miss Davenant."

He slashed at the wet sticky green stuff and put his shoulder to the door It yielded at a touch and they went in.

The one candle lighted the pavilion hardly at all, and the dusky light that oozed in through the door and windows helped very little And the silence was thick and heavy.
"Thesıger!" sard Frederick, cleanng his throat. "Thesiger! Hullol Where are you?"

Thesıger did not say where he was And then they saw.

There were low seats to the windows, and between the windows low stone benches ran $O n$ one of these something dark, something dark and in places white, confused the outline of the carved stone
"Thesiger," said Frederick again in the tone a man uses to a room that he is almost sure is empty "Thesiger!"

But Amelia was bending over the bench She was holding the candle crookedly so that it flared and guttered
"Is he there?" Frederick asked, following her, "is that hum? Is he asleep?"
"Take the candle," said Amelia, and he took it obediently. Amelra was touching what lay on the bench Suddenly she screamed Just one scream, not very loud But Frederick remembers just how it sounded Sometimes he hears it in dreams and wakes moaning, though he is an old man now and his old wife says "What is $1 t$, dear?" and he says: "Nothing, my Ernestine, nothing"

Directly she had screamed she said. "He's dead," and fell on her knees by the bench Frederick saw that she held somethung in her arms
"Perhaps he isn't," she said "Fetch someone from the house, brandy - send for a doctor Oh, go, go, go!"
"I can't leave you here," said Frederick with thoughtful propriety, "suppose he revives?"
"He will not revive," said Amelia dully, "go, go, go! Do as I tell you Go' If you don't go," she added suddenly and amazingly, "I believe I shall kill you It's all your doing"

The astounding sharp injustice of thes stung Frederick into action.
"I belneve he's only fainted or something," he said "When I've roused the house and everyone has witnessed your emotion you will regret . . ."

She sprang to her feet and caught the knife from him and raised it, awkwardly, clumsily, but with keen threatening, not to be mistaken or disregarded Frederick went

When Frederick came back, with the groom and the gardener (he hadn't thought it well to disturb the ladies), the pavilion was filled full of white revealing daylıght. On the bench lay a dead man, and kneeling by him a living woman on whose warm breast his cold and heavy head lay pil-
lowed The dead man's hands were full of the green crushed leaves, and thick twning tendrils were about his wrists and throat. A wave of green seemed to have swept from the open window to the bench where he lay
The groom and the gardener and the dead man's friend looked and looked.

- "Looks like as if he'd got himself entangled in the creeper and lost 'is 'ead,' said the groom, scratching his own.
"How'd the creeper get m, though? That's what I says," it was the gardener who said it.
"Through the window," said Doricourt, moistening his lips with his tongue
"The window was shut, though, when I come by at five yesterday," sald the gardener stubbornly "'Ow did it get all that way since five?"

They looked at each other, voicing, silently, impossible things

The woman never spoke She sat there in the white ring of her crinolned dress like a broken white rose But her arms were round Thesiger and she would not move them.

When the doctor came, he sent for Ernestine who came, flushed and sleepy-eyed and very frightened, and shocked
"You're upset, dear," she said to her frrend, "and no wonder. How brave of you to come out with Mr Doricourt to see what happened. But you can't do anything now, dear Come in and I'll tell them to get you some tea "

Amelia laughed, looked down at the face on her shoulder, laid the head back on the bench among the drooping green of the creeper, stooped over it, kassed it and said quite quietly and gently "Good-bye, dear, good-byel"-took Ernestune's arm and went away with her

The doctor made an examination and gave a dcath-certuficate "Heart fallure," was his original and brilliant diagnosis. The certaficate said nothing, and Frederick said nothing, of the creeper that was wound about the dead man's neck, nor of the little white wounds, like little bloodless lips half-open, that they found about the dead man's neck.
"An imagnative or uneducated person," sard the doctor, "mught suppose that the creeper had something to do with his death. But we mustn't encourage superstition. I will assist my man to prepare the body for its last sleep Then we need not have any chattering woman"
"Can you read Latin?" Frederick asked. The doctor could, and, later, did.

It was the Latin of that brown book with the Doncourt arms on it that Frederick wanted read And when he and the doctor had been together with the book between them for three hours, they closed it, and looked at each other with shy and doubtful eyes
"It can't be true," said Frederick.
"If it 1 s ," sald the more cautious doctor, "you don't want it talked about I should destroy that book if I were you And I should root up that creeper and burn it. It is quite evident, from what you tell me, that your friend belleved that this creeper was a man-eater, that it fed, just before its flowering tume, as the book tells us, at dawn, and that he fully meant that the thing when it crawled into the pavilion seeking its prey should find you and not hum. It would have been so, I understand, if his watch had not stopped at one o'clock."
"He dropped it, you know," said Donicourt like a man in a dream.
"All the cases in this book are the same," said the doctor, "the strangling, the white wounds I have heard of such plants, I never believed" He shuddered "Had your frend any spite against you? Any reason for wantung to get you out of the way?"

Frederick thought of Ernestine, of Thesiger's eyes on Ernestine, of her smile at him over her blue mushn shoulder
'No," be said, "none None whatever. It must have been accident I am sure he did not know. He could not read Latin" He lied, being, after all, a gentleman, and Ernestme's name beng sacred
"The creeper seems to have been brought here and planted in Henry the Eighth's time And then the thing began It seems to bave been at its flowerng season that it needed the .. that, in short, it was dangerous The Inttle animals and birds found dead near the pavilion . . . But to move itself all that way, across the floor' The thing must have been almost conscient," he said with a sincere shudder. "One would think,"
"Yes," sard Fredenck, "one would I think if I can't do anything more I'll go and rest. Somehow all thus has given me a turn Poor Thesiger!"

His last thought before he went to sleep was one of pity. "Poor Thesiger," he said, "how violent and wicked! And what an escape for mel I must never tell Ernestime And all the tume there was Amelia. . . Ernestine would never have done that for $m e$ " And on a little pang of regret for the mpossible he fell asleep

Amelia went on living She was not the sort that dies even of such a thing as happened to her on that nught, when for the first and last time she held her love in her arms and knew hum for the murderer he was It was only the other day that she died, a very old woman Ernestine who, beloved and surrounded by chuldren and grandchuldren, survived her, spoke her epitaph
"Poor Amelia," she said, "nobody ever looked the same side of the road where she was There was an mdiscretion when she was young Oh , nothing disgraceful, of course She was a lady But people talked. It was the sort of thing that stamps a grl, you know."

## Edgar Pangborn

## Pick-up for Olympus

This was Ab Thompson-you might have seen him if you were around there in the 1960s: thin nose, scant chin, haur sandy to gray, pop eyes, and a warm depth of passion for anything with wheels If it had pistons, wheels, some kind of driving shaft, Ab could love it. When the old half-ton bumbled into his filling station, the four cylinders of his lonesome heart pounded to the spark, the best of many voices withun him said tenderly' Listen how she perksl The bearded driver leaning from the cab had to ask him twice: "Is this the right road for Olympus?"
A genume 1937 Chevvy, sweet as the day she was hatched. Oh-little things here and there, of course Ab pulled himself together "Never heard of it You're aumed for N'York-might be beyond there somewheres" The muddy hood stirred his longing, when this thunder-buggy was made, streamlining wasn't much more than the beginnung of a notion. "Water? Check the oll, sir?"
"Yes, both Got enough gas, I think." The driver's vorce was fatıgued, perhaps from the June heat. Ab Thompson rased the hood and explored. Rugged, rugged don't make 'em like this nowadays "
"I guess not" In the back of the truck a drowsy-eyed woman in a loose gown of white lunen scratched the head of a leopard and kept watch of half a dozen shy little goats.

Ab marveled it was like the dollar Ingersoll his pop used to brag about-and oh, dear Lord, how long ago was that? Before what they called the Second World War?-Ab couldn't just remember Naturally this old girl was beat up-beat up bad, and almost thirty years old. But she ticked away She perked Needed a new fan belt Leak in the top of the radiator -dump in some ginger, maybe she'd seal herself up. And the valves He showed the driver the spot of dirty oll on the measuring rod. "She'll take a quart, maybe two."
"All right," said the bearded man The woman murmured reprovingly to the leopard and thed a short rope to the grass collar on his neck When the oll was in, the driver said apologetically "Seems very nosy"
"That's your valves, Mister. I could tighten 'em some You got one loose tappet, I dunno-I could tughten 'er some only not too much on account if I make her too tight you don't get the power is all "
"Well-" the driver scratched the thick curls tumbling over the horns on his forehead "Well, suppose you-" "She ain't had a real valve job in quite some tume, am I right, Mister? I ann't equipped for a valve job is the hell of 1t. But I could look her over, give you an idea, won't cost you nothing, glad to do it Understand, that there tiching don't hurt nothing, it's just your tappet, but them valves-" Ab spat in embarrassment.
"Yes, look her over I'd be much obliged."
"Kind of like a good watch, Mister-got to keep her cleaned up"

## "Yes Look her over, give me an idea"

Ab sighed in happiness "Okay Twenty minutes, say . . ."
You could pound the daylights out of them, he thoughtthey'd stll perk. Bet she could take a ten-percent grade in high, even now Actually the valves weren't bad, he sawsighing over the leaf-gauge, wishing in a brief sorrow like the touch of mings that somehow, somewhere, it might be possible to set up the right kind of shop Suppose you could stretch the money as far as hiring an assistant-then maybe an addition on the south side, with room for a lift-nuts no use dreaming . . The valves weren't bad-bit of maladjustment, natural after neglect. She'd perk. They never made them lue this nowadays-

The woman in white was exercising the leopard on the rope, in the open space around the gas-tanks, a goat bleated peevishly

Not that there was anything wrong with the new cars, Ab thought-especially the take-off jobs that needed only a twenty-foot clearance to sprout wings and leave the highway those might be hell-fired cute when they got a few more
bugs ironed out And you couldn't deny the new ground models were slick and pretty fifty miles to the gallon if you didn't average more than a hundred per But you take this old baby-"Mister," sa1d Ab Thompson, "you got compression, I do mean Shouldn't have no trouble on the hulls."
"That's true I have no trouble in the hulls."
"Starter ain't too good Might've had some damage, I dunno"
"I meant to ask about that. The trouble is here in the cab"
"Huh? Nothin' there but the button you step on."
"I know My foot keeps catching on 1t." Ab opened the right-hand door, the button looked good enough "I thought, if you could build it out a little-?" The driver showed Ab the cloven bottom of his hoof. "This slot here-you see, the button catches in it "
"Oh, hell, instant plastic'll fix that." Ab trotted to his sback, delighted Nice to have the right stuff on hand for once. He returned with a gadget like a grease-gun. "Thus here is something new in the trade Hardens on contact with air, I do mean hardens Stick to anything-got to handle it careful till it's dry Comes out in a spray, like." He played the plastic delicately on the starter button, bulding it out away from the gas pedal. "Now try that, sir."
"Oh, fine yust what I had in mind. Well, the valves-"
"Ain't too bad But I would recommend you stop some place where they got the equipment. Might go on a long ume, or-well, she might kind of start complaming, I dunno. It oughta be done"
"I'll see to it Much obliged" The woman and the leopard clumbed back in the truck. "What do I owe you?"

Ab massaged his neck. "Three bucks . . . Thank you, sur. Come again" The hittle truck rolled away. "Jesus, I do mean! Thirty years old and she stull perks, just as sweet as you-bedamn"

## H. F. Heard

## The Swap

## "Let's try!"

"What nonsense"
'Well, if it's nonsense, no harm's done by trying. Besides, it tahes only a few minutes anyhow"
"It's too silly-all this Indian pretense."
"But it isn't Yoga, it's Sufi And it's quite plain and experimental If it doesn't work, we'll know it in five or ten minutes, that isn't much tume to lose "
"And if it does?"
"Oh, you own it mughtl"
"I don't own anything-I mean, I don't allow anythung. It's you who want to make this absurd experiment. All I ask is If such a grotesque thing should actually happen, docs your mumbo-jumbo tell you how to un-mumbo-jumbo agam?"
"Yes, all you have to do is to repeat the process from the other end, or side, and there you are, back agan"
Jones, who was urging the expenment, was a large, enthuslastic man He had asked Mather, a smaller, more accurate colleague, to come around He was always asking Mather around Mather usually came, usually punctured the blister of speculation which had risen in Jones's easily inflamed mind They generally parted with the mutual feeling of having wasted time and the mutual, if not spoken, resolve not to meet agan But they did Perhaps, in some odd way, they needed each other More and more those we have thought to be enemues have, at least in natural history, proved to be widely reciprocating partners, those we took to be obvious parastes and victum-hosts, closer inspection has shown to be symbiots -partners who interchange essential services

Mather was a farly conservative psychologist Jones held a newly invented chair of Historical Anthropology The crank businessman who had founded ther small college had m- sisted that, among the standard conventional facultes, there should be this odd study That he had chosen also to endow this professorship with one thousand dollars a year more than the endowment of any of the other chars didn't make the position of Jones, his appointee, any easser.

But Jones was not the kind of man to care. His ebullient indufference to his conservative colleagues' envy-tinged disapproval he called "the anthropological outlook."
"We're all savages," he used to announce ainly at the high table, "all, mentally, gunea pigs to be tested and studied, unless we're anthropologists" Then he would add what he called the anthropological approach "And, of course, the anthropologist himself is only a rarer form of savage than another anthropologst, and so on ad mfintum."
"Then you have no datum of objectivity," Wilkins, the phrlosopher, would challenge
"Well, there can't be-unless you could really get mside someone else."
"That wouldn't be enough," cut in Mather. "It would, to be precise, be going only halfway To complete the process and bring it to an adequate conclusion, from the premise you have postulated, you would have not only to get inside someone else, simultaneously he would have to get inside you. Then each would have to return and compare notes"
"Yes," sard Jones agreeably, "yes, that, at last, would be real experimental anthropology."

His mind floated off in speculation. The rest of the hightable discussion fell to its normal level the food presented, the football prospects, and the local gossip.

This contribution from Mather recurred to Jones, however, a fortnight later. It and Jones's own pachydermatous good nature and eupeptic hopefulness-his digestion was never bis weak spot-quite prepared him for another snub. After all, the instructions actually seemed to point to Mather.

Jones, in pursuit of his odd assignment-for his colleagues bad to own that he worked as hard at his silly job and with more enthusiasm than they did at ther proper ones-had been reading up on Sufi esoteric practices One in particular had interested him It was called "How the ranbow which circles the spray of the Fountain of Light (The Nor) may, by
heart-contact, be thrown to link with another such rambow" There followed quite unmistahable instructions as to how this rainbow interchange was to be effected.
"Well," Jones had remarhed to himself as he had put the book down "If that means anything, it means that, with quite a simple experiment, one should be able to do precisely what Mather said (and quite rightly) would alone let one have real anthropological knowledge, drect knowledge, of another person"

He went on, with growing interest, to read the further instructions They sard that for the best or casiest results "the opposite number should be one's contrast", if, for example, one was born under Jupiter with the sun in a neighboning "house," then one should choose as one's colleague in the experiment someone whose natal star was Saturn, with more than a glance of the Moon, or perhaps of Mercury, in his influences
"That certannly would seem to point out Mather His dryness would be a perfect complement to my ebullience," murmured Jones to humself, pencll in hand "I'll try Maybe the stars indicate our collusions as well as our collisions" Whether they do or not, the fact remans that Mather did come when called Jones opened with a really quite good "anthropological approach "
"I've been thinking over what you said about insight into character"
"You mean that if you are to be able to see unto me I must be able to the same degree to see into you?"
"Yes, that's it, and, of course, you're right."
Mather was not so desiccated that he was not a little suppled by wholehearted agreement.
"I'm glad you think so," he conceded.
So, when Jones unmasked his request, he did not immedrately refuse Jones's way of putting it, too, was not unskullful.
"Tve come across a psychophysical expenmental method which aums at helping such insight Of course, I'm not a psychologist, so I can't tell if there's anything in it. I thought perhaps you'd 'vet' it for me"
"A psychophysical method of msight-do you mean an low percentage of curnosity in his question, but Jones took it as a request for more information. And once again he mproved his position.
"Well, I gather it is practically nothing but a physical method-something which can be definitely tested "

That certanly reassured Mather, who was one of the almost wholly physological psychologists.
"Well, go ahead. Describe the method"
Jones knew that this would be the turning point. He tried to preserve the favorable position he had won But in a few minutes it was clear that he had lost heavily. He could only conclude rather feebly, "Let's try"

And then, when he thought he had failed, there came that queer little hint of interest, if only nervous interest Jones, like many flond optımistic men, was a diabetic and had been on insulin quite a while. Little upsets like this told on him more than he chose to own to himself. His nervousness was disguised-even to humself-rather than lessened by his outward cheerfulness He began to feel his need of the routine shot. But if Mather was going to yield, he must be pushed now. Mather fidgeted, put his hand in his pocket, pulled it out empty, and then sard, "Oh, very well, let's get it over and show there's nothing in it. After all, a great deal of science still consists in prichang the bubbles of superstitionl" It was hardly a gracious offer to co-operate, but Jones was ready to take it.
"The first thing is what is called the heart-contact," he said. "We have to sit as close as we can, directly opposite one another."

He drew up two stools and sat down on one. Mather methodically settled himself on the other. This was the last time, he said to his not ill-tempered but conventionally respectable self, that he would humor Jones Even if Jones had the ear of their silly old founder, if the rest of the faculty -which was sound enough--kept steadily at sound work, the college could build up a reputation which could make it independent.

Jones interrupted thes not too friendly refiection with, "Would you please draw your stool as close as possible? The
point is that we have to have the left breast as close as possible to the left breast It's to get the two hearts opposite one another"
"Two hearts that beat as one?" queried Mather crossly, but adjusting his position as asked
Jones answered only, "Now, please draw over a little to the left"-he did so, too-"so that our faces are as much as possible face to face And now we have to let each eye look into the eye it sees opposite it."

This, thought Mather, is worse than a bore-It's really rather unpleasant. Stull, it would soon be over.

That was, as far as he could remember, his last actual reflection for a considerable time it wasn't that he ceased to notice things Indeed, he perceived things perhaps more clearly now than ever before Perhaps it was that he hadn't been so interested in anything, in a sort of vivid way, snce he was a chlld Perhaps that was the reason he'd ceased to be able to reflect, ceased to be the detached little man with the notebook.

Jones found exactly the same thing Perhaps he noticed it a few seconds earlier than Mather did, since he wasn't delayed by having to get over an attack of irritation Things had suddenly gone just as he wished, so his observations followed quite a sumple route, and at a steady pace First, he saw the bridge of his own nose reflected in Mather's eyes It was like looking into a small, very clear, binocular camera-a sort of stereoscopic effect He was just beginning to wonder why he had never tried this odd little expertment before, when he was disturbed by an awkward fecl-log-a physical feeling that he hadn't had since he'd fainted from a palpitation His heart had begun to beat as if it were pushing itself out of his chest, and he had at the same time the sensation that thus was in some way a "double event"that Mather was suffering in the same way and that he, Jones, could durectly share that unpleasantness as though it were his own He tried to shift his attention back to his eyes and away from his chest He was sufficiently successful, though the acute discomfort continued, to be largely distracted by what be saw

A moment before he had been observing the bridge of
his nose mirrored in the eyes which were stanng into his. Now the same field of vision was before him-but not quite the same-the same detalls, but their order was changed He saw his nose and, behund it, the muror eyes-and in these what was he seeng? To clear away his confusion he lowered his focus He saw quite clearly hus own nose confrontug hum. He saw the broad bndge, almost a saddic, which he'd so often confronted when shanng Squinting involuntarily, he caught sight of a high narrow bridge even closer to hum It stuck out so far and high that he could see the white, stretched skin that covered it.

Funny, he thought, I magined I was much too far-sighted to be able to focus on anything as close as that, or, for that matter, on that nose opposite.

Suddenly, he was overcome by vertigo What was his actual position? outlook? orientation? There wasn't any doubt. It was only fear that was making him try to question it. A blast of sheer dread struck him like a line squall Here was real nughtmare He 'd never imagned a dream as simple as this could so stun him with panuc He must wake up What roused him, however, was a laugh-not a very pleasant onebut he had to own that it wasn't simister, only ugly, and so, in a way, reassuring Where had he heard that queer nerghing cackle? Of course it was a rather clever but quite offensive parody of his own cheerful "ba, ha "

The face close before hum began to draw away But the laughter went on; Jones could see as well as hear that now. The laughter was obviously coming from the face that was now drawn away sufficiently to be seen as a whole There was no longer a shadow of a doubt under which to take shelter. He had to come out into the hard light of knowledge. He could see humself laughing, and that unpleasant nerghing must be -if not the sound of his voice, at least what it sounded liketo whom? To Mather, of coursel The mouth opposite him ceased to gape and bellow. It was about to form words The accent of the voice was little more pleasant than its laughter.
"Well, we've done it." Jones heard the remark, a mincing parody of his own (as he'd always thought) rather clearcut tenor. Yes, there sitting opposite him was-bimself. Not quite humself, though. He knew humself, as far as ap-
pearances went, only through those daily mirror inspections when he shaved and brushed his har Now, of necessity, he saw humself the other way around, the right way around. It was depressing to notuce the signuficant, if slight, differences that showed up He had gotten used to making little compensatory disregardings of the farullar murror presentation. For mstance, he now saw that his features were not at all the symmetrical pattern he'd come to assume one eye was distinctly lower than the other, his nose was clearly out of line, his mouth had a pouched fold on one corner and a tucked-in wrankle in the other, the left ear stood out much further than the right So that was the actual umpression one gave That was what one looked like when one stood outside oneself and, disembodied, looked with detachment at one's body

The words "detachment" and "disemboded," however, running rapidly through his mind, suddenly swung him around. Of course, he wasn't detached, disembodied There was something worse than just seeing oneself from the outside, worse than having sumply dragged one's moorings there was the actual position from which one saw that one had drifted. There was the shock of what one had run into-of being right in someone else's body The mouth was, naturally, dry from alarm. But was that the only reason why it tasted so unpleasantly strange and stale? The tongue obeyed hum as he passed it around the "tacky" gums But in its routune efforts to freshen things up it struck against something that caught and punched it What was that? Of course, it must be a large upper dental plate What a horrid thingl Thank heaven, he had kept his own teeth-all but a little bridgework-"the bridge of sighs," he called it jokangly to humself, for sometumes he could hear his breath whistle through it But, of course, that was just what he hadn't done He'd lost his own carefully tended body and was now shut up 28 this dilapidated makeshift He swallowed with fearfear of having to make an menentory that might disclose heaven-knew-what lapses, lesions, and disgusts The swallow was not a success Helll had one to learn how someone else does everything? He began to cough Swollen tonslls had glven bur that choke Mather had evidently never taken proper care of his body He began to sneeze The nose was apparently as neglected as the throat He snatched for a handkerchief. It was certainly in keeping with all the rest But there was no choice.

Shaken by the sneezing, that confounded huge dental plate nearly flew out of his mouth He was so disgustedly vexed that he almost let it slip out. He felt he wanted to stamp on it to express his revulsion. The thought that there was someone to protest aganst brought him to his outer senses again. Yes, there he was-his real self, sitting in front of him He could no longer see his old body-dear, delightful, most precious of all object-clearly, for it had retreated The stool on which it was still seated was now pushed back still farther. Of course, he couldn't see as clearly as he was used to seeing. He remembered that Mather, like most pettfoggng, hairsplitting, over-accurate persons, was nearsıghted. His own body, it was clear, however, wasn't being pushed about yet That was a relief Mather-after that first explosion of startled humor-must have been even more stunned than he was by what had happened.

Well, he, Jones, must pull himself together-or, rather, this old rag bag Mather had left to him. He must hurry For he suddenly realized that Mather must be told how to take care of the Jones body. He might, by some sudden, careless, foolish action, strain or break part of that body-clumsy little ass

Jones got to his feet-but not very slallfully. As he discovered when he tried to bend it quickly, the left knee was stuff, indeed, quite arthritic, and judging by the feel, there were some quite savage corns on the right toes But the body was lighter and he was nearer the floor when be stood up Of course, Mather was a smaller man by some inches He stepped over to where his own body was seated. It looked up at hum with a queer, steff twist of the neck.
"Shall I give you a hand up?" Jones-in-Mather asked Mather-in-Jones
"No," came that queer voice in reply. "It's a damned clumsy overgrown thing you've swapped on me But I'd better learn to ride it myself."
"Well, it's better than being cramped up as I am!"
"Don't make personal remarks," the other one snapped. "This body seems pretty well out of condition"
"You take care of $1 t$," exclamed Jones "You're very careless, I'm finding out, about how to take care of a body. And that body you're in, just because it is a fine one, needs care"
"Oh, damn you," began Mather Then they both broke into feeble laughter
"Well," Jones remarked finally, "we've got a double hold on each other, there's no doubt We'd better each set about quetly finding out how to run these machines "

They were silent for some time, as each returned to his internal inventory While doing this Jones, though, watched Mather He saw Mather move the Jones hand up to the Jones face and feel and pat it gingerly Why should he do that? There was nothing to be ashamed of or disgusted at in that fine ruddy cheek. Suddenly the Jones voice addressed ham "You take care of that plate You haven't got one. Don't you lose it"

Jones felt he must retalate for thas msult, the gross msult of being told to take care-as though it were precious-of a contraption which was a disgusting injury to have stuffed in one's mouth. He was seized with a craving to spit the beastly thing out. Wiser second thoughts prevaled. He contented himself with retaliating "You take care of that left eye Those eyes see twice as far as yours do, but the left one needs care-don't go straining it."
"It's half blind," sard Mather, turnung the Jones-head down, rasing the Jones-wnst, and looking at the wrist watch. "I can hardly see the watch hands!"
"You've never been able to see across the room. Look at those books in the bookcase over there "

Jones saw Mather turn the Jones-head toward the books and become interested.
"Yes," came the grudging acknowledgment. "It's queer to see as far as that with the naked eye."
"And now look out of the window"
Mather ambled the big Jones-body across the room
"I feel a bit as though I were on stlts," he giggled as he passed his own body. Then, at the window, he added. "It
is rather fun with these long-distance eyes of yours Spectacles don't quite give all that."

For a few minutes they walked about, each trying out hus borrowed surface senses. Jones was quite amused to see what amazing detarl he could now see on the dial of his watch Then he scanned the back of the harry Mather-hand that had risen up and held itself in front of these new, shortly keen eyes which were now his, as though that hand had obeyed him all his life

Next, he turned to trying out the ears. They were certanly dufferent-not any sharper, he thought, but more inclined to relish sound just for itself. He remembered that Mather, of course, played the piano He wondered what it would be like to play? Would one really have to care for music? Or would the fingers simply run away of themselves, up and down the keyboard, as quickly and as mechancally as one of those old Pranolas?

His interior mevestigations were disturbed by hearing his former body speak Mather was complaining in that voice which he, Jones, was still certan that Mather was putting on to make him hear how ridiculous he sounded Mather, too, was quiggling, in a ridiculous way, his borrowed hands. "Why, they're nearly paralyzed," he squeaked.
"Don't be msulting"
"Well, don't make my voree sound so absurd You've been doing that to insult mel" answered Mather.

So, Jones reflected, we sound equally ridiculous to each other. This mollified him considerably and he replied soothingly "It's because you can play and I can't It's amusing, this end, to feel a hand as live as that "

Mather, too, was soothed, and a new sensation distracted Jones something sharp that shot right up the mner side of his leg He twisted the leg again, and again that pan shot, keen as toothache Heavens, he thought, so that's scratica

The two figures walked up and down the big open study A'n onlooker would have thought they were two philosophers lost in reflection over some shared intellectual problem In truth, they were both engrossed in nothing but feeling Each was wandering up and down the strange lodging in which he found humself, trying the doors, the odd cupboards, the back
rooms, looking down mysterious ill-lit passages, listening in at private telephones, peening out from mysterious windows It was like moving through a strange house at dusk and every now and then tripping over wires which gave you a shock, switched on a light, or rang a bell

After a silence, Jones heard Mather muttering again in that provohing Jones-parody voice
"It's a clumsy body," the voice sard
"Nonsense," he retorted "It's sumply because you don't know how to run a high-powered car Don't you go flunging it about It's a bigger thing than you're used to "
"Well, you take care of mine You're not used to as fine a prece of mechansm."

A sudden gust of anger swept through Jones He felt a strong temptation to pinch one of these highly prized fingers in the door-only then he, Jones, would have to endure all the pan

Well, it was no use wrangling Mather was so stupid as only to be vexed by this predicament, but he, Jones, should surely be interested in such a brilliant success He was determined that he would be-though perhaps it was rather more of an adventure than he had been able to foresee But, before going any further, there was a lot of interest to be ganed from learning at firsthand-and mdeed more than firsthard-about another body's little ways Thus was real exploration, going further, after all, than any human exploration had ever gone And, once you got over your disgust, the actual way of exploring was rather fun. It was a little like being out on the road for the first tume on a sort of mysterious bicycle which completely enclosed you, but which you had to balance and drive every moment. The machine gave queer little swoops and dives In another way it was luke being moved into a new house with a new set of servants The things one used to require were still supplied, but were never to be found in quite the same places the old staff in the old house used to put them. This Mather-body had a number of odd tricks For mstance, you had to know when it really wanted to sneeze and play other pneumatic tricks, and when it was only shamming-or, at least, not metending to go through with the thing You'd get all ready,
standing by with a pocket handkerchref out, and, then, on the brink, the body would change its mind

Suddenly, as Jones was congratulating himself on how well he was tumbling to its ways and getting its drift, it put up a new problem to hum. It was a sort of itch, or perhaps craving would be a better word Did it want food? No, there was certainly the remains of a meal in its stomach. A drink? No; the throat wasn't wanting liquid, that was clear. And yet the throat or mouth was wanting something. Jones was so puzzled that he glanced over to the Matherpossessed body He saw Mather pull up the Jones-hand and put it into the pocket of the Jones-coat. Now, that was going too far' Swap bodies, maybe, but you must respect personal property. Next, Mather would be reading his private correspondence. In a sort of retaliation, Jones stuck one of the queer effeminate hands-which were all he had now to rely on-into Mather's pocket. It surprised hum. It was hardly in before it closed on something and drew it out. A preel Of course, Mather smoked and he, Jones, did not. That queer craving must be for tobacco He looked across and saw that his body had ceased to rummage in his pockets. Again there came that parody-laugh to which he couldn't get used
"Of course," Mather was saying to him, "of course, it's my body that wants to smoke, though, for a moment, I was absent-mindedly rummaging for my pipe, as I knew it was tume for one"

By that tume Jones had found that his borrowed, burrowing fingers had lit on a tobacco pouch
"You'd better have a smoke for me," cackled the parodyvorce "Then I'll not be feeling nicotine starved when I get back."
Fancy, thought Jones, having to stoke this beastly little body in the filthy way just to keep it comfortable for its tobacco-addicted owner.

But the demand was in him now. It was he who now felt the wish to smoke But how? He'd never smoked in his lufe; had always hated the silly, dirty habrt. His own body drew across to him and, through it, Mather sa1d, "Here,
give me the pipe and pouch" But after some fumbleng Mather exclarmed
"Damn these chilblauned fingers! They can't even pack a pipe "

Jones had begun to want so much to smoke that he swallowed the insult. Together, they managed to get the pipe filled.
"Now, don't burn my sut or my fingers," was Mather's last provoking advice But as soon as he was sucking at the pipe a sense of ease and tolerance rose up in Jones's mund. He felt it was ridiculous, but there it was and, as it was pleasant, why not yield to it? Jones sat down At least, untul thus pipe was firushed, there was no need to do anytbing else. After all, it was the only pipe he would ever enjoy in his lufe He knew, once back in his proper body, he would hate the beastly thing He stretched humself back in a chair and noticed idly that, as he himself had become relaxed, Mather, in the Jones body, seemed to be becoming proportionately restless After fidgeting about increasingly, he turned at last on Jones
"Jones," he called, "is there anything wrong with this body of yours? I'm beginning to feel queer, devilsh queer You didn't eat something at lunch which disagreed with you, and then slup out and sit smoking comfortably m my body while I have to do the digesting?"

He was obviously in angry distress which was evidently growng, so Jones hastened to reassure him, at least on that count.
"No, no," he answered in quite a placatory tone-or, at least, in one that was as mollifying as he could make Mather's sharp little voice manage "No, I assure you I didn't. Never do I eat very sparngly In fact, I'm on a moderate diet."

As he sard that, the thought, the explanation, flashed into his mind. Lord How forgetful one becomes away from homel He put down the pipe he was now holding quite expertly and rose in real concern. He fumbled, found Mather's watch, and looked at it. Yes, it was true enough it was full time-a bit over, in point of fact. He went over to his Mather-occupied body or, rather, the body that was now wholly occupying - engrossing Mather.
"It'll be all right in a minute I'll show you what to do"
Mather only looked at hum with dumb distress in his Jones-eyes Then the mouth muttered weahly. "Can't you get me out of this?" He was too tired, evidently, even to protest
"Yes, yes," said Jones reassuringly. "In a moment, in just a moment we'll change back But just now-" He paused. The truth was that he was frightened, too-more frightened, maybe, than Mather was For Mather didn't know what was wrong with him what was giving out under him Jones did He didn't dare risk the change-over-with all that almost suffocating acceleration of the heart-when his body, with Mather inside it, might collapse before he was back in it and able to do what he knew must be done What a fool he'd been not to keep an eye on the tume. Of course, being out of his body he wouldn't have the warning sensation and, equally of course, Mather wouldn't know what those first symptoms would be stgnaling

Well, somehow he must face Mather and get hum to do what had to be done Otherwise there were only two other facts to be faced Which of them would be the worse, he couldn't amagine One was Mather's dying of the body Mather was now in, falling down and falling to pieces, and Mather's going-going, literally, only heaven knew where-and he, Jones, living, spending the rest of his life in this absurd little spidery body-already more than half a dozên years older than he was; and-horrors'-having to take up life in Mather's house-in Mather's body, it would be the only place he would be allowed to hive To have to share the house with wizened, frisky little Mrs Mather-he who was unmarried and a musogymist-and those awful, noisy, umpudent, duty chuldren

There was, of course, the one other chore to be certified as a lunatic by mantanning the truth. that he was Jones in Mather's body and that Mather had died in Jones's

The thought roused him to desperation He seized his own body by the arm. How odd to feel one's body from the outsidel But there was no more time for such reflections
"Come," he sald hurriedly. "Lean on me if you feel you're going to fant."

Somehow he got that huge, heeling bulk across the passage and up the three stars into the bathroom He snatched the hypodermic from the small mirror cabinet He slumped the Jones body down on the seat, then propped it up and set about loading the syringe But, heavensl, these neat little hands, which could deftly fill a pipe and run freely enough on the prano keyboard, now fumbled almost as though they were frostbitten Once, he nearly dropped the little glass tube of the cylinder on the floor tiles Then his mept fingers pulled the plunger out too far, and it came clean away from the tube But at last, by dint of sheer schooling, he got those meompetent hands to carry the loaded instrument at the ready He pushed back the sleève on his old body's forearm. Mather was roused by this
"What the devil are you doing?" he whispered in helpless anger
"You'll be all right in a moment," replied Jones But would he? Anyhow, it was clear that a moment or two would decide, one way or the other, and, probably, for good He pinched up the skin of the left forearm. He'd so often, quickly and deftly, plucked up the flesh on his leg in that way But these wretched Mather-fingers fell down on that, too At last he had a good fold farly well held with the left hand He brought the needle near with his right. Of course, it caught badly in the skin-wouldn't make a good piercing He pressed the plunger feebly The liquid began to ooze out over the skin He jabbed savagely Mather sturred in the collapsed body and just succeeded in making it say, "So, you're finshing me off with a shot of poison. That's why "His voice tralled away

But the needle had gone in with a tear-nght in-too deep, really, but what did he care?-it was in. That was all that mattered now He drove the plunger home and saw the skin swell above the buried slant of the hollow needle He whipped it out, stuck a patch of cotton on the puncture, and wated, bent over the body-his body, which he must bring back. Gradually it stirred, though the eyes were now closed He shuffled the hypodermic behind the bathroom seat Yes, the body was coming alive So great was his relief that he dragged the hulk on hus shoulder, drew it out of the
batbroom back into the sitting-room, and plumped it into a charr. As the body sank back, he heard Mather saymg in a vague, accentless voice, "What went wrong? What's wrong with this damned body anyway?"

Jones's mind was working quickly now. He dragged a stool forward to the right side of the chair in which his body sat, held up by the chair's straight back. He pushed mmself forward in Mather's body, untll the two bodies were leftbreast to left-breast He could actually feel the dull labored thump of the Jones heart like a slow bass scored under the hard, thick stroke of the Mather-heart, which had had some pretty stiff pumping to do in the last ten minutes He swung the Mather-face close to his old face. The lids were stll lowered.
"Mather!" he said. "Look at me!"
The eyes opened and gazed steadily, absent-mindedly, as a baby will stare when absorbed in taking its bottle That would do Jones gazed out through the very short-ranged Mather-eyes into the two pupils opposite hum. He felt his heart begn to quieten: slower and slower it beat. He felt relaxed and easy. Then he felt his heart rise in its beats again-not distressingly but with a series of rapid, strong strokes And then, once again, it began to smooth out its emphasis and become as steady as before He rested back comfortably. The face opposite him drew away. He was able to look past it and idly read the tutles on the book backs across the room.

Suddenly Mather's voice broke on his ear: 'It's not a safe method But I own it's the quickest I've ever come across for hypnosis"

Jones sat up.
"It put you under deeper than it put me. You're hardly around yet," Mather's voice continued, "but one would expect that A trained psychologist is always the most dufficult of all people to put under."

Jones got to his feet Yes, they were his own famular, comfortable, comless feet "Well," he remarked, "thank you for trying it out with me"
"Oh, nothing, nothing," sard Mather anrly "But, take my advice, and leave such experimentung to trained psycholo-
gists I don't mind telling you that you're looking pretty queer" He paused Then he went on, with a note of grudging curiosity coming into his voice "I may as well tell you that when I was a student I was hypnotuzed a number of times, for experımental purposes But I don't remember ever having had any dreams at all luke those I had during our little experiment Did you have any queer fancies?"

Jones gave a non-committal grunt Mather stood for a moment, uncertain whether or not to probe further Finally he sard to humself, It must have been the Freudian "transference" working in dream-imagery form But, I must say, I never expected the feeling-provoked fantasy could be so convincing It is certainly not safe Certainly not.

He walked to the door "Well, good-by; and you'll take my advice, won't you? No more experimenting of this sort" Jones shook hands with hum and got nid of hum with another senies of thanks

When he returned from lettung the little man out, he stood for a moment, stall and silent in the middle of the room Then he remarked to himself in a soft voice "Maybe he is right. Really, it could only have been a dream" But, after another moment, he turned, went out of the room, through the passage, and into the bathroom He bent down Behind the bathroom seat lay the hypodermic syringe He pulled up his left sleeve On the lower forearm was a big, clumsy puncture with a small scrap of reddened cotton still adhering to it. He looked at his watch.
"Well," he muttered, "if it was a dream, it not only took its tume about it, but it troubled to produce quite a lot of curcumstantial evidence It was certanly a dream that cared enough for verisimulitude to dress the part It was a dream with such a sense of the dramatic that it first nearly pushed me right out of the basic dream of this life, but, having taken me to the brink, it swung me back again I've never heard of a patient who oversiept the time of his injection long enough to bring himself to the verge of collapse and then, in his dream, not only sleepwalked and gave himself the dose in the mick of time, but who also troubled to invent another character, taken from one of his colleagues And this character is brought in not only to give him the dose but,
with a novelist's love for accuracy of character, the colleague is made to give the injection so damn badly that the dreamer deals himself a sore arm for two weeks! Anyhow, that's what I'm in forl"

He paused and then went on to himself "But it'll be more than two weeks before I'll be able to decide if that was a dream or really a switch-over for a while If it really was, if one actually saw from the other side, well, then it was worth the discomfort and the risk But there's the rub one never will be quite sure-at least, till one has gone to the other side for good-and then it'll be too late to make a report of the sort that any of my colleagues would even listen to However, I suppose Mather is right whether it was hypnosis or a real transference, one shouldn't try it agam But if only I wasn't a diabetic, I think l'd have another try!"

## Ray Bradbury

## The Tombling Day

It was the Tombling day, and all the people had walked up the summer road, meluding Grandma Lobllly, and they stood now in the green day and the high sky country of Missouri, and there was a smell of the seasons changung and the grass breaking out in flowers
"Here we are," sald Grandma Lobllly, over her cane, and she gave them all a flashing look of her yellow-brown eyes and spat into the dust.

The graveyard lay on the side of a quet hill It was a place of sunken mounds and wooden markers, bees hummed all about in quetudes of sound and butterflies withered and blossomed on the clear blue arr The tall sunburnt men and gughamed women stood a long silent tume looking in at their deep and buried relatives
"Well, let's get to work'" said Grandma, and she hobbled across the moist grass, sticking it rapidly, here and there, with her cane
The others brought the spades and special crates, with dastes and blacs thed brightly to them The government was cutting a road through here in August and since this graveyard had gone-unused in fifty years the relatives had agreed to untuck all the old bones and pat them snug somewhere else

Grandma Loblilly got right down on her knees and trembled a spade in her hand The others were busy at their own places
"Grandma," sald Joseph Pikes, making a big shadow on her working "Grandma, you shouldn't be workin' on this place This's William Simmons' grave, Grandma"
At the sound of his voice, everyone stopped working, and histened, and there was just the sound of butterfilies on the cool afternoon arr

Grandma looked up at Pıkes "You think I don't know but I intend to visit him today" She patted out trowel after trowel of rich soil and she grew quiet and introspective and said things to the day and those who might listen "Sixty years ago, and him a fine man, only twenty-three And me, I was twenty and all golden about the head and all mulk in my arms and neck and persummon in my cheeks Suxty years and a planned marriage and then a sickness and him dying away. And me alone, and I remember how the earth-mound over hum sank in the rains--"

Everybody stared at Grandma.
"But still, Grandma-" said Joseph Pikes.
The grave was shallow She soon reached the long ron box.
"Gımme a hand!" she cried.
Nine men helped lift the iron box out of the earth, Grandma poking at them with her cane "Careful!" she shouted "Easy!" she cried "Now." They set it on the ground. 'Now," she sad, "if you be so kindly, you gentlemen might fetch Mr. Summons on up to my house for a spell"
"We're takun' hum on to the new cemetery," said Joseph Pikes

Grandma fixed him with ber needle eye. "You just trot that box right up to my house Much obliged "

The men watched her dwindle down the road They looked at the box, looked at each other, and then spat on therr hands.

Five minutes later the men squeezed the iron coffin through the front door of Grandma's little white house and set the box down by the pot-belly stove.

She gave them a drink all around 'Now, let's lift the hd," she sard "It ann't every day you see old friends"

The men did not move
"Well, if you won't, I will." She thrust at the lid with her cane, again and again, breaking away the earthcrust Spiders went touching over the floor There was a rich smell, like plowed spring earth Now the men fingered the lid Grandma stood back. "Upl" she sald She gestured
her cane, like an ancient goddess And up in the ar went the lid The men set it on the floor and turned

There was a sound like wind sighing in October, from all ther mouths

There lay Willam Simmons as the dust filtered bright and golden through the air There he slept, a little smule on his lips, hands folded, all dressed up and no place in all the world to go
Grandma Loblilly gave a low moaning cry.
"He's all there!"
There he was, indeed Intact as a beetle in his shell, his skin all fine and white, his small eyelids over his pretty eyes like flower petals put there, his lips still with color to them, his harr combed neat, his the tied, his fingernalls pared clean All in all, he was as complete as the day they shoveled the earth upon his silent case

Grandma stood tightening her eyes, her hands up to catch the breath that moved from her mouth. She couldn't see "Where's my specs?" she cried People searched "Can't you find 'em?" she shouted She squinted at the body "Never mind," she said, gettung close The room settled She sighed and quavered and cooed over the opened box
"He's kept" sard one of the women "He ann't crumbled"
"Thengs luke that," said Joseph Pikes, "don't happen"
"It happened," sand the woman
"Sixty years underground Stands to reason no man lasts that long"

The sunlight was late by each window, the last butterfles were settling amongst flowers to look like nothing more than other flowers

Grandma Lobllly put out her wrinkly hand, trembling "The earth kept him The way the aur is That was good dry soil for keeping"
"He's young," warled one of the women, quetly "So young"
"Yes," sand Grandma Lobllly, looking at him "Him, lying there, twenty-three years old And me, standing here, pushing eighty!" She shut her eyes
'Now, Grandma," Joseph Pikes touched her shoulder.
"Yes, him lyin' there, all twenty-three and fine and purty, and me-" She squeezed her eyes tught. "Me bending over him, never young agan, myself, only old and spindly, never to have a chance at being young agin. Oh, Lord' Death keeps people young Look how kind death's been to him" She ran her hands over her body and face slowly, turning to the others "Death's nicer than lfe Why didn't I die then, too? Then we'd both be young now, together Me in my box, in my white wedding gown all lace, and my eyes closed down, all shy with death. And my hands making a prayer on my bosom "
"Grandma, don't carry on."
"I got a right to carry on' Why didn't I die, too? Then, when he came back luke he came today, to see me, I wouldn't be like this!"

Her hands went wildly to feel her lined face, to twist the loose skin, to fumble the empty mouth, to yank the gray hair and look at it with appalled eyes.
"What a fine coming-back he's had!" She showed her skinny arms "Think that a man of twenty-three years will want the likes of a seventy-nine-year woman with sumprot in her veins? I been cheated Death kept him young forever. Look at me, did Life do so much?"
"They're compensations," sard Joseph Pikes. "He ain't young, Grandma. He's long over eighty years."
"You're a fool, Joseph Pikes He's fine as a stone, not touched by a thousand rans And he's come back to see me and he'll be picking one of the younger gris now. What would he want with an old woman?"
"He's in no way to fetch nuthin' offa nobody," said Joseph Pikes

Grandma pushed him back. "Get out now, all of youl An't your box, ain't your lid, and it ain't your almost-husband' You leave the box here, leastwise tonight, and tomorrow you dig a new burying place"
"Awnght, Grandma; he was your beau. I'll come early tomorra. Don't you cry, now."
"I'll do what my eyes most need to do"
She stood stiff in the middle of the room until the last of them were out the door After a while she got a candle
and lit it and she noticed someone standing on the hill outside It was Joseph Pikes He'd be there the rest of the nught, she reckoned, and she did not shout for him to go away She did not look out the window again, but she knew he was there, and so was much better rested in the following hours.

She went to the coffin and looked down at William Summons

She gazed fully upon him Seeing his hands was like seeing actions She saw how they had been with rems of a horse in them, moving up and down She remembered how the lips of ham had clucked as the carriage had glided along with an even pacing of the horse through the meadowlands, the moonlt shadows all around She knew how it was when those hands held to you.

She touched his suit. "That's not the same suit he was buried in!" she cried suddenly And yet she knew it was the same Suxty years had changed not the suit but the lonings of her mind
Selzed with a quick fear, she hunted a long time until she found her spectacles and put them on.
"Why, that's not Willam Summons!" she shouted.
But she knew thes also to be untrue It was Willam Summons "His chin didn't go back that far!" she cned softly, logically "Or did it?' And his hair, 'It was a wonderful sorrel color, I remember! This hair here's just plann brown. And his nose, I don't recall it being that tippyl"

She stood over thus strange man and, gradually, as she watched, she knew that this indeed was Willam Simmons She knew a thing she should have known all along that dead people are like wax memory-you take them in your mind, you shape and squeeze and fix them, push a bump here, stretch one out there, pull the body tall, shape and reshape, handle, sculp and finish a man-memory untul he's all out of kalter.

There was a certan sense of loss and bewilderment in her She wished she had never opened the box. Or, leastwise, had the sense to leave her glasses off She had not seen hum clearly at first, just enough so she filled in the rough spots with her mind. Now, with her glasses on . . .

She glanced again and again at his face It became slowly familiar That memory of him that she had torn apart and put together for sixty years faded to be replaced by the man she had really known And he was fine to look upon The sense of having lost something vanıshed He was the same man, no more, no less Thus was always the way when you didn't see people for years and they came back to say howdydo For a spell you felt so very uneasy with them But then, at last, you relaxed
"Yes, that's you," she laughed "I see you peeking out from behind all the strangeness I see you all glinty and sly here and there and about "

She began to cry agan If only she could he to herself, if only she could say, "Look at him, he don't look the same, he's not the same man I took a fetching on!" then she could feel better But all the little inside-people sitting around m her head would rock back in their tiny rockers and cackle and say, "You ann't fooln' us none, Grandma"

Yes, how easy to deny it was him And feel better But she didn't deny it She felt the great depressing sadness because here he was, young as creek water, and here she was, old as the sea
"William Simmons'" she cried "Don't look at me! I know you stlll love me, so I'll primp myself up!"

She stirred the stove-fire, quickly put irons on to heat, used irons on her hair till it was all grey curls Baking-powder whitened her cheeks! She bit a cherry to color her lips, pinched her cheeks to bring a flush From a trunk she yanked old materrals untll she found a faded blue velvet dress which she put on.

She stared wildly in the mirror at herself
"No, no" She groaned and shut her eyes "There's nothing I can do to make me younger'n you, William Summons! Even if I died now it wouldn't cure me of thus old thing come on me, this disease of age'"

She had a violent wish to run forever in the woods, fall in a leaf-ple and molder down into smoking run with them She ran across the room, intending never to come back. But as she yanked the door wide a cold wind exploded over her from outside and she heard a sound that made her hesitate.

The wind rushed about the room, yanked at the coffin and pushed inside it.

William Simmons seemed to stir in his box.
Grandma slammed the door
She moved slowly back to squint at hum.
He was ten years older
There were wrinkles and lines on his hands and face
"William Simmons!"
During the next hour, William Simmons' face tolled away the years His cheeks went in on themselves, like clenching a fist, leke withering an apple in a bin His flesh was made of carved pure white snow, and the cabin heat melted it. It got a charred look. The arr made the eyes and mouth pucker. Then, as if struck a hammer-blow, the face shattered into a mullion wnokles The body squirmed in an agony of time It was forty, then fifty, then sixty years old! It was seventy, eighty, one hundred years! Burning, burning awayl There were small whispers and leaf-crackles from its face and its age-burning hands, one hundred ten, one hundred twenty years, line upon etched, greaved, line!

Grandma Lobllly stood there all the cold night, aching her brd-bones, watching, cold, over the changing man She was a witness to all improbabilities She felt something finally let loose of her heart. She did not feel sad any more The weight lifted away from her

She went peacefully to sleep, standing against a charr.
Sunlight came yellow through the woodland, birds and ants and creek waters were moving, each as quet as the other, going somewhere.

## It was morning

Grandma woke and looked down upon William Summons.
He was nothing but delicate ivory carvings
"Ah," sard Grandma, looking and seeing
Her very breath sturred and sturred hus bones until they flaked, like a chrysals, like a kand of candy all whitting away, burnung with an invisible fire The bones flaked and flew, light as pieces of dust on the sunlight. Each time she shouted, the bones split asunder, there was a dry flaking rustle from the box.

If there was a wind and she opened the door, he'd be blown away on it like so many crackly leaves!

She bent for a long time, looking at the box Then she gave a knowing cry, a sound of discovery and moved back, putting her hands first to her face and then to ber spindly breasts and then traveling all up and down her arms and legs and fumbling at her empty mouth.

Her shout brought Joseph Pikes running
He pulled up at the door only in time to see Grandma Lobllly dancing and jumping around on her yellow, highpeg shoes in a wild gyration

She clapped hands, laughed, flung her skirts, ran in a circle, and did a little waltz with herself, tears on her face And to the sunight and the flashing mage of herself in the wall mirror she cried
"I'm young' I'm eighty, but I'm younger'n himl"
She skupped, she hopped, and she curtsied
"There are compensations, Joseph Pikes, you was right!" she chortled "I'm younger'n all the dead ones in the whole world!"

And she waltzed so volently the whirl of her dress pulled at the box and whispers of chrysalis leapt on the arr to hang golden and powdery amidst her shouts.
"Whee-deeel" she cried "Whee-heee!"

## Nigel Kneale

## Minuke

The estate agent kept an uncomfortable silence untul we reached his car "Frankly, I wish you hadn't got wind of that" he sad "Don't know how you did I thought I had the whole thing carefully disposed of Oh , please get in"

He pulled his door shut and frowned "It puts me in a rather awkward spot I suppose I'd better tell you all I know about that case, or you'd be suspectung me of heaven knows what kinds of chicanery in your own."

As we set off to see the property I was interested m, he shifted the cigarette to the side of his mouth
"It's quite a distance, so I can tell you on the way there," he sard. "We"ll pass the very spot, as a matter of fact, and you can see it for yourself Such as there is to see "

It was away back before the war (sard the estate agent). At the height of the building boom You remember how it was ribbon development in full blast everywhere, speculative builders stacking things up almost overnght. Though at least you could get a house when you wanted it in those days

Tve always been careful in what I handle-I want you to understand that Then one day I was handed a packet of coast-road bungalows, for letting Put up by one of these gone tomorrow firms, and bought by a local man I can't say I exactly jumped for joy, but for once the things looked all right, and-business is inclined to be business

The desirable residence you heard about stood at the end of the row Actually, it seemed to have the best site On a sort of natural platform, as it were, raised above road-level and looking straight out over the sea Like all the rest, it had a simple two-bedroom, lounge, livng-room, kutchen, bathroom layout. Red-tled roof, roughcast walls Ornamental portico, garden-strip all round Sufficiently far from town, but with all convenences

It was taken by a man named Pritchard Cinema projectionist, I thinh the was Wife, a boy of ten or so, and a rather younger daughter Oh -and dog, one of those black, lop-eared animals They christened the place "Minuhe," M-I-N-U-K-E My Nook Yes, that's what I sald too. And not even the miserable excuse of its being phonetically correct Still, hardly worse than most

Well, at the start everything seemed quite jolly The Pritchards settled in and busied themselves with rearing a privet hedge and shoving flowers in They'd pand the first quarter in advance and, as far as I was concerned, were out of the picture for a bit

Then, about a fortnight after tbey'd moved in, I had a telephone call from Mrs $\mathbf{P}$ to say there was something odd about the kitchen tap Apparently the thing had happened twice The first time was when her sister was visiting them, and tried to fill the kettle no water would come through for a long time, then suddenly squirted volently and almost soaked the woman I gather the Pritchards hadn't really belleved this-thought she was trying to find fault with therr little nest-it had never happened before, and she couldn't make it happen agan Then, about a week later, it did• with Mrs. Pritchard this time After her husband had exammed the tap and could find nothing wrong with it, he decided the water supply must be faulty. So they got on to me

I went round personally, as it was the first complant from any of these bungalows The tap seemed normal, and I remember asking if the schoolboy son could have been expermmenting with their main stop, when Mrs Pritchard, who had been fiddlung with the tap, suddenly satd, "Quick, look at this! It's off now'" They were quite cocky about its happening when I was there

It really was odd I turned the tap to the lumst, butnot a drop! Not even the sort of gasping gurgle you hear when the supply is turned off at the mam After a couple of minutes, though, it came on Water shot out with, I should say, about ten tumes normal force, as if it had been held under pressure Then gradually it died down and ran steadly

Both children were in the room with us until we all dodged out of the door to escape a soaking-it had splashed all over
the ceiling-so they couldn't have been up to any tricks I promised the Pritchards to have the pipes checked Before returning to town, I called at the next two bungalows in the row nether of the tenants had had any trouble at all with the water I thought, well, that localized it at least.

When I reached my office there was a telephone message waitung, from Pritchard I rang hum back and he was obvously annoyed "Look here," he said, "not ten minutes after you left, we've had something else happen! The wall of the large bedroom's cracked from top to bottom. Big pieces of plaster fell, and the bed's in a terrible mess " And then he sadd, "You wouldn't have got me in a jerry-built place luke this if I'd known'"

I had plasterers on the job next morning, and the whole water supply to "Minuke" under examination For about three days there was peace The tap behaved itself, and absolutely nothing was found to be wrong I was annoyed at what seemed to have been unnecessary expenditure It looked as if the Pritchards were going to be difficult-and I've had my share of that type fault-finding cranks occasionally carry eccentricity to the extent of a little private destruction, to prove their points I was on the watch from now on.
Then it came agan
Pritchard rang me at my home, before nune in the morning His voice sounded a bit off Shaky
"For God's sake can you come round here night away," he sald "Tell you about it when you get here" And then he sard, almost fiercely, but quetly and close to the mouthprece, "There's something damned queer about this place!" Dramatizing is a typical feature of all cranks, I thought, but particularly the little mousy kind, like Pritchard

I went to "Minuke" and found that Mrs Pritchard was in bed, in a state of collapse The doctor had given her a sleeping dose

Pritchard told me a tale that was chrefly remarkable for the expression on his face as he told it.

I don't know if you're familar with the layout of that type of bungalow? The living room is in the front of the house, with the kitchen behind it To get from one to the other you have to use the little hallway, through two doors

But for convenience at mealtimes, there's a servng-hatch in the wall between these rooms A small wooden door slides up and down over the hatch-opening
"The wife was just passing a big plate of bacon and eggs through from the kutchen," Pritchard told me, "when the hatch door came down on her wrists I saw it and I heard her yell I thought the cord must've snapped, so I said, 'All night, all right' and went to pull it up because it's only a light wooden frame"

Pritchard was a funny color, and as far as I could judge, it was genuine
"Do you know, it wouldn't comel I got my fingers under it and heaved, but it might have weighed two hundredweight. Once it gave an meh or so, and then pressed harder That was it-it was pressing down' I heard the wife groan I said, 'Hold on'" and ripped round through the hall When I got into the kitchen she was on the floor, fanted And the hatch-door was hitched up as right as ninepence. That gave me a turn" ${ }^{1}$ He sat down, quite deflated it didn't appear to be put on Stull, ordinary neurotics can be almost as troublesome as out-and-out cranks
I tested the hatch, gingerly; and, of course, the cords were sound and it ran easily.
"Possibly a bit stiff at times, being new," I said. "They're apt to jam of you're rough with them" And then, "By the way, just what were you hinting on the phone?"
He looked at me It was warm sunlight outside, with a bus passing Normal enough to take the mike out of Frankenstem's monster. "Never mind," he said, and gave a sheepish half-grin " $\mathrm{B}_{1}$ of-well, funny construction in this house, though, eh?"

I'm afratd I was rather outspoken with hum.
Let alone any twaddle about a month-old bungalow being haunted, I vas determined to clamp down on this "jerrybuilding" talk. Perbaps I was beginoung to have doubts myself

I wrote straight off to the building company when I'd managed to trace them, busy developing an arterial road about tbree counties away I dare say my letter was on the insinuating side• I think I asked if they had any record of
defficulties in the construction of this bungalow At any rate I got a suffly reply by return, stating that the matter was out of their hands in addition, their records were not avallable for discussion. Blind alley.

In the meantime, things at "Minuke" had worsened to a really frighteming degree I dreaded the phone ninging One morning the two Pritchards semor awoke to find that nearly all the furniture in their bedroom had been moved about, including the bed they had been sleeping in they had felt absolutely nothing Food became suddenly and revoltingly decomposed All the chimney pots had come down, not just into the garden, but to the far side of the high road, except one which appeared, pulverized, on the living-room floor The obvious attempts of the Pritchards to keep a rational outlook had underlined most of my suspicions by this time

I managed to locate a local man who had been employed during the erection of the bungalows, as an extra hand He had worked only on the foundations of "Minuke," but what he had to say was interesting

They had found the going slow because of striking a layer of enormous flat stones, apparently trmmed slate, but as the site was otherwise excellent, they pressed on, using the stone as foundation where it fitted in with the plan, and laying down rubble where it didn't. The concrete skin over the rubble-my ears burned when I heard about that, I can tell you-this wretched so-called concrete had cracked, or shattered, several tumes Which wasn't entirely surprising, If it had been laid as he described. The flat stones, he said, had not been seriously disturbed A workmate had referred to them as "a grant's grave," so it was possibly an old burial mound Norse, perhaps-those are farrly common along this coast-or even very much older

Apart from this-I'm no diehard skeptic, I may as well confess-I was beginning to admut modest theories about a poltergeist, in spite of a lack of corroborative knockings and ormament-throwing There were two young chuldren in the house, and the lore has it that kads are often unconsciously connected with phenomena of that sort, though usually
adolescents Still, in the real-estate profession you have to be careful, and if I could see the Pritchards safely off the premises without arring these possibilties, it might be kindest to the bungalow's future.

I went to "Minuke" the same afternoon.
It was certanly turning out an odd nook. I found a departing policeman on the doorstep That morning the back door had been burst in by a hundredweight or so of soll, and Mrs Pritchard was trying to convince herself that a practical joker had it in for them. The policeman had taken some notes, and was giving vague advice about "civil acton" which showed that he was out of his depth.

Pritchard looked very tired, almost ill. "I've got leave from my job, to look after them," he sard, when we were alone. I thought he was vise. He had given his wife's llness as the reason, and $I$ was giad of that.
"I don't believe in-unnatural happenings," he said. I agreed with him, non-committally.
"But I'm afraid of what ideas the kids might get. They're both at impressionable ages, $\mathrm{y}^{\prime}$ know."
I recognized the symptoms without disappointment. "You mean, you'd rather move elsewhere," I said.

He nodded. "I like the district, mind you But what I-" There was a report like a gun in the very room.
I found myself with both arms up to cover my face There were tiny splinters everywhere, and a dust of fiber in the arr. The door had exploded Literally.

To hark back to constructional details, it was one of those $\mathrm{h}_{\mathrm{igh}}$, hollow frame-and-plywood jobs As you'll know, it takes considerable force to splunter plywood- well, this was in tiny fragments And the oddest thog was that we had felt no blast effect.

In the next room $I$ heard their dog howling. Pritchard was as stuf as a poker.
"I felt it!" he said. "I felt this lot coming I've got to knowing when something's likely to happen. It's all round!" Of course I began to imagine I'd sensed something too, but I doubt if I had really, my shock came with the crash Mrs Pritchard was in the doorway by this time with the kids behund her. He motioned them out and grabbed my arm.
"The thing is," he whispered, "that I can still feel it! Stronger than ever, by God' Look, will you stay at home tonight, in case I need-well, in case things get worse? I can phone you."

On my way back I called at the town library and managed to get hold of a volume on supernatural possession and what-not. Yes, I was committed now But the library didn't specialize in that line, and when I opened the book at home, I found it was very little help "Vampires of southeastern Europe" type of stuff I came across references to something the jargon called an "elemental" which I took to be a good deal more vicious and destructive than any poltergeist A thoroughly nasty form of manufestation, if it existed Those Norse gravestones were fitting into the picture uncomfortably well, it was fashonable in those days to be burned with all the trimmings, human sacrifice, and even more unmentionable attractions

But I read on After half a chapter on zombis and Rumaman werewolves, the whole thing began to seem so fantastic that I turned seriously to working out methods of exploding somebody's door as a practical joke Even a totally certfiable joker would be likeler than vampires In no tume I'd settled down with a whiskey, doodling wiring diagrams, and only occasionally-like twinges of conscience-speculating on contactung the psychic investigation people

When the phone rang I was hardly prepared for it.
It was a confused, distant voice, gabbling desperately, but I recognzed it as Pritchard "For God's sake, don't lose a second! Get here-lt's all hell on earth! Can't you hear 1t? My God, I'm going crazyl" And in the background I thought I was able to hear something A sort of bubbling, shushing "wah-wah" noise Indescribable But you hear some odd sounds on telephones at any tume
"Yes," I said, "I'll come immediately Why don't you all leave-" But the hine had gone dead

Probably I've never moved faster I scrambled out to the car with untred shoes flopping, though I remembered to grab a heavy stick in the hall-whatever use it was to be I drove like fury, heart belting, straight to "Minuke," expecting to see heaven knows what.

But everything looked stll and normal there The moon was up and I could see the whole place clearly Curtamed lights in the windows Not a sound. I rang. After a moment Pritchard opened the door He was quiet and seemed almost surprised to see me

I pushed mside "Well?" I said "What's happened?"
"Not a thing, so far," he said "That's why I didn't ex-pect-"

I felt suddenly angry. "Look here," I said, "what are you playing at? Seems to me that any hoaxing round here begns a lot nearer home than you'd have me believe" Then the penny dropped I saw by the fright in his face that he knew something had gone wrong That was the most horrible, sickening moment of the whole affair for me.
"Didn't you ring?" I said.
And he shook his head.
T've been in some tight spots But there was always some concrete, actual business in hand to screw the mind safely down to I suppose panic is when the subconscious breaks loose and everything in your head dashes screamung out. It was only just in time that I found a touch of the concrete and actual A kiddie's pantbox on the floor, very watery.
"The chuldren," I said "Where are they?"
"Wife's just putting the little 'un to bed She's been restless to-might• just wouldn't go, crying and dufficult. Arthur's in the bathroom Look here, what's happened?"

I told hum, making it as short and matter of fact as I could He turned ghastly.
"Better get them dressed and out of here night away," I sard "Make some excuse, not to alarm them"

He'd gone before I finished speaking.
I smoked hard, trying to buld up the idea of "Hoax! Hoax!" in my mind. After all, it could have been But I knew it wasn't

Everytbing looked cosy and normal. Clock ticking Fire red and mellow Half-empty cocoa mug on the table The sound of the sea from beyond the road I went through to the kitchen. The dog was there, lookng up from its sleep-ing-basket under the snk. "Good dog," I sald, and it wriggled its tal

Prtchard came in from the hall. He jumped when he saw me
"Gettang nervyl" he said "They won't be long I don't know where we can go if we-well, if we have to-to leave tomght-"
"My car's outside," I told him "Ill fix you up Look here, did you ever 'hear things'? Odd nowes?" I hadn't told hum that part of the telephone call

He looked at me so oddly I thought he was going to collapse.
"I don't know," he said. "Can you?"
"At this moment?"
I listened
"No," I sald "The clock on the shelf The sea. Nothing else No"
"The sea," he sard, barely whispenng. "But you can't hear the sea in this katchen!"
He was close to me m an instant. Absolutely ternfied. "Yes, I have heard thus before! I thenk we all have I sard it was the sea so as not to frighten them But it isn't. And I recognized it when I came in here just now That's what made me start. It's getung louder it does that."

He was right. Like slow breathing It seemed to emanate from unside the walls, not at a particular spot, but everywhere We went into the hall, then the front room it was the same there Muxed with it now was a sort of thin crying
"That's Nelle," Pritchard sard. "The dog she always whumpers when it's on-too scared to howl My God, I've never heard it as loud as this before!"
"Hurry them up, will you!" I almost shouted He went. The "breathung" was ghastly Slobbering Stertorous, I thunk the term is And faster Oh, yes, I recognuzed it. The background music to the phone message My skin was pure ice
"Come along!" I yelled I switched on the little radio to drown the noise "The old National Program, as it was in those days, for late dance music Believe it or not, what came tbrough that loudspeaker was the same vile sighing noise, at double the volume And when I tried to switch off, it stayed the same

The whole bungalow was trembling The Prtchards came
running in, she carrying the little grl. "Get them into the car," I shouted We heard glass smashing somewhere

Above our heads there was an almighty thump Plaster showered down

Halfway out of the door the little girl screamed, "Nelliel Where's Nellie? Nellie, Nellie'"
"The dog'" Pritchard moaned "Oh, curse it!" He dragged them outside. I dived for the kitchen, where I'd seen the animal, feeling a lunatic for doing it. Plaster was springing out of the walls in painful showers

In the kutchen I found water everywhere One tap was squirting like a fire hose. The other was missing, water belching across the window from a torn end of pipe.
'Nellel" I called.
Then I saw the dog It was lying near the oven, quite suff. Round its neck was twisted a piece of painted piping with the other tap on the end

Sheer funk got me then. The ground was moving under me I bolted down the hall, nearly bumped into Pritchard. I yelled and shoved. I could actually feel the house at my back.

We got outside The noise was luke a dreadful snoring, with rumbles and crashes thrown in One of the lights went out. "Nellie's run away," I said, and we all got minto the car, the kids bawling I started up. People were coming out of the other bungalows-they're pretty far apart and the din was just beginning to make itself felt. Pritchard mumbled, 'We can stop now Think it'd be safe to go back and grab some of the furniture?" As if he was at a fire, but I don't think he knew what he was doing
"Daddy-look!" screeched the boy.
We saw 1t. The chimney of "Minuke" was going up in a horrible way In the moonlight it seemed to grow, quite slowly, to about sıxty feet, like a grant crooked finger And then-burst. I heard bricks thumping down. Somewhere somebody screamed.

There was a glare like an ungodly great lightung-flash. It lasted for a second or so.

Of course we were dazzled, but I thought I saw the whole of "Minuke" fall suddenly and mstantaneously flat, like_ a
swatted fly. I probably did, because that's what happened, anyway

There isn't much more to tell
Nobody was really hurt, and we were able to put down the whole thing to a serious electrical fault Man fuses had blown throughout the whole district, which helped this theory out Perhaps it was unfortunate in another respect, because a lot of people changed over to gas

There wasn't much recognizable left of "Minuke" But some of the bits were rather unusual Knots in pipes, for instance-I bursed what was left of the dog myself Wood and brich cleanly sliced Small quantities of completcly powdered metal The bath had been squashed flat, like tinfoll In fact, Pritchard was luchy to land the insurance money for his furniture

My professional problem, of course, remained The plot where the wretched place had stood I managed to persuade the owner it wasn't ideal for building on Incidentally, lifting those stones might reveal something to somebody some day-but not to me, thank you!

I think my eventual solution showed a touch of wit I let it very cheaply as scrap-metal dump

Well? I know I've never been able to make any sense out of it. I hate telling you all this stuff, because it must make me seem etther a simpleton or a charlatan In so far as there's any circumstantial evidence in looking at the place, you can see it in a moment or two Here's the coast road ...

The car pulled up at a bare spot beyond a sparse line of bungalows The space was marked by a stragghng, tufty square of prrvet bushes Inside I could see a tangle of rustung iron springs, a car chassis, oll drums
"The hedge keeps it from being too unsightly," said the estate agent, as we crossed to 1 t. "See-the remans of the gate"

A few half-rotten slats dangled from an upright One still bore part of a chrome-plated name "ML-" and, a little farther on, " K "
"Nothing worth seeing now," he sard I peered inside "Not that there ever was much-Look out!" I felt a violent
push In the same instant something zipped past my head and crashed against the car behind "My Godl Went right at you'" gasped the agent

It had shattered a window of the car and gone through the open door opposite We found it in the road beyond, sizzling on the Tarmac A beavy steel nut, white-hot
"I don't know about you," the estate agent sard, "but I'm rather in favor of getting out of here."

And we did Quickly.

## John Collier

## Bird of Prey

The house they call the Engineer's house is now deserted The new man from Baton Rouge gave it up after living less than a month in it, and built humself a two-room shack with his own moncy, on the very farthest corner of the company's land

The roof of the Enginecr's house has caved m, and most of the windows are broken. Oddly enough, no birds nest in the shelter of the eaves, or take advantage of the forsaken rooms An empty house is normally fine harborage for rats and muce and bats, but there is no squeak or rustle or scamper to disturb the quiet of this one Only creatures utterly foreign, utterly remote from the most distant cousinhood to man, only the termute, the tarantula, and the scorpion indifferently make it their home

All in a few years Edna Spalding's garden has been wiped out as if it had never existed The porch where she and Jack sat so happily in the evenngs is rotten under its load of wind-blown twigs and sand A young tree has already burst up the boards outside the living-room window, so that they fan out like the stiff fingers of someone who is afrad In tbus corner there stlll stands a strongly made parrot's perch, the wood of which has been left untouched even by the termite and the boring beetle

The Spaldings brought a parrot with them when first they came It was a sort of extra wedding present, given them at the last moment by Edna's mother It was something from home for Edna to take into the wilds

The parrot was already old, and he was called Tom, and, luke other parrots, he sat on his perch, and whistled and laughed and uttered bis few remarks, which were often very appropriate Edna and Jack were both very fond of him, and they were overwhelmingly fond of each other They luked
therr house, and the country, and Jack's colleagues, and everything in lufe seemed to be delightful.

One nught they had just fallen asleep when they were awakened by a tremendous squawking and fluttening outside on the porch. "Oh, Jack!" cried Edna. "Get up! Hurry! Run! It's one of those cats from the men's camp has got hold of poor Tom!"

Jack sprang out of bed, but caught his foot in the sheet; and landed on his elbow on the floor Between rubbing his elbow and disentangling his foot, he wasted a good many seconds before he was up again. Then he dashed through the living-room and out upon the porch.

All this time, which seemed an age, the squawking and fluttering increased, but as he flung open the door it ceased as suddenly as it had begun The whole porch was bathed in the brightest mooninght, and at the farther end the perch was clearly vsible, and on the floor beneath it was poor old Tom parrot, gasping amid a litter of his own feathers, and crying, "Oh! Oh! Oh!"

At any rate he was alive Jack looked right and left for traces of his assallant, and at once noticed the long, heavy tralers of the trumpet vine were swinging violently, although there was not a breath of wind. He went to the ral and looked out and around, but there was no sign of a cat. Of course, it was not lakely there would be. Jack was more interested in the fact that the swaying vines werc spread over a length of several feet, which seemed a very great deal of disturbance for a flecing cat to make Finally be looked up, and he thought he saw a bird-a big bird, an enormous bird-flying away He just caught a glompse of it as it crossed the brightness of the moon.

He turned back and picked up old Tom The poor parrot's chain was broken, and his heart was pounding away like mad, and stll, like a creature hurt and shocked beyond all endurance, he cried, "Oh! Ohl Ohl"

This was all the more odd, for it was seldom the old fellow came out with a new phrase, and Jack would have laughed beartily, except it sounded too pathetic So he carefully examined the poor bird, and finding no mjury beyond the loss of a handful of feathers from his neck, he replaced
him on the perch, and turned to reassure Edna, who now appeared in the doorway
"Is he dead?" cried she
"No," said Jack. "He's had a bit of shock, though Something got hold of him "
"I'll bring him a prece of sugar," said Edna "That's what he loves That'll make hum fcel better "

She soon brought the sugar, which Tom took in his claw, but though usually he would mibble it up with the greatest avidity, this time he turned his lack-lustre eye only once upon it, and gave a short, bitter, despairing sort of laugh, and let it fall to the ground
"Let him rest," said Jack "He has had a bad touslıng"
"It was a cat," sard Edna "It was one of those beastly cats the men have at the camp "
"Maybe," said Jack "On the other hand-I don't know I thought I saw an enormous bird flying away "
"It couldn't be an eagle," sand Edna "There are none ever seen here"
"I know," sard Jack "Besides, they don't fly at night. Nor do the buzzards It might have been an owl, I suppose But-"
"But what?" sard Edna
"But it looked very much larger than an owl," said Jack.
"It was your fancy," said Edna "It was one of those beastly cats that did it"

This point was discussed very frequently during the next few days Everybody was consulted, and everybody had an opinion Jack might have been a little doubtful at first, for he had caught only the briefest glimpse as the creature crossed the moon, but opposition made him more certan, and the discussions sometimes got rather heated
"Charlie says it was all your imagination," said Edna. "He says no owl would ever attack a parrot."
"How the devil does he know?" said Jack. "Besides, I said it was bigger than an owl"
"He says that shows you ımagine things," said Edna.
"Perhaps he would like me to think I do," said Jack "Perhaps you both would"
"Oh, Jack!" cried Edna She was deeply hurt, and not without reason, for it showed that Jack was still thinking
of a ridiculous mistake he had made, a real mistake, of the sort that young husbands sometumes do make, when they come suddenly into a room and people are startled without any real reason for it Charke was young and free and easy and good-looking, and he would put his hand on your shoulder without even thinking about it, and nobody minded.
"I should not have said that," sand Jack.
'No, indeed you shouldn't," sard Edna, and she was nght.
The parrot said nothing at all All these days he had been moping and alling, and seemed to have forgotten even how to ask for sugar. He only groaned and moaned to himself, ruffled up his feathers, and every now and then shook his head in the most rueful, miserable way you can possibly imagine.

One day, however, when Jack came home from work, Edna put her finger to her lips and beckoned hum to the window "Watch Tom," she whispered

Jack peered out. There was the old bird, lugubriously climbing down from his perch and picking some dead stalks from the vine, which he carned up till he ganned a corner where the balustrade ran into the wall, and added his gatherings to others that were already there He trod round and round, twisted his stalks in and out, and, always with the same doleful expression, pard great attention to the mice disposition of a feather or two, a prece of wood, a fragment of cellophane There was no doubt about it.
"There's no doubt about th," said Jack.
"He's making a nestl" cried Edna
"Hel" cried Jack. "Hel I like that. The old impostor! The old male impersonator! She's going to lay an egg Thom-asina-that's her name from now on."

Thomasina it was Two or three days later the matter was settled beyond the shadow of a doubt There, one morn10g, in the ramshackle nest, was an egg
"I thought she was stck because of that shaking she got," sadd Jack. "She was broody, that's all."
"It's a monstrous egg," said Edna. "Poor birdie!"
"What do you expect, after God knows how many years?" said Jack, laughing "Some birds lay eggs nearly as big as
themselves-the kiwi or something Stull, I must admut it's a whopper"
"She doesn't look well," sard Edna
Indeed, the old parrot looked almost as sick as a parrot can be, which is scveral tumes sicker than any other living creature Her eyes closed up, her head sank, and if a finger was put out to scratch her she turned ber beak miserably away However, she sat conscientiously on the prodigious egg she had laid, though every day she seemed a little feebler tban before
"Perhaps we ought to tahe the egg away," said Jack "We could get it blown, and heep it as a memento"
"No," sard Edna. "Let her have it. It's all she's had in all these years"

Here Edna made a mistake, and she realized it a few mornings later "Jack," she called "Do come It's TomThomasina, I mean I'm afraid she's going to die "
"We ought to have taken the egg away," sard Jack, coming out with his mouth full of breakfast. "She's exhausted herself It's no good, anyway It's bound to be sterile"
"Look at her'" cried Edna
"She's done for," said Jack, and at that moment the poor old bird keeled over and gasped her last.
"The egg killed her," sard Jack, prcking it up "I sard it would Do you want to keep it? Oh, good Lord!" He put the egg down very quickly "It's alive," he sard
"What?" said Edna "What do you mean?"
"It gave me a turn," sald Jack "It's most extraordinary It's against nature There's a chick inside that egg, tapping"
"Let it out," said Edna "Break the shell."
"I was rıght," said Jack. "It was a burd I saw It must have been a stray parrot Only it looked so big"
"I'm going to break the shell with a spoon," sard Edna, running to fetch one
"It'll be a lucky bird," said Jack when she returned "Born with a silver spoon in its beak, so to speak. Be careful."
"I will," said Edna. "Oh, I do hope it lives!"
With that she gingerly cracked the shell, the tapping mcreased, and soon they saw a well-developed beak tearing its way through. In another moment the chick was born.
"Golly!" cried Jack. "What a monster!"
"It's because tt's young," said Edna. "It'll grow lovely. Like its mother."
"Maybe," said Jack. "I must be off. Put it in the nest. Feed it pap. Keep it warm. Don't monkey with it too much. Good-bye, my love"

That morning Jack telephoned home two or three times to find out how the chick was, and if it ate He rushed home at lunchtime. In the evening everyone came round to peep at the nestling and offer advice

Charlie was there "It ought to be fed every hour at least," said he. "That's how it is in nature."
"He's nght" said Jack. "For the first month at least, that's how it should be."
"It looks as if I'm going to be tred down a bit," sard Edna ruefully.
"I'll look in when I pass and relieve your solitude," said Charlie.
"I'll manage to rush home now and then in the afternoons," said Jack, a little too thoughtfully.

Certainly the hourly feeding seemed to agree with the chick, which grew at an almost alarming speed. It became covered with down, feathers sprouted, in a few months it was fully grown, and not in the least luke its mother. For one thing, it was coal-black.
"It must be a hybrid," said Jack. "There is a black parrot; Tve seen them in zoos They didn't look much like this, though I've half a mind to send a photograph of hum somewhere"
"He looks so wricked," said Edna.
"He looks cunning," sard Jack. "That bird knows everything, believe me I bet he'll talk soon."
"It gave a sort of laugh," sard Edna. "I forgot to tell you."
"When?" cried Jack. "A laugh?"
"Sort of," said Edna. "But it was horrible It made Charlie nearly jump out of his skin"
"Charlie?" cried Jack. "You didn't say he'd been here"
"Well, you know how often he drops in," sald Edna.
"Do I?" sald Jack "I hope I do God! What was that?"
"That's 'what I meant," sard Edna "A sort of laugh"
"What a horrible sound"' sard Jack
"Listen, Jack," said Edna "I wish you wouldn't be silly about Charlie You are, you know"

Jack looked at her "I know I am," said he "I know it when I look at you And then I thunk I never will be agan But somehow it's got stuck in my mind, and the least little thing brings it on Maybe I'm just a bit crazy, on that one subject"
"Well, he'll be transferred soon," sadd Edna. "And that'll be the end of it "
"Where did you hear that?" sald Jack.
"He told me this afternoon," said Edna "He was on his way back from getting the mail when he dropped in That's why he told me first Otherwise he'd have told you first. Only he hasn't seen you yet Do you see?"
"Yes, I see," said Jack. "I wish I could be psychoanalyzed or something "

Soon Charle made hus farewells, and departed for his job on the company's other project Edna was secretly glad to see him go She wanted no problems, however groundless, to exist between herself and Jack A few days later she felt sure that all the problems were solved for ever
"Jack," sald she when he came home in the evening
"Yes," sald he
"Something new," said she "Don't play with that bird. Listen to me"
"Call him Polly," sad Jack. They had named it Polly to be on the safe side "You don't want to call him 'that bird.' The missus doesn't love you, Poll "
"Do you know, I don'tl" said Edna, with quite startling vehemence "I don't like hum at all, Jack Let's give hum away "
"What? For heaven's sake!" cried Jack 'Thus rare, black, specially hatched Poll2 Thus parrot of romantic origin? The cleverest Poll that ever-"
"That's it," said Edna. "He's too darned clever Jack, I hate him. He's horrible"
"What? Has be said something you don't like?" said Jack, laughing "I bet he will, when he talks. But what's the news, anyway?"
"Come mside," said Edna "I'm not going to tell you with that creature listening" She led the way into the bedroom. "The news is," sald she, "that I've got to be humoured. And if I don't like anything, it's got to be given away It's not going to be born with a beak because its mother was frightened by a hateful monstrosity of a parrot."
"What?" said Jack.
"That's what," said Edna, smiling and nodding.
"A brat?" cried Jack in delight. "A boy! Or a girl! It's bound to be one or the other Listen, I was afraid to tell you how much I wanted one, Edna Oh, boy! This is gomg to make everything very, very fine Lie down. You're delicate Put your feet up I'm going to fix dinner. Thus is practice Stay still Oh, boy! Oh, boy! Or girl as the case may bel"

He went out through the living-room on has way to the kitchen. As he passed the window he caught sight of the parrot on the dark porch outside, and he put his head through to speak to it.
"Have you heard the news?" said he. "Behold a father! You're going to be cut right out, my bird. You're going to be given away Yes, sir, it's a baby."

The parrot gave a long low whistle. "You don't say so?" said he in a husky voice, a voice of apprehension, a quite astonishing imitation of Charle's voice. "What about Jack?"
"What's that?" sard Jack, startled.
"He'll think it's his," whispered the parrot in Edna's voice. "He's fool enough for anything Kiss me, darling. Phew-w-w! You don't say so? What about Jack? He'll think it's his, he's fool enough for arything. Kiss me, darling Phew-w-wl"

Jack went out into the kitchen, and sat down with his head in his hands for several minutes.
"Hurry upl" cried Edna from the bedroom. "Hurry upFather!"
"I'm coming," sard Jack.
He went to his desk, and took out the revolver. Then he went into the bedroom

At the sound of the cry and the shot, the parrot laughed

Then, lifting its claw, it took the chain in its beak, and bit through it as if it were paper

Jack came out, holding the gun, his hand over his eyes "Fool enough for anything!" said the parrot, and laughed.

Jack turned the gun on himself As he did so, in the infinitesimal interval between the beginning and the end of the movement of his finger on the trigger, he saw the bird grow, spread its dark wings, and its eyes flamed, and it changed, and it launched itself toward hım.

The gun went off Jack dropped to the floor The parrot, or whatever it was, sailing down, seized what came out of his ruined mouth, and wheeled back through the window, and was soon far away, visible for a moment only as it swept on broader wings past the new-risen moon.

## David H. Keller

## The Thing in the Cellar

It was a large cellar, entirely out of proportion to the house above it The owner admitted that it was probably built for a distinctly different kind of structure from the one which rose above it Probably the first house had been burned, and poverty had caused a diminution of the dwelling erected to take its place

A winding stone starway connected the cellar with the kitchen Around the base of this series of steps successive owners of the house had placed their firewood, winter vegetables, and junk The junk had gradually been pushed back till it rose, head high, in a barricade of uselessness What was back of that barncade no one knew and no one cared For some hundreds of years no one had crossed it to penetrate to the black reaches of the cellar behind

At the top of the steps, separating the kitchen from the cellar, was a stout oaken door This door was, in a way, as pecular and out of relation to the rest of the house as the cellar It was a strange kind of door to find in a modern house, and certanly a most unusual door to find in the inside of the house-thick, stoutly bult, dexterously rabbeted together, with huge wrought-iron hinges, and a lock that looked as though it came from Castle Despair Separating a house from the outside world, such a door would be excusable, swinging between kitchen and cellar, it seemed peculiarly inappropriate

From the earliest months of his life Tommy Tucker seemed unhappy in the kitchen in the front parlor, in the formal dining-room, and especially on the second floor of the house he acted like a normal, healthy child, but carry him to the kitchen, and he began at once to cry His parents, being plain people, ate in the kitchen save when they had company Beang poor, Mrs Tucker did most of her work, though occasionally she had a charwoman in to do the extra Satur266
day cleaning, and thus much of her tume was spent in the kutchen Tommy stayed with her, at least as long as he was unable to walk. Much of the time he was decidedly unhappy.

When Tommy learned to crawl, he lost no tome in leaving the kitchen. No sooner was his mother's back turned than the little fellow crawled as fast as he could for the doorway opening into the front of the house, the dining-room, and the front parlor Once away from the katchen he seemed happy, at least he ceased to cry On being returned to the kitchen his howls so thoroughly convinced the neighbors that he had colic that more than one bowl of catnup and sage tea were brought to hum.
It was not until the boy learned to talk that the Tuckers had any idea as to what made hum cry so hard when he was in the kitchen. He had to suffer for months until he obtanned a little relief, and even when he told his parents what was the matter they were absolutely unable to comprehend Thus is not to be wondered at, because they were both hard-working, rather simple-minded persons

What they finally learned from therr little son was this that if the cellar door was shut and securely fastened with the heavy iron lock, Tommy could at least eat a meal in peace, if the door was simply closed and not locked, he shivered with fear, but kept quet, but if the door stood open, if even the slightest streak of black showed that it was not tughtly shut, then the little three-year-old would scream humself to the point of exhaustion, especially if his father would refuse hum permussion to leave the kitchen.
Playing in the katchen, the child developed two interesting habits Rags, scraps of paper, and splenters of wood were contunually being pushed under the thick oak door to fill the space between the door and the sill Whenever Mrs Tucker opened the door, there was always some trash there, placed by her son It annoyed her, and more than once the little fellow was spanked for this conduct, but punshment acted mn no way as a deterrent. The other habit was as singular Once the door was closed and locked, he would rather boldly walk over to it and caress the old lock. Even when he was so small that he had to stand on tiptoe to
touch it with the tips of his fingers he would touch it with slow caressing strokes; later on, as he grew, he used to kiss 1t

His father, who only saw the boy at the end of the day, decided that there was no sense in such conduct, and in his masculine way tried to break the lad of his foolishness There was, of necessity, no effort on the part of the hard-working man to understand the psychology back of his son's conduct. All that the man knew was that his little son was acting in a way that was decidedly queer.

Tommy loved his mother, and was willing to do anything he could to help her in the household tasks, but one thing he would not do, and never did do, and that was to fetch and carry between the house and the cellar If his mother opened the door he would run screaming from the room, and he never returned voluntanly until he was assured that the door was closed.

He never explaned just why he acted as he did In fact, he refused to talk about it, at least to his parents, and that was just as well, because had he done so they would sumply have been more positive than ever that there was something wrong with their only child They tried, in their own way, to break the child of his unusual habits; failing to change him at all, they decided to ignore his peculianties

That is, they ignored them until he was six years old and the time came for hum to go to school He was a sturdy little chap by that time, and more intelligent than the average boy beginning in the prmary class. Mr. Tucker was at times proud of him, the child's attitude toward the cellar door was the one thing most disturbing to the father's pride Finally nothing would do but that the Tucker family call on the neighborhood physician. It was an important event in the life of the Tuckers
"The matter is just this, Dr. Hawthorn," said Mr Tucker in a somewhat embarrassed manner. "Our little Tommy is old enough to start school, but he behaves childishly in regard to our cellar, and the missus and I thought you could tell us what to do about it. It must be his nerves"
"Ever since he was a baby," added Mrs Tucker, taking up the thread of conversation where her husband had paused.
"Tommy has had a great fear of the cellar Even now, big boy that he is, he doesn't love me enough to fetch and carry for me through that door and down those steps It's not natural for a child to act like he does, and what with chinking the cracks with rags and kissing the lock, he drives me to the point where I fear he may become daft as he grows older"

The doctor, eager to satisfy his customers, and dimly remembering some lectures on the nervous system recerved when he was a medical student, asked some general questions, listened to the boy's heart, examned his lungs, and looked at his eyes and fingernalls
"Looks like a fine, healthy boy, to me," he said at last.
"Yes, all except the cellar door," replued the father.
"Has he ever been sick?"
"Naught but fits once or twice when he cried himself blue in the face," answered the mother.
"Frıghtened?"
"Perhaps It was always in the kitchen"
"Suppose you go out and let me talk to Tommy by myself?"
And there sat the doctor very much at his ease, and the little six-year-old boy very uneasy
"Tommy, what is in the cellar you're afraid of?"
"I don't know"
"Have you ever seen it?"
"No, sir"
"Ever heard 1t? Smelt 1t?"
"No, sur."
"Then how do you know something is there?"
"Because there is"
That was as far as Tommy would go, and at last his seeming obstunacy annoyed the physician even as it had for several years annoyed Mr. Tucker. He went to the door and called the parents into the room.
"He thinks there's something down in the cellar," he sand. The Tuckers simply looked at each other "That's foolsh," answered Mr. Tucker finally.
"It's just a plann cellar with junk and firewood and cider barrels in 1t," added Mrs Tucker "Since we moved into that house I haven't missed a day without going down those stone steps, and I know nothing's there But the lad has
always screamed when the door was open I recall now that since he was a child in arms he has always screamed when that door was open"
"He thinks there's something there," repeated the doctor
"That's why we asked you to see hum," repled the father. "It's the chuld's nerves"
"I'll tell you what to do," advised the doctor "He thinks there's something there Just as soon as he finds that he's wrong and that there's nothing there, he'll forget about it. He has been humored too much. What you want to do is to open that cellar door and make hum stay by hımself in the kutchen Nail the door open so he can't close it. Leave hum alone there for an hour, and then go and laugh at hum and show hum how silly it was for hum to be afraid of an empty cellar I'll give you some nerve and blood tonic and that will help, but the big thing is to show him there's nothong to be afrad of "

On the way back to the Tucker home Tommy broke away from his parents. They caught him after an excitıng chase, and kept hum between them the rest of the way home Once in the house he disappeared, only to be found in the guestroom under the bed The afternoon being already spoiled for Mr. Tucker, he determined to keep the child under observation for the rest of the day. Tommy ate no supper, in spite of the urgngs of the unhappy mother The dishes were washed, the evening paper read, the evening pipe smoked, and then Mr Tucker took down his tool-box and got out a hammer and some long nails
"And I'm going to nall the door open, Tommy, so you can't close it, as that was what the doctor sald, and you're to be a man and stay here in the kitchen alone for an hour. We'll leave the lamp burning, and then when you find there's nothing to be afraid of, you'll be well and a real man and not a son for a father to be ashamed of "

But at the last Mrs Tucker kissed Tommy and cried and whispered to her husband not to do 1t, and to wait untll the boy was larger, but nothing was to do except to nal the thick door open so it could not be shut, and leave the boy there alone with the lamp burning and the dark open space
of the doorway to look at with eyes that grew as hot and burning as the flame of the lamp

That same day Dr Hawthorn took supper with a classmate of his, a man who specialized in psychiatry, and who was particularly interested in children. Hawthorn told Johnson about his newest case, the little Tucker boy, and asked him for his opinion. Johnson frowned
"Chldren are odd, Hawthorn. Perhaps they are hke dogs It may be therr nervous system is more acute than in the adult We know that our eyesight is limited, also our hearing, and smell. I firmly believe that there are forms of life which exist in such a form that we can nether see, hear, nor smell them. Fondly we delude ourselves into the fallacy of believng that they don't exist because we can't prove their existence This Tucker lad may be pecularly acute He may dimly appreciate the existence of something in the cellar which is unappreciable to his parents Evidently there's some basis to this fear of his Now I'm not saying there is anything in the cellar In fact, I suppose it's just an ordinary cellar, but this boy, since he was a baby, has thought that there was something there, and that's just as bad as though there actually were What I would like to know is, what makes hum think so? Give me the address, and I'll call tomorrow and have a talk with the little fellow"
"What do you think of my advice?"
"Sorry, old man, but I think it was perfectly rotten If I were you I would stop round there on my way home and prevent them from following it The little fellow may be badly frightened. You see, he evidently thinks there's somethang there"
'But there isn't."
"Perhaps not. No doubt he's wrong, but he thinks so"
It worned Dr Hawthorn so much that he decided to take his friend's advice It wàs a cold, foggy night, and the physician was cold as he tramped along the streets, but at last he came to the Tucker house He remembered now that he had been there once before, long ago, when little

Tommy Tucker came into the world There was a light in the front window, and in no time at all Mr. Tucker came to the door.
"I've come to see Tommy," said the doctor.
"He's back in the kitchen," repled the father.
"He gave one cry, but snnce then he's been quet," sobbed Mrs Tucker
"If I'd let her have her way she would have opened the door, but I sad to her, 'Mother, now's the time to make a man out of our Tonmy' And I guess he knows by now that there was nothing to fear Well, the hour is up Suppose we go and get hum and put hum to bed?"
"It's been a hard time for the child," whispered Mrs. Tucker
Carrying the candle, the man walked ahead of the woman and the doctor, and at last opened the kutchen door The room was dark
"Lamp has gone out," sard the man "Wart until I light it." "Tommy! Tommy!" called Mrs Tucker
But the doctor ran to where a white form was stretched on the floor Sharply he called for more light. Trembling, he examuned all that was left of little Tommy Twitchng, he looked down the open space into the cellar At last he turned to Tucker and Tucker's wife
"Tommy-Tommy has been hurt. I guess be's dead" he stammered
The mother threw herself on the floor and picked up the torn, mutilated thing that had been, only a little while ago, her son
Tucker took his hammer, drew out the nalls and closed the door He locked it and drove in a long spike to renforce the lock Then he took hold of the doctor's shoulders and shook him
"What kulled hum, Doctor? What klled him?" he shouted at Hawthorn
The doctor looked at hum bravely in spite of the fear in his throat
"How do I know, Tucker?" he replied "How do I know? Didn't you tell me that there was nothng there? Nothing down there? In the cellar?"

## Will Jenkins

## Devil's Renchman

When Joe Burchard wore the witch ring from the outland country and fought with the devil in Ben Harper's body, the morning didn't start out any different from any other. The sun rose over the mountans, and the shadows were long and sprawling, and all the spider webs shone like diamonds The wind blew overhead, going from yonder to some other place Smoke from the cabins all up and down the valley streaked out long and low it was a mighty nice day to be twenty-one years old m, like Joe was He'd licked every man but one in a day's walking, and he'd courted and kissed every girl but two

He didn't know a thing about the witch ring that morning, though He sat on his granny's cabin and ate the breakfast she'd cooked hum He felt purely fine, like a body does when he's twenty-one and tall and broad and hasn't got a care in the world He breathed in, and it felt good. He breathed out, and it felt even better

His granny looked at hum sharp whilst he was eating his breakfast She'd been a witching woman once and she could see more in a peek than most in a gape, and Joe was her only kin and she loved him like nobody but a granny is able to He had on his store-gong red wool shut and his Saturday pants That meant he'd be going down to Crowder's Store, where three roads crossed and the young men loafed around to show off to each other and the gris that came to the store with their ma's
"Huh'" says Joe's granny
"Dressed up! You alm to be kassing some young grl and fighting some young man thes morning I know the signs"

He granned at her "Now," he says, "the fella ann't so young He's Ben Harper And the gril-I ain't sure, but Letty Smith asked me to stop by her folks' cabin for a letter she'd luke to get mailed "

His granny thumped the floor with her stick, fretful.
"Foolish! Foolssh! Foolish!" she says "To you, it's fun, but Ben Harper's been craving Letty since she was old enough to look cornerways He wouldn't fight no fist fight with somebody he thought she favored! He's got black cyes and no lobes to his ears, and that's a sign he ain't no fist-fighting man He'll take to a knife or worse, he will""
"Shucks!" says Joe "There's the law, granny. Them days are long gone He'd as soon take to witching"
"He mught do that," says Joe's granny, peevish "You're young yet, honey. You don't know what can happen inside a man when a girl he craves laughs at him. And if a man's heart is wrong and his cravings hot, there's ways of turning to witchery But you, now-supposing you do kiss Letty at her folks' cabin and lick Ben Harper down to the store?"

Joe laughed, and he wiped his mouth
"Tbat's something I ain't figured out yet," he says.
His granny snapped, "There's Sally" Sally Walker was the only girl besides Letty in a day's walking that Joe hadn't courted and kissed, and Joe's granny thought a lot of Sally. But Joe didn't look up.
"No-0," says Joe "I've known her all my born days it wouldn't be no fun to court Sally or to kiss her She's pretty enough She's sweet She's a right nice grl But I just am't got a mind to her."

His granny says, angry, 'I was a witchin' woman once, before I got religion and marmed your grandpa. I know what's the matter You're scared Sally wouldn't luke you kussing her. You're-scared! I'd ought to do a little witchin'-"

Joe laughed and he got up and he went over and gave his granny a hug
"You wouldn't witch me," he says
"I wouldn't witch nobody," says his granny, peevsh. "I promised your grandpa and I promised the Lord Else I'd show you Go along with you"

She gave him a shove and he laughed again and went over to the mirror that his granny kept tacked up on the wall. It was a sign and a reminder of what she'd given up, because a witching woman can't abide a murror Joe bent down to look in it, and he took a comb and be parted $h_{1 s}$ straight
black hair because he'd be stopping by Letty's folks' cabin, and she'd be there by her lone

Then he went out of the cabin and striding on his way, and the sun was shining bright and a bobwhite called somewheres off in the woods, and the sky was so blue even a young man had to notice it It felt purely good to be alive and young and a-walking to kiss a grl another man pined for, and fight that man and lick him after Joe didn't take his granny's fussing serious She'd got religion and marned Joe's grandpa and he was watting for her over Jordan and she wouldn't disappoint him. So Joe went on his way with nothing on his mind but the pleasure it was to be alive He didn't think about the witching ring, that's sure He didn't know there was such a thong

But presently he thought about Sally Her folks' cabin was the nearest to his granny's and when his own ma and pa died off while he was small he came to live with his granny He could remember Sally from when nether of them was knee-high to a duck And now he was grown-up, thinking of Sally gave him a queer kind of sad feeling, and a yearning feeling, and a scared feeling, too So he backed down from thanking about her as much as he could.

The speckled s̀hadows passed over as ne walked Birds charped and katydids whirred all about He went uphill and down, and all of a sudden he looked and there was Letty Smith's folks' cabin up above him and the gray rocks sticking out of the hullside all around And sudden-like he knew that he didn't want to kiss Letty, but he was bounden to He was going to fight Ben Harper, and Ben Harper craved Letty so bad that hus eyes shone wild when they looked at her, and he'd never got religion But she'd told Joe that her ma and her pa were going over the mountans to hear the new preacher and she'd have to stay home to look after the stock, and would he stop by to get a letter to mal for her down at Crowder,'s,

Joe stopped short and grunted to himself He kand of fumed, because all of a sudden he didn't care a thing about kissing Letty And that wasn't natural, with hum being twenty-one He caught humself thinkıng, "If it was Sally, now-" and then he thought suspicious of his granny. She could make hum feel this way if she liked. A spell muttered over a crumb of cornbread he'd eat the rest of out in the yard because of the mirror on the wall

But he knew his granny wouldn't witch him even for his own good She'd got relıgion years ago

So Joe took a deep breath and clımbed up the hillside, frowning to humself because it was funny he didn't want to kiss a pretty girl But still he wasn't thunking about witchery, and least of all about the witch nog.

He stepped over the stile and went across the pasture to the cabin There wasn't any noise but the chickens pecking and clucking and the wind above the Hollow. He opened his mouth to call, but the door opened and there was Letty looking at hum. Her hair was straggly and she wasn't primped up She looked white and scared and half crazy with crying and grief She didn't say a word Her hands were shaking.
"What's the matter?" says Joe, uncomfortable. "You sick?"
She didn't say a word, just looked at him implonng. And Joe felt queer

He says, suspicious, "You sure act funny, Letty. You act luke you was witched."

And that was what had to be said before Letty could speak She put her face in her hands and she moaned
"I $a m$ witchedl" she cned. "That's it, Joe-I aml"
Now, Joe wasn't scared of witchery luke some people, because his granny had told hum-and she'd ought to knowthat witchery hasn't got any power over a man unless his heart is wrong

So Joe says, curious, "How does it take you, Letty? How does it feel?"
"I'm pins and needles all over," says Letty, pitiful, "and I itch and $I$ ache to go to the one that's witched me, and nobody else can come near me without a pain in my heart and my breath stopping So don't come near me, Joe. I'm witched and if you do I'll fall down dead." But she cried, heartbroken.

Joe shifted his weight from one foot to the other. Letty looked mighty pituful, and she looked at him so pleading that

## DEVIL'S HENCIIMSAN

it was right much of a dare for a young man that was twentyone years old
"My granny says," says Joc, "that witchung ann't got any power if your heart's right "

Then Letty crsed harder
"I know," she says bitter "I know all that. But I've had hate in my heart a long tume I hated Ben Harper because he craved me to love him and he wasn't the right one I hated the guls you courted, because they wasn't me There's no harm telling you because I'm witched, but I've land awahe nughts think.ing of you and I-I-" She says, heartbroke, "I've tried to witch you to dream love dreams of me and that's give witchery the power over me And if you was to come near me now l'd have a pain in my heart and my breath would stop and I'd drop down dead "

Then she wrung her hands and cried desperate but her eyes went to him pleading And Joe shifted his weight back to the foot he'd been standing on before It's a mighty fine thing to be twenty-one, but Joe knew better than to fool with witchery He thought hard, fidgeting Letty'd been trymg to witch him into loving her, and that was what gave witchery the power over her, so she was witched because of him.

She was a pretty garl, too, when she wasn't eryng Joo knew better than to look too close, but he did hnow that she was thin where a girl had ought to be thin, and where a grl oughtn't to be, she wasn't She'd be nice to go buggy niding with or a-courting, but Joe hadn't ever thought of wanting to marry her
"Who witched you?" says Joe, unbappy "If I'm what made the trouble you're in, I'd ought to try to get you out."
"It's Ben Harper," says Letty "He boiled a black cat in a kettle and threw the bones in a running stream, and he gave up crossing over Jordan and a man came and told hum what to do He told me So I got to go to hum, Joe Please help me So long as he's living, unless he takes the witching off, Im suffering, and flesh and blood can't stand but so much!"

Then she twitched and she shivered and she gasped and
she panted like she was going to have a fit
Joc backed away, considerate, and he says, "I was figuring on seeing him down to the store today and he's the last man in a day's walking that I ann't licked But if he's been fooling with a black cat's bones and started witching, it ann't no ordinary flesh and blood can lick hm My granny-"
"She won't belp none," says Letty, a-wringing her hands. "She's got religion And there an't anything else can help me but Ben Harper dying or taking the witching off of me But you could make him, Joe There ann't anything I won't do for you, Joe, if only you'll do that for me!"
"You hold on," says Joe, "and I'll do 1 t. You go stand on a rock in a running stream. That'll weaken the witchery and I'll tend to Ben Harper."

And he turned and he left her. And first off he started straight for Ben's cabin, figurnng that Ben wouldn't be going to no store that Saturday morning if he'd put a spell on Letty so's she'd have to come to hum. Ben would be watting up in his cabin for his spell to work.

Then Joe began to realuze that if Ben was a witch it wouldn't do no good to go after hum alone, because, leaving out stronger witchery, there's just three things witching can't stand against. One's a purely good heart, and one's a bullet fired across still water, and one's the law and the Grand Jury. So Joe turned and headed back to talk to his granny. If tt'd been Sally that had been itching and aching and crying and wringng her hands because Ben Harper'd witched her, Joe wouldn't have turned aside He'd have gone straight to Ben Harper, and he'd have been raging, and somehow he'd've managed to kill Ben with his own bare hands before any spell could stop him. But thus was Letty, so it was different.

The sky didn't look so blue to hum, because he didn't see it. He thought about Letty, crying pitfful, and it was because of him that she'd been witched, and he thought about Sally Walker that may be Ben might turn his mind to witch some day.

He went tramping across the pasture and he went past the well. He stomped up on the porch and his eyes were hot and angry, and he went inside-and there was Sally Walker a-setthg and talking with his granny. She'd seen him start off to

Crowder's Store from her own folks' cabin up the mountamside, and she'd come over to visit.
The two of them, Sally and his granny, turned around and stared when Joe came stomping in

He says, furious, "Granny, Letty Smuth's been witched!"
Then the words poured out as he told them, raging, all about it. His granny snuffed
"Huh!" she says "When I was a witching woman, before I got religion, $I$ woulda handled this!"

Joe says, "It's on account of me, Granny! He couldn't have witched her, but her heart ann't been right on account of me! She's been hating the girls I courted and she tried witching me to make me dream love dreams of her She told me And that gave witchery the power over her. I can't let Letty go be a witch's woman on account of me"

His granny thumped her stick and looked at Sally, a-setting there white and pale and twisting her fingers in her lap as she looked at Joe Joe's granny says, "I told you he didn't have the sense he was born with!"

But she didn't move to do a thing And Joe says, fierce, "I know you won't do no witching, Granny So it looks like I got to get Ben Harper in my sights over stlll water And I got to do it right away I got to, Granny, because it's on account of me!"

His granny says, "What'll the law do? The sheriff don't pay no mind to witchin' They'll hang you, and it'd serve you right for fooling around like you been doing"
"I'll go on a journey, after," says Joe "They won't never catch me But I'd never sleep nights thinking of Letty as a witch's woman and a-cryng in the dark because she couldn't never pass over Jordan I got to do it, Granny I got tol"
"I promised," his granny says, peevish, "but Lord knows it's a temptation! Away back before there was any people living in this Hollow and before the ships come across the ocean to this land, the great-grandpappy of my grandpa was foolin' with witchery, and it's in the blood But I promisedand I amm 'to cros'ss over Jordan I won't do a thing "
"Then," says Joe, "Tll get my rifle Nothing else to do"
His granny thumped the fioor with her stick. "You, Joe!" she says, angry, "I didn't say I wouldn't tell you what to do

This is a witchin' family, and there's thungs come down from long ago Up in the attic there's one of them. When I burnt my witchin' thungs I wouldn't touch it because it couldn't be burnt, and after I got religion I wouldn't touch a witch thing excep' to burn it And it's full of penl. But if your heart is right, you can take it an' fight Ben Harper and he won't never be able to witch nobody any more."

Joe, he says, miserable, "I don't know how right my heart is, but I don't want a thing from Letty, not even a thank you All I want is to be able to sleep nughts and not think of somebody crynn' in the dark because they won't never cross over Jordan, and it my fault."

Joe's granny sniffs and says, "Go up in the attic," she says "High up where the bricks get narrow, and make a shelf. All the way in back there's a ron box. It's rusty and it's old. You fetch it herc."

Joe went and climbed up to the attic It was crowded with things from past tumes and long ago. There were boxes with quilts and comforters in them, and a spinning wheel Joc's granny had used when she was a girl, and what might've been a loom There was a old bed, all apart, and a fluntlock musket, and all the things that pile up in a attic when folks live in the same house for generations Joe had to step careful, but he got to the chimney, and he reached far back and up high, and he felt a little box all furry with cobwebs Something ran over his fingers when he sturred 1 t, but he brushed the cobwebs off and went back down stairs
"There's a ring in that box," says Joe's granny, gnm. "It's rusty because it's iron There's paper in the box hand writ, and there's no use tryn' to read it You go outside and put on the ring Then you can go fight Ben Harper and he can't do a thing to you by his witchun'. If you lick him, he won't never be able to witch no more But I'm warnin' you, don't never let anybody you love see you while you wear that ring!"

Then Sally spoke, for the only time Her voice, was shaky, "If he-puts it on-can he cross over Jordan after?"

Joe's granny snuffed "It's outland witchery," she says "My grandma warned me-she that was never happy again
after grandpa saw her wearin' the ring There's witchery that means tumn' your back to the Lord, and your heart has to be black to take pleasure in it. But there's witchery that has to be done with a good heart It's full of perd, because to feel sure your heart is right is presumin' before the Lord. I trust I'm gom' over Jordan, but I know I'm a schemin' old woman and I wouldn't never dare to put on that ring But Joe," she says, "he's bound and determined, and I wouldn't want to see hum hung even for shootn' a witch."

She looked at Joe, stern, and he went out of the house The box was iron, wrth desigus on $1 t$, and he had to hit it a couple of licks with the axhead before the top opened up reluctant. And there was a ring in it, like his granny had said, and there was paper in it-only it wasn't paper but luke rabbit skin with the fur off, and old and dry and yellow He could read the writing, but it was spelled funny and it didn't make sense at all
"By ye arte of alchymie," was what he made out, "I Thomas Dee, Doctor, have made ye nnge of vertie under ye signe of Saturne, but yt ys a sadde discouerie . . ."

Joe didn't try to read any more. He shut up the box and he put the nog on his finger It fitted pretty good.

He drdn't feel a mite dufferent untul he happened to look down at the ground. Then he was scared.

He shivered a minute and took the ring off fast. But then he thought about Letty all alone and itching and aching and cryng because she knew she couldn't hold out forever. So he started off toward Ben Harper's cabin, holding the ring tught.

It wasn't far beyond where Letty lived, and the way was near Tramping through the fallen leaves and pushing aside the bushes, it came to Joe Burchard that Letty'd be strengthened to fight the witchery if she knew his errand. So he turned aside a hittle and presently there was her folks' cabin on the hullside, with the gray rocks stickng up out of the earth all around. He stepped over the stule and up the sloping pasture, and when he was ten yards from the cabin he hollered.

There wasn't ány answer Not a sound but the clucking of the chickens and a bobwhite calling somewhere Joe hollered again.

Still no answer And then the sweat came out on Joe Burchard all over. It was plan enough Letty was tolin' over the hills to Ben Harper, crying and wringing her hands as she went because she couldn't help herself

Joe took out after her He went fast He carried the whtch ring in his hand, not on his finger, and he vaulted the rall fence of the pasture, and he went running over the slanting ground, and once he stumbled and went crashing into a dead tree that crumbled to dust when he hit it , and then he knew that witchery was workang on him to keep him from catching up to Letty to help her The rıng had fallen out of his hand

It took him minutes to find it again, and Lord knows if he'd been thinking anything but good he wouldn't never have found it at all He hunted and hunted desperate, and then he says, agonzed, "Lord, help Your servant, because I don't want to do this for myself, being the only gurl I purely care about is Sally But I'm the cause of Letty bein' witched-" And there was the witch ring before him, laying on the ground in plain sight He picked it up and put it on his finger and he run.

He flung through brushwood and he flung through braars He climbed up steep ways and he slid down slopes He waded waist-deep in hollows where the leaves had gathered, and he hauled himself up rockfalls by the vines that grew down over them He came to a place where the path led to Ben Harper's cabin He turned into that path and he run

He hadn't gone a quarter of a mile when he saw Letty She was moving along the path with her hands over her face, and she was crying bitter. There was sobbings that choked her, and sometumes she took down her hands from her face to wring them. And she was gasping, "I don't want to go I ann't goin'. I'm goin' to stop when I get to that bush. . . ; I'm a-gon' to set right down here an' not move a step

But she went right on walking, slow and heavy and leaning back and crying, like somebody trying to walk in a freshet Ben Harper's witching was strong!

Then Joe came up to her, panting, and he says, "Letty!"

And she turned her despairnng eyes to him, and she fell down on the path and hid her face She didn't know him. And Joe remembered that if he was to go near her she'd have a pain in her heart and her breath would stop. There couldn't nobody touch Letty but the one that had witched her And she didn't know Joe She lay on the ground, crying and shivering because she'd seen Joe Burchard with the witch ring on his finger, and she took on pruful. So Joe began to realze how perilous it was to wear this ning, but he went on.

He run on down the path before her, and he brushed tbrough briars and he pushed through brush, and there was Ben Harper's cabin. And Ben Harper sat on the steps before his door

His eyes gittered and the sunshine seemed to dodge falleng on him, and he was a strong, stout man and Joe had put him off to the last to lick, because lickang Ben Harper without no witchery would be a hard job But this was worse Joe knew right away that he wouldn't have no chance at all without the witch ring
Ben's eyes were ghttering and his mouth was slobbering and he was an awful sight to look at. He'd turned his back on the Lord to have Letty for his own in this life, and he knew she was coming to him. He was waitung for his reward for turning witch, and it was terrible to see But Joe knew, all of a sudden, that Ben wasn't alone, because nght there in his body with him, a-gloating over what Ben thought, a-sharing everything he saw and knew and felt, there was the devil. He was right there in Ben's body, possessing it, and Ben didn't know But Joe knew, for certain, and he felt almost sorry for Ben So it was Ben he spoke to
"Ben," he says, "look at my shadow."
Ben Harper looked-and the devil in his body looked, too Then he screeched And then he bounced up and come for Joe like a panther cornered in a henhouse will come for a man that opens the door The devil in Ben Harper's body knew that he'd got power over any creature that casts a shadow except a man or woman whose heart is night. But he knew, and Ben knew, too, that when somebody that don't cast a shadow stands before hum, it's tume for the ending of evil and
witchery, too And with the witch ring on hus finger, Joe didn't cast no shadow.

Ben Harper was a big man He wasn't as tall as Joc, but he was broader His legs were like tree trunks and his arms were thick with muscle His cyes glared hate, and his teeth showed like a snarling dog's, and he came panting to fight for his witchery and his meannesses and the pleasures he'd turned witch to have And the devil stayed in his body to help him Ben was fighting for Letty, wringing her hands and crying because she couldn't help herself from coming to him He was fighting for the devil like a preacher fights for the Lord, only he fought with fists and boots and fingers and teeth, biting and gouging and frothing at the mouth because he was fightung for what he'd give up crossing over Jordan for

And that was a fight! If it wasn't that the witch ring was a good fit on Joe Burchard's finger, Ben woulda got if off and trompled on it, and there would've been nothing left of Joe at all They fought on the tromped clear space before Ben's cabin door, and they fought in the brush beyond the clearing They fought into the rall fence around the pigsty, and they knocked it down and they fought in the mud and the mire and the hogs run squealing off into the pine thicket around

Once Ben got both hands around Joe's throat, and the misty dark shapes all around grew thicker and crowded close But Joe-with his eyes going black from lack of breath-managed to get hold of just one of Ben's fingers, and he bent it back and broke it, and Ben let go.

And presently they were up, beating at each other with their fists, gasping in each other's faces, and the blows they struck making smacking noises in the stillness that seemed to hold everywhere near by And Joe felt his knees weakening, and he lurched ahead and gripped Ben around the wast and flung bim to the ground, and then be pounded Ben's head on a mite of rock that stuck up out of the ground right there, and he hammered Ben's head on 1t, and he hammered and he hammered And Joe must've been mughty dazed by the fight-
ing he'd been through, because he sudden-like heard himself panting, "The Lord is my shepherd-" Thump! That was Ben's head on the rock "I shall not want" Thumpl "He leadeth me beside the still waters-" Thumpl

And then Ben give a monstrous shudder and lay still.
He wasn't dead, because he was still breathing, but his eyes were closed and his arms were limp and his fingers hung loose and empty There wasn't a quiver in hum when Joe got up, pantıng

He looked all around The sunshine played over everything plain and clear It shone on Ben Harper, and there wasn't any more mistiness anywhere Joe heard the birds singing He heard Ben's hogs grunting a little way off, so he panted a while and then heaved Ben up off the ground and carned hum into the cabin, so as not to leave him laying like dead for the hogs to find And in the cabin he saw Something that the devil must've told Ben Harper to make, and Joe Burchard felt mughty sick at his stomach But he kicked it to preces and flung it in the fireplace and stirred up the embers to make it burn And then he knew, from what his granny had told him, that Ben Harper couldn't never be a witch again, no matter what he did So he'd better try mighty hard to get religion.

Then Joe went out of the cabin and down the path He saw Letty Smith runnung away, swarming over fallen logs and running through the brush, with the witching off her so she didn't itch or ache or need to be fearful any more And she was crying stul, but it was with joy, and she'd get to somebody's cabin, crying with gladness, and get them to take her quick to a preacher so she could get religon and nevermore be like she'd been

But Joe, he headed back to his granny's It'd been a mighty hard fight. Where he wasn't scratched, he was black and blue Where he wasn't sore, he stung, and where he didn't sting he ached pretty bad And he was all wore out. But he started back for hus granny's and there was something that his mind clung to When Letty'd seen him, she cried out and fell down an' hid her face When Ben Harper saw him, he'd screeched and come desparng to fight. And his granny had
said for Joe never to let nobody he cared about see him with the ring on his finger That was a thing Joe had to find out about being he was twenty-one

When he came to his granny's cabin, he went past the well He went up on the porch and he went in the door And he turned to the mirror that his granny had tacked up on the wall for a proof and a reminder that she'd grve up all her witching ways He looked in that murror to see what he looked like that he had scared Letty so bad, and made Ben Harper screech and fight. He figured he was going to see something mighty fearful

But he didn't see a thing He looked right through his own image and at the wall behind him. He was invisible in the mirror like he didn't cast a shadow in the sun. He stood there, staring at the mirror that didn't show him back at all

Then his granny says, stern, "You Joe! Take off that there ring' Didn't I tell you not to let nobody see you with it on?"

Joe wrenched it off his finger, and he swallowed He turned. And there was Sally Walker still setting in the chair where she'd been visiting with his granny Joe groaned He stumbled to a charr, and he put bis face in his hands and felt like crying while his granny got up and went to get some rags and arnuca for the beating he'd got whilst he was licking Ben And Joe could've cried He was twenty-one years old and he'd licked every man in a day's walking and he'd fought the devil besides, that day, and he'd won. But Sally Walker'd seen hum with the witch ring on his finger and Joe didn't see any good in anything

Then she sard soft and anxious in his ear, "Joe, do you hurt bad anywheres?"

He jumped. He looked at her and she didn't look scared of him. She looked worried, but that was all And Joe felt so good at seeing that, he went plain out of his head.

His granny's stick, thumping on the floor, brought him back to where he was and made him stop what he was doing
"Huhl" says his granny, snıffing "Now you lıcked every man in a day's walking and kissed every grl but one! Now What're you goin' to do?"

And Joe Burchard grinned like his throat would split, and he didn't mind the hurt at all. He held Sally Walker close and
he says, "Granny, I rechon I'm going to settle down an' get married"

And he did And it was a long time before he learned any more about the witch ring His granny wouldn't talh about it, and Sally didn't know, but it stayed in Joc's mind And one day his granny took sick and she loohed triumphant because she'd kept her promise to Joc's grandpa and to the Lord, and she knew she'd be going over Jordan So she lay in her bed, and Joe says
"Granny," he says, "if you don't tell me I'll never hnow, and till I hnow I'll fret. When I was wearing that witch ring I scared Letty Smith and I scared Ben Harper, but when I looked in that mirror I looked right through my amage and I couldn't see myself at all How come?"

His granny grinned at bum, laying there in the bed, watting to pass over Jordan
"Huh'" she says "That ring is perilous, honcy, because it makes folks see you like you really are That's what Letty and Ben Harper saw But no man can't never see lumself luke he really 1 s , so you couldn't see a dawgoned thing!"
And Joe, he thought it over, and he says, "But you and Sally, you saw me with the witch ring on! You saw me like I really was, and it didn't scare neither of you "
But hus granny just snuffed at him, while she looked at him soft-just as soft as Sally ever did And she says, "You won't understand, honey But we was two women that purely loved you So it didn't matter a bit."

And Joe's granny was right. He didn't understand Never tull the day he died.

## M. R. James

## Lost Hearis

It was, as far as I can ascertain, in September of the year 1811 that a post-chaise drew up before the door of Aswarby Hall, in the heart of Lincolnshire. The little boy who was the only passenger in the chase, and who jumped out as soon as it had stopped, looked about him with the keenest curnosity during the short interval that clapsed between the ringing of the bell and the opening of the hall door He saw a tall, square, red-brick house, built in the resgn of Anne, a stone-pillared porch had been added in the purer classical style of 1790, the windows of the house were many, tall and narrow, with small panes and thick white woodwork A pediment, pierced with a round window, crowned the front There were wings to right and left, connected by curious glazed galleries, supported by colonnades, with the central block. These wings plannly contaned the stables and offices of the house Each was surmounted by an ornamental cupola with a gilded vane

An evening light shone on the bulding, making the windowpanes glow luke so many fires Away from the Hall in front stretched a flat park studded with oaks and fringed with firs, which stood out against the sky. The clock in the churchtower, buried in trees on the edge of the park, only its golden weathercock catching the light, was striking six, and the sound came gently beating down the wind It was altogether a pleasant impression, though tinged with the sort of melancholy appropriate to an evening in early autumn, that was conveyed to the mind of the boy who was standing in the porch wating for the door to open to him

The post-chase had brought him from Warwicksbure, where, some six months before, he had been left an orphan Now, owing to the generous offer of his elderly cousm, Mr Abney, he had come to live at Aswarby. The offer was unexpected, because all who knew anything of Mr. Abney 288
looked upon him as a somewhat austere recluse, into whose steady-going houschold the advent of a small boy would umport a new and, it seemed, incongruous element The truth is that very little was known of Mr Abney's pursuits or temper The Professor of Greeh at Cambridge had been heard to say that no one knew more of the religious beliefs of the later pagans than did the owner of Aswarby Certainly his lubrary contained all the then avarlable books bearing on the Mysteries, the Orphic poems, the worship of Mithras, and the Neo-Platonists In the marble-paved ball stood a fine group of Mithras slaying a bull, which had been imported from the Levant at great expense by the owner. He had contributed a description of it to the Gentleman's Magazine, and he had written a remarkable senies of articles in the Crutical Museum on the superstitions of the Romans of the Lower Empire He was looked upon, in fine, as a man wrapped up in his books, and it was a matter of great surprise among his neighbours that be should even have heard of his orphan cousin, Stephen Elloth, much more that he should have volunteered to make him an inmate of Aswarby Hall

Whatever may have been expected by his neighbours, it is certain that Mr Abney-the tall, the thin, the austereseemed melined to give his young cousin a kindly reception The moment the front door was opened he darted out of his study, rubbing his hands with delight.
"How are you, my boy?-how are you? How old are you?" sald he-"that is, you are not too much tired, I hope, by your journey to eat your supper?"
"No, thank you, sir," said Master Elloott, "I am pretty well."
"That's a good lad," said Mr Abney "And how old are you, my boy?"

It seemed a little odd that he should have asked the question twice in the first two minutes of ther acquantance
"I'm twelve years old next birthday, sir," sard Stephen
"And when is your birthday, my dear boy? Eleventh of September, eh? That's well-that's very well Nearly a year hence, isn't it? I like-ha, hal-I like to get these things down in my book. Sure it's twelve? Certam?"
"Yes, quite sure, sir."
"Well, well' Take him to Mrs Bunch's room, Parkes, and let him have his tea-supper-whatever it is"
"Yes, sir," answered the stand Mr. Parkes, and conducted Stephen to the lower regions

Mrs Bunch was the most comfortable and human person whom Stephen had as yet met in Aswarby. She made him completely at home, they were great friends in a quarter of an hour and great friends they remained Mrs Bunch had been born in the neighbourhood some fifty-five years before the date of Stephen's arrival, and her residence at the Hall was of twenty years' standing Consequently, if anyone knew the ins and outs of the house and the district, Mrs Bunch knew them, and she was by no means disinclined to communicate her information.

Certainly there were plenty of things about the Hall and the Hall gardens which Stephen, who was of an adventurous and inquiring turn, was anxious to have explained to him. "Who built the temple at the end of the laurel walk? Who was the old man whose picture hung on the staircase, sitting at a table, with a skull under his band?" These and many similar points were cleared up by the resources of Mrs Bunch's powerful intellect There were others, however, of which the explanations furnushed were less satisfactory

One November evening Stephen was sitting by the fire in the housekeeper's room reflecting on his surroundings
"Is Mr Abney a good man, and will he go to heaven?" he suddenly asked, with the peculiar confidence which children possess in the ability of their elders to settle these questions, the decision of which is believed to be reserved for other tribunals
"Good?-bless the chıld!" said Mrs Bunch "Master's as kund a soul as ever I seel Didn't I never tell you of the little boy as he took in out of the street, as you may say, this seven years back? and the little girl, two years after I first come here?"
'No Do tell me all about them, Mrs Bunch-now this minute!"
"Well," said Mrs Bunch, "the little garl I don't seem to recollect so much about I know master brought her back
with hum from his walk one day, and give orders to Mrs Ells, as was housekeeper then, as she should be took every care with. And the pore chuld hadn't no one belonging to her-she telled me so her own self-and here she lived with us a matter of tbree weeks it might be, and then, whether she were somethink of a gipsy in her blood or what not, but one morning she out of her bed afore any of us had opened a eye, and nether track nor yet trace of her have I set eyes on sunce Master was wonderful put about, and had all the ponds dragged, but 1 t's my belief she was had away by them gipsies, for there was singing round the house for as much as an hour the nught she went, and Parkes, he declare as he heard them a-calling in the woods all that afternoon. Dear, dear! a hodd chuld she was, so silent in her ways and all, but I was wonderful taken up with her, so domesticated she was-surprising"
"And what about the little boy?" said Stephen.
"Ah, that pore boy!" sighed Mrs Bunch. "He were a for-eigner-Jevanny he called hisself-and he come a-tweaking his 'urdy-gurdy round and about the drive one winter day, and master 'ad him in that munute, and ast all about where he came from, and how old he was, and how he made his way, and where was his relatives, and all as land as heart could wish But it went the same way with him. They're a hunruly lot, them forergn nations, I do suppose, and he was off one fine morning just the same as the grrl Why he went and what he done was our question for as much as a year after, for he never took his 'urdy-gurdy, and there it lays on the shelf"

The remainder of the evening was spent by Stephen in miscellaneous cross-examination of Mrs Bunch and in efforts to extract a tune from the hurdy-gurdy.

That nught he had a currous dream At the end of the passage at the top of the house, in which his bedroom was situated, there was an old disused bathroom. It was kept locked, but the upper half of the door was glazed, and, sunce the musin curtans which used to hang there had long been gone, you could look in and see the lead-lined bath affixed to the wall on the right hand, with its head towards the window

On the nught of which I am speaking, Stephen Ellott found bimself, as he thought, looking through the glazed door.

The moon was shining through the window, and he was gazing at a figure which lay in the bath

His description of what he saw remunds me of what I once beheld myself in the famous vaults of St. Michan's Church in Dublin, which possess the horrid property of preserving corpses from decay for centuries A figure inexpressibly thin and pathetic, of a dusty leaden colour, enveloped in a shroudlike garment, the thin lips crooked into a faint and dreadful smile, the hands pressed tightly over the region of the heart.

As he looked upon it, a distant, almost inaudible moan seemed to issue from its lips, and the arms began to strr. The terror of the sight forced Stephen backwards, and he awoke to the fact that he was indeed standing on the cold boarded floor of the passage in the full light of the moon With a courage which I do not think can be common among boys of his age, he went to the door of the bathroom to ascertain if the figure of his dream were really there It was not, and he went back to bed

Mrs. Bunch was much impressed next morning by his story, and went so far as to replace the musin curtan over the glazed door of the bathroom. Mr Abney, moreover, to whom he confided his experiences at breakfast, was greatly interested, and made notes of the matter in what he called "his book."

The spring equinox was approaching, as Mr Abney frequently reminded his cousin, adding that this had been always considered by the ancients to be a critical time for the young that Stephen would do well to take care of humself, and to shut his bedroom window at might, and that Censorinus had some valuable remarks on the subject. Two incidents that occurred about this time made an impression upon Stephen's mind

The first was after an unusually uneasy and oppressed nught that he had passed-though he could not recall any particular dream that he had had

The following evening Mrs Bunch was occupyng herself in mending his nightgown.
"Gracious me, Master Stephen!" she broke forth rather irntably, "how do you manage to tear your nughtdress all to
fluders this way? Look here, sir, what trouble you do give to poor servants that have to darn and mend after you'"

There was indeed a most destructive and apparently wanton series of slits or scorings in the garment, whuch would undoubtedly require a skilful needle to make good They were confined to the left side of the chest-long, parallel slits, about six inches in length, some of them not quite piercing the texture of the linen Stephen could only express his entire ignorance of their ongun he was sure they were not there the night before
"But," he sard, "Mrs Bunch, they are just the same as the scratches on the outside of my bedroom door, and I'm sure I never had anything to do with making them"

Mrs Bunch gazed at hum open-mouthed, then snatched up a candle, departed hastrly from the room, and was heard making her way upstars In a few minutes she came down
"Well," she said, "Master Stephen, it's a funny thing to me how them marks and scratches can 'a' come there-too high up for any cat or dog to 'ave made 'em, much less a rat for all the world like a Chinaman's finger-nauls, as my uncle in the tea-trade used to tell us of when we was grls together. I wouldn't say nothing to master, not if I was you, Master Stephen, my dear, and just turn the key of the door when you go to your bed "
"I always do, Mrs Bunch, as soon as I've sad my prayers"
"Ah, that's a good chuld always say your prayers, and then no one can't hurt you"
Herewith Mrs Bunch addressed herself to mending the mjured mightgown, with intervals of meditation, until bed-time This was on a Friday nught in March, 1812

On the following evening the usual duet of Stephen and Mrs Bunch was augmented by the sudden arrival of Mr. Parkes, the butler, who as a rule kept himself rather to himself in his own pantry He did not see that Stephen was there he was, moreover, flustered, and less slow of speech than was his wont.
"Master may get up his own wine, if he lukes, of an evening," was his first remark. "Either I do it in the daytume or not at all, Mrs Bunch I don't know what it may be. very
like it's the rats, or the wind got into the cellars, but I'm not so young as I was, and I can't go through with it as I have done."
"Well, Mr Parkes, you know it is a surprising place for the rats, is the Hall"
"I'm not denying that, Mrs Bunch, and, to be sure, many a time I've heard the tale from the men in the shipyards about the rat that could speak I never laid no confidence in that before, but to-night, if I'd demeaned myself to lay my ear to the door of the further bin, I could pretty much have heard what they was saying"
"Oh, there, Mr Parkes, I've no patience with your fancies! Rats talking in the wine-cellar indeed!"
"Well, Mrs Bunch, I've no wrsh to argue with you' all I say is, if you choose to go to the far bin, and lay your ear to the door, you may prove my words this minute"
"What nonsense you do talk, Mr. Parkes-not fit for children to listen to! Why, you'll be frightening Master Stephen there out of his wits"
"What' Master Stephen?" said Parkes, awaking to the consciousness of the boy's presence. "Master Stephen knows well enough when I'm a-playing a joke wrth you, Mrs Bunch."

In fact, Master Stephen knew much too well to suppose that Mr Parkes had in the first instance intended a ooke He was interested, not altogether pleasantly, in the situation; but all his questions were unsuccessful in inducing the butler to give any more detaled account of his experiences in the wine-cellar.

We have now arrived at March 24, 1812 It was a day of curnous experiences for Stephen. a windy, noisy day, which filled the house and the gardens with a restless impression As Stephen stood by the fence of the grounds, and looked out into the park, he felt as if an endless procession of unseen people were sweeping past him on the wind, borne on resistlessly and aimlessly, vaunly striving to stop themselves, to catch at something that might arrest their flight and bring them once agan into contact with the living world of which they had formed a part. After luncheon that day Mr. Abney said
"Stephen, my boy, do you think you could manage to come to me to-night as late as eleven o'clock in my study? I shall be busy untul that time, and I wish to show you something connected with your future life which it is most important that you should know You are not to mention this matter to Mrs Bunch nor to anyone else in the house, and you had better go to your room at the usual time "

Here was a new excitement added to life Stephen eagerly grasped at the opportunity of sitting up till eleven o'clock. He looked in at the lubrary door on his way upstairs that evening, and saw a brazier, which he bad often noticed in the corner of the room, moved out before the fire, an old slver-git cup stood on the table, filled with red wine, and some written sheets of paper lay near 1. Mr Abney was sprankling some incense on the brazier from a round silver box as Stephen passed, but did not seem to notice his step

The wind had fallen, and there was a still ought and a full moon. At about ten o'clock Stephen was standing at the open window of his bedroom, looking out over the country Stul as the nught was, the mysterious population of the distant moonlit woods was not yet lulled to rest. From tume to time strange cries as of lost and despaning wanderers sounded from across the mere They mught be the notes of owls or water-burds, yet they did not quite resemble either sound Were not they coming nearer? Now they sounded from the nearer side of the water, and in a few moments they seemed to be floatug about among the shrubberies Then they ceased; but just as Stephen was thonkung of shuttung the window and resuming his reading of Robinson Crusoe, be caught sight of two figures standing on the gravelled terrace that ran along the garden side of the Hall-the figures of a boy and girl, as it seemed, they stood side by side, looking up at the windows Something in the form of the grl recalled irresistibly his dream of the figure in the bath. The boy mspired hum with more acute fear

Whist the girl stood still, half smuling, with her hands clasped over her heart, the boy, a thin shape, with black haw and ragged clothing, raised his arms in the air with an appearance of menace and of unappeasable hunger and loaging The moon shone upon his almost transparent hands, and

Stephen saw that the nalls were fearfully long and that the light shone through them As he stood with his arms thus raised, he disclosed a ternfying spectacle On the left side of his chest there opened a black and gaping rent, and there fell upon Stephen's brain, rather than upon his ear, the mpression of one of those hungry and desolate cries that he had heard resounding over the woods of Aswarby all that evenung In another moment this dreadful parr had moved swiftly and noiselessly over the dry gravel, and he saw them no more

Inexpressibly frightened as he was, he determined to take his candle and go down to Mr Abney's study, for the hour appointed for their meeting was near at hand The study or library opened out of the front hall on one side, and Stephen, urged on by his terrors, did not take long in getting there To effect an entrance was not so easy The door was not locked, he felt sure, for the key was on the outside of it as usual His repeated knocks produced no answer Mr Abney was engaged he was speaking Whatl why did he try to cry out? and why was the cry choked in his throat? Had he, too, seen the mysterious children? But now everything was quiet, and the door yelded to Stephen's ternified and frantic pushing

On the table in Mr Abney's study certan papers were found which explamed the situation to Stephen Ellott when he was of an age to understand them. The most mportant sentences were as follows-
"It was a belief very strongly and generally held by the an-cients-of whose wisdom in these matters I have had such experience as induces me to place confidence in their asser-tions-that by enacting certain processes, which to us moderns have something of a barbaric complexion, a very remarkable cnlightenment of the spiritual faculties in man may be attained that, for example, by absorbing the personalities of a certann number of his fellow-creatures, an individual may gan a complete ascendancy over those orders of spiritual beings which control the elemental forces of our unverse
"It is recorded of Simon Magus that he was able to fly in the air, to become invistble, or to assume any form he pleased, by the agency of the soul of a boy whom, to use the libelous
phrase employed by the author of the Clementine Recogntthons, he had 'murdered' I find it set down, moreover, with considerable detail in the writings of Hermes Trismegistus, that sumular happy results may be produced by the absorption of the hearts of not less than three human bemgs below the age of twenty-one years To the testing of the truth of thus receipt I have devoted the greater part of the last twenty years, selecting as the corpora vilia of my experiment such persons as could conveniently be removed without occasioning a sensible gap in society The first step I effected by the removal of one Phoebe Stanley, a gri of grpsy extraction, on March 24, 1792 , The second, by the removal of a wandering Italian lad, named Giovanni Paol, on the might of March 23, 1805 The final 'victum'-to employ a word repugnant in the highest degree to my feelings-must be my cousin, Stephen Ellott His day must be this March 24, 1812
"The best means of effecting the required absorption is to remove the heart from the living subject, to reduce it to ashes, and to mingle them with about a pint of some red mine, preferably port The remans of the first two subjects, at least, it will be well to conceal a disused bathroom or winecellar will be found convenient for such a purpose Some annoyance may be experienced from the psychic portion of the subjects, which popular language dignifies with the name of ghosts But the man of philosophic temperament-to whom alone the experiment is appropriate-will be little prone to attach mportance to the feeble efforts of these beings to wreak their vengeance on hum I contemplate with the livelest satisfaction the enlarged and emancipated existence which the experiment, if successful, will confer on me, not only placing me beyond the reach of human justice (socalled), but elmmnatung to a great extent the prospect of death atself"

Mr Abney was found in his chair, his head thrown back, his face stamped with an cupression of rage, fright, and mortal pain In his left side was a terrible lacerated wound, exposing the heart There was no blood on his hands, and a long hnife that lay on the table was perfectly clean A savage wild-cat might have inflicted the injunes The window of the study was open, and it was the opimion of the coroner that Mr. Abney had met his death by the agency of some wild creature But Stephen Ellott's study of the papers I have quoted led hum to a very different conclusion.

## Lord Dunsany

## Thirseen at Table

In front of a spactous fireplace of the old kind, when the logs were well alight, and men with pipes and glasses were gathered before it in great cascful chairs, and the wild weather outside and the comfort that was within, and the season of the year-for it was Christmas-and the hour of the night, all called for the werrd or uncanny, then out spohe the ex-master of foxhounds and told this tale
"I once had an odd experience too It was when I had the Bromley and Sydenham, the ycar I gave them up-as a matter of fact it was the last day of the scason It was no use going on because there were no fones left in the country, and London was sweeping down on us You could see it from the kennels all along the skyline like a terrible army in grey, and masses of villas every year came shirmishing down our valleys Our coverts were mostly on the hills, and as the town came down upon the valleys the foxes used to leave them and go rught away out of the country, and they never returned I think they went by might and moved great distances Well, it was early April and we had drawn blank all day, and at the last draw of all, the very last of the season, we found a fox He left the covert with his back to London and its railways and villas and wire, and shipped away towards the chalk country and open Kent I felt as I once felt as a child on one summer's day when I found a door in a garden where I played left luckily ajar, and I pushed it open and the wide lands were before me and waving fields of corn
"We settled down into a steady gallop and the fields began to drift by under us, and a great wind arose full of fresh breath We left the clay lands where the bracken grows and came to a valley at the edge of the chalk. As we went down into it we saw the fox go up the other side like a shadow that crosses the evening, and glde into a wood that stood on
the top We saw a flash of primroses in the wood and we were out the other side, hounds hunting perfectly and the fox still goung absolutely straught. It began to dawn on me then that we were in for a great hunt, I took a deep breath when I thought of 1 , the taste of the air of that perfect spring afternoon as it came to one galloping, and the thought of a great run, were together like some old rare wine. Our faces now were to another valley, large fields led down to it with easy hedges, at the bottom of it a bright blue stream went singing and a rambling village smoked, the sunlight on the opposite slopes danced luke a farry, and all along the top old woods were frowning, but they dreamed of spring. The field bad fallen off and were far behind and my only human companion was James, my old first whip, who had a hound's instinct, and a personal animosity aganst a fox that even embittered his speech
"Across the valley the fox went as straight as a railway hine, and again we went without a check straight through the woods at the top I remember hearing men sing or shout as they walked home from work, and sometımes children whistled; the sounds came up from the village to the woods at the top of the valley After that we saw no more villages, but valley after valley arose and fell before us as though we were voyaging some strange and stormy sea, and all the way before us the fox went dead up-wind like the fabulous flying Dutchman There was no one in sight now but my first whip and me, we had both of us got on to our second horses as we drew the last covert. Two or three tumes we checked in those great lonely valleys beyond the village, but I began to have insprrations, I felt a strange certainty withn me that this fox was going on straight up-wind till he died or until might came and we could hunt no longer, so I reversed ordmary methods and only cast straightahead, and always we picked up the scent again at once I believe that this fox was the last one left in the villa-haunted lands and that he was prepared to leave them for remote uplands far from men, that if we had come the following day he would not have been there, and that we just happened to hit off his journey.
"Evenung began to descend upon the valleys, stll the hounds drifted on, like the lazy but unresting shadows of clouds
upon a summer's day, we heard a shepherd calling to his dog, we saw two maidens move toward a hidden farm, one of them singing softly, no other sounds but ours disturbed the leisure and the loneliness of haunts that seemed not yet to have known the inventions of steam and gunpowder "And now the day and our horses were weanng out, but that resolute fox held on I began to work out the run and to wonder where we were The last landmark I had ever seen before must have been over five mules back, and from there to the start was at least ten miles more If only we could kall! Then the sun set I wondered what chance we had of killing our fox I looked at James' face as he rode beside me He did not seem to have lost any confidence, yet his horse was as tired as mine It was a good clear twilight and the scent was as strong as ever, and the fences were easy enough, but those valleys were ternbly trying, and they still rolled on and on It looked as if the light would outlast all possible endurance both of the fox and the horses, if the scent held good and he did not go to ground, otherwise night would end it. For long we had seen no houses and no roads, only chalk slopes with the twilight on them, and here and there some sheep, and scattered copses darkening in the evening At some moment I seemed to realize all at once that the light was spent and that darkness was hovering I looked at James, he was solemnly shaking his head Suddenly in a little wooded valley we saw climb over the oaks the redbrown gables of a queer old house, at that instant I saw the fox scarcely leadıng by fifty yards We blundered through a wood into full sight of the house, but no avenue led up to it or even a path, nor were there any signs of wheelmarks anywhere Already lights shone here and there in windows We were in a park, and a fine park, but unkempt beyond credibility, brambles grew everywhere It was too dark to see the fox any more, but we knew he was dead beat, the hounds were just before us-and a four-foot raling of oak I shouldn't have tried it on a fresh horse at the beginning of a run, and here was a horse near his last gasp, but what a run' an event standing out in a lifetime, and the hounds, close up on their fox, slipping into the darkness as I hesitated I decided to try it. My horse rose about eight mehes and took it
fair with hus breast, and the oak log flew into handfuls of wet -decay,-it was rotten with years And then we were on a lawn, and at the far end of it the hounds were tumbling over ther for. Fox, horses, and light were all done together at the end of a twenty-mule point. We made some noise then, but nobody came out of the queer old house
"I felt pretty stiff as I walked round to the hall door with the mask and the brush, while James went with the hounds and the two horses to look for the stables I rang a bell marvellously encrusted with rust, and after a long whule the door opened a little way, revealing a hall with much old armour in it and the shabbiest butler that I have ever known
"I asked hum who lived there Sir Richard Arlen. I explamed that my horse could go no further that nught, and that I wished to ask Sir Ruchard Arlen for a bed
"' O , no one ever comes here, sir,' said the butler.
"I pointed out that $I$ had come
"' 'I don't think it would be possible, sre,' he said.
"This annoyed me, and I asked to see Sir Richard, and insisted until he came. Then I apologzed and explained the sttuation. He looked only fifty, but a 'Varsity oar on the wall with the date of the early seventies made him older than that, his face had something of the shy look of the hermut, he regretted that he had not room to put me up I was sure that this was untrue, also I had to be put up there, there was nowhere else within miles, so I almost msisted Then, to my astomshment, he turned to the butler and they talked it over in an undertone At last they seemed to think that they could manage it, though clearly with reluctance. It was by now seven o'clock, and Sir Richard told me be dined at half-past seven. There was no question of clothes for me other than those I stood in, as my host was shorter and broader. He showed me presently to the drawing-room, and then he reappeared before half-past seven m evening dress and a white waistcoat. The drawing-room was large and contaned old furniture, but it was rather worn than venerable; an Aubusson carpet flapped about the floor, the wind seemed momently to enter the room, and old draughts haunted corners, stealthy feet of rats that were never at rest modicated the extent of the ruin that time had wrought in the wainscot,
somewhere far off a shutter flapped to and fro, the guttering candles were insufficient to light so large a room The gloom that these things suggested was quite in hecping with Sir Richard's first remark to me after he entered the room
" 'I must tell you, sir, that I have led a wicked life O, a very wicked life'
"Such confidences from a man much older than oneself after one has known hum for half an hour are so rare that any possible answer merely does not suggest itself I sard rather slowly, ' O , really,' and chiefly to forestall another such remark, I sard, 'What a charming house you have'
" 'Yes,' he sald, 'I have not left it for nearly forty years Since I left the 'Varsity One is young there, you know, and one has opportunities, but I make no excuses, no excuses' And the door slipping its rusty latch, came drufting on the draught into the room, and the long carpet flapped and the hangings upon the walls, then the draught fell rustling away and the door slammed to agan
" 'Ah, Marianne,' he said 'We have a guest to-mght Mr Linton This is Marianne Gib' And everything became clear to me 'Mad,' I sard to myself, for no one had entered the room
"The rats ran up the length of the room behind the wanscot ceaselessly, and the wind unlatched the door agan and the folds of the carpet fluttered up to our feet and stopped there, for our weight held it down
" 'Let me introduce Mr Linton,' sad my host 'Lady Mary Errinjer'
"The door slammed back again I bowed politely Even had I been invited I should have humoured hum, but it was the very least that an uminvited guest could do
"This kind of thing happened eleven times the rustling, and the fluttering of the carpet, and the footsteps of the rats, and the restless door, and then the sad voice of my host mtroducing me to phantoms Then for some while we wated whule I struggled with the situation, conversation flowed slowly And agan the draught came traing up the room, while the flanng candles filled it with hurrying shadows 'Ah, late again, Cicely,' sard my host in his soft mournful way 'Always late, Cicely' Then I went down to denner with that
man and his mind and the twelve phantoms that haunted it. I found a long table with fine old silver on 1 t, and places laid for fourteen. The butler was now in evening dress, there were fewer draughts in the dining-room, the scene was less gloomy there 'Wull you sit next to Rosalind at the other end?' Sir Ruchard sard to me 'She always takes the head of the table I wronged her most of all'
"I said, 'I shall be delighted'
"I looked at the butler closely, but never did I see by any expression of his face, or by anything that he did, any suggestion that he waited upon less than fourteen people in the complete possession of all their faculties Perhaps a dish appeared to be refused more often than taken, but every glass was equally filled with champagne At first I found little to say, but when Sir Richard, speaking from the far end of the table, sald 'You are tred, Mr. Linton?' I was reminded that I owed something to a host upon whom I had forced myself. It was excellent champagne, and with the help of a second glass I made the effort to begin a conversation with a Miss Helen Errold, for whom the place upon one side of me was laid. It came more easy to me very soon, I frequently paused in my monologue, like Mark Antony, for a reply, and sometimes I turned and spoke to Miss Rosalind Smith Sir Richard at the other end talked sorrowfully on, he spoke as a condemned man might speak to his judge, and yet somewhat as a judge might speak to one that he once condemned wrongly My own mind began to turn to mournful things I drank another glass of champagne, but I was still thirsty I felt as if all the moisture in my body had been blown away over the downs of Kent by the wind up which we had galloped Still I was not talking enough my host was lookng at me I made another effort, after all I had something to talk about a twenty-mile point is not often seen in a lifetime, especially south of the Thames I began to describe the run to Rosalind Smith I could see then that my host was pleased, the sad look in his face gave a kind of a flicker, like mist upon the mountains on a miserable day when a faint puff comes from the sea and the mist would lift if it could And the butler refilled my glass very attentively I asked her first if she hunted, and paused and began my story I told her
where we found the fox and how fast and straight he had gone, and how I had got through the village by keeping to the road, while the little gardens and wire, and then the river, had stopped the rest of the field I told her the kind of country that we crossed and how splendid it looked in the spring, and how mysterious the valleys were as soon as the twilght came, and what a glorious horse I had and how wonderfully he went.
"I was so fearfully thirsty after the great hunt that I had to stop for a moment now and then, but I went on with my description of that famous run, for I had warmed to the subject, and after all there was nobody to tell of it but me except my old whipper-m, and 'the old fellow's probably drunk by now' I thought. I described to her munutely the exact spot in the run at which it had come to me clearly that this was going to be the greatest hunt in the whole history of Kent. Sometimes I forgot meidents that had happened, as one well may in a run of twenty miles, and then I had to fill in the gaps by mventing I was pleased to be able to make the party go off well by means of my conversation, and besides that the lady to whom I was speaking was extremely pretty I do not mean in a flesh-and-blood kind of way, but there were little shadowy lines about the char beside me that hinted at an unusually graceful figure when Miss Rosalind Smith was alive, and I began to perceive that what I first mustook for the smoke of guttering candles and a tablecloth waving in the draught was in reality an extremely antmated company who listened, and not without interest, to my story of by far the greatest hunt that the world had ever known undeed, I told them that I would confidently go further and predict that never in the bistory of the world would there be such a run again Only my throat was terribly dry
"And then, as it seemed, they wanted to hear more about my horse I had forgotten that I had come there on a horse, but when they reminded me it all came back, they looked so charming leanung over the table, intent upon what I said, that I told them everything they wanted to know Everything was going so pleasantly if only Sur Rechard would cheer up I heard his mournful vorce every now and then-these were very pleasant people if only he would take them the right
way I could understand that he regretted his past, but the early seventies seemed centuries away, and I felt now that he misunderstood these ladies, they were not revengeful as he seemed to suppose I wanted to show him how cheerful they really were, and so I made a joke and they all laughed at 1 t, and then I chaffed them a bit, especially Rosalind, and nobody resented it in the very least And still Sir Richard sat there with that unhappy look, like one that has ended weeping because it is vain and has not the consolation even of tears
"We had been a long time there, and many of the candles had burned out, but there was light enough I was glad to have an audience for my exploit, and being happy myself I was determined Sir Richard should be I made more jokes and they still laughed good-naturedly, some of the jokes were a little broad perhaps, but no harm was meant And they, I do not wish to excuse myself, but I had had a harder day than I ever had had before, and without knowing it I must have been completely exhausted, in this state the champagne had found me, and what would have been harmless at any other time must somehow have got the better of me when quite tired out. Anyhow, I went too far, I made some joke,I cannot in the least remember what,-that suddenly seemed to offend them I felt all at once a commotion in the arr, I looked up and saw that they had all risen from the table and were sweeping towards the door I had not time to open it, but it blew open on a wind, I could scarcely see what Sir Richard was doing because only two candles were left, I think the rest blew out when the ladies suddenly rose I sprang up to apologize, to assure them-and then fatigue overcame me as it had overcome my horse at the last fence, I clutched at the table, but the cloth came away, and then I fell The fall, and the darkness on the floor, and the pent-up fatigue of the day overcame me all three together
"The sun shone over glittering fields and in at a bedroom window, and thousands of birds were chaunting to the spring, and there I was in an old four-poster bed in a quant old panelled bedroom, fully dressed, and wearing long muddy boots, someone had taken my spurs and that was all For a moment I farled to realze, and then it all came back-my came, he came in perfectly cheerful and indescribably shabby I asked hum if Sir Richard was up, and be sadd he had just gone down, and told me to my amarement that it was twelve o'clock I asked to be shown in to Sur Richard at once
"He was in his smoking-room 'Good morning' he said cheerfully the moment I went in I went directly to the matter in hand 'I fear that I insulted some ladies in your house 'I began.
"'You did indeed,' he said 'You did indeed' And then he burst noto tears, and took me by the hand 'How can I ever thank you?' he said to me then 'We have been thirteen at table for thirty years, and I never dared to msult them because I had wronged them all, and now you have done th, and I know they will never dine here agan' And for a long tume he still held my hand, and then he gave it a grip and a kind of a shake which I took to mean 'good-bye,' and I drew my hand away then and left the house And I found James in the disused stables with the hounds and asked him how he had fared, and James, who is a man of very few words, sand he could not rightly remember, and I got my spurs from the butler and climbed on to my horse, and slowly we rode away from that queer old house, and slowly we wended home, for the hounds were footsore but happy and the horses were tred stlll And when we recalled that the hunting season was ended, we turned our faces to spring and thought of the new things that try to replace the old And that very year I heard, and have often heard since, of dances and happier dinners at Sir Rıchard Arlen's house "

## Philip Fisher

## Eighss

## I

There had never been any question of Carey's seamanshup Officers who knew had testified to that The captain himself had declared so to the court And he had added further the unsolicited opinion that he knew no officer he would more fully trust to keep safe position when the destroyer division was making twenty-five knots in close column

Furtive glances flickered between the officers grouped about the green-baized wardroom table A disagreeable duty, this trying a brother-at-arms The judge advocate hımself hesltated. Then, pushing aside a thought not entirely complumentary to naval regulations, he sighed almost audibly and put another question.

Captain Kennart shook his head with grim decision
"No," he said emphatically "Carey never used the stadrmeter Always judged the distance with his naked eye"

A member of the court cleared his throat Another tapped the table top with his pencil. The judge advocate sighed within himself again
"That's all," he said finally
Carey's counsel nodded The president of the court looked inquiringly at his confrères Each shook his head in turn

The president made the routine admonition regarding silence and Captain Kennart left the room

Lieutenant, junior grade, Warren Carey relaxed somewhat in his seat He had felt that his captan would do his best by him He thrilled with a growing fatth in his fellow man at this positive evidence that despite what had occurred the captain bore no grudge Yet had Captan Kennart given testimony inspired by an active hate, he could have found no fault

Hope again grew in his breast. These officers about hum, too, he had shopped and partied with all over the China coast. The admural had ordered them on this court A regulation duty They were to ascertain facts, impartally weigh them, give judgment in accordance with navy law This they would do, Carey hnew. Yct when one's fate is to be settled by real men, mercy ever tempers justice. Real men can understand

A fluttering breath escaped Carey, nevertheless
He dared not succumb to optımism Between him and these others, all other men udeed, he still sensed something mexplicable, as if he were befogged in vibrations of a different plane He could not see this clouding envelope It was a thing to be felt, but not by a normal perceptive faculty He wondered if he really differed in any strange way from ordinary men It appeared almost that he did

He shuddered slightly in recollection of that night on the lower Yangtze when he, and only he, had seen those lights Every man who had been on the bridge when the thing had occurred had sworn to having seen not a single light He , Carey, witness at the captan's own tral, had been alone in the affimatuve He had not been told of course Yet mstinctively he knew it must be so That nught they had declared themselves Before the court they assuredly had done the same thing

Another witness was summoned.
Through the haze of strange introspection Carey heard fragments of his testimony

To think that this companion of many an upper Yangtze rice-bird hunt, this doctor who had brought him through the dengue fever down in Cavite, should now have to vouch for him in a general court To think-could something about hum really be different from other men? Was he-gifted? Why had it been given to him, and him only, to see what had been withheld from the sight of all other men on the ship-those hghts? Or was he prone to temporary hallucination such as his captan pityingly had hinted in an endeavor to extenuate his-Carey's-cnme? And was the medico now-?
"No" The doctor's voice rose "I have fished, hunted,
shopped, seen the sights with Carey, and doctored hum, for the last year and a half He is not insane"

Carey's heart leaped in gratitude at the man's vehement assertion The medico, too, was a man!

But-insane!
Surely the court had understood the captan's hint Not by any possible chance could they bring that dread judgment of his case Never'

And yet-he, and only he, had been the man to see And then, that trouble with the captain Carey shook his head Surely he had not been even temporarily mad Persons laboring under mental delusions promptly forgot, he had heard, the vagaries of their period of aberration And too clearly could he still recall those lights, still envision that horrid struggle on the destroyer's bridge From the first order he had given the man at the wheel every incident was indelibly impressed on his memory, and with a clarity not to be confuted Even to the final catastrophe and the terror inspired by the crew. No, no, the medico was quite right. He, Carey, was not insane

Yet, somehow, he was the only one.
Dimly the doctor's voice drifted again through the cloud. "No, sur" He was answering the judge advocate's question "I tested Carey's eyes when he went up for full heutenant just before we sailed from the Philippines They were perfect then And I exammed them yesterday agan His eyes are perfect now"

Carey quivered slightly. If it wasn't his eyes what could it be?

The captan had declared that he was a trustworthy seaman, the medico swore that he was neither msane nor visually defective Then what? He had seen

And ever since the thing had occurred he had been in thus daze He could not understand

[^4]from Manula to Lingayen Gulf for torpedo practice there happened an instance of it I was on the flagboat, leading the column. It was during the first watch I was on the bridge, and the captan and navigator were there with the officer of the deck
"We had just rounded Cape Bolinao and expected to prek up the light across the gulf We were all peering dead aheadthere's always a little rivalry to sight a light first The division commander ordered one-thurd speed untıl we got a bearıng on that light. Then he was going to turn column right and go down the gulf and anchor off Dagupan
"For half an hour every man on the bridge gazed straight ahead and stramed to see the hght we knew must show up Suddenly one of the men on the lookout sang out that be saw at. He pointed almost due west, about a point on the port bow We all strove to make it out The lookout insisted it was there Then one after another we saw it. It was an occulting light, and we could even discern its pulsations and check its rate The column swung south at standard speed
"Ten minutes later we had to change course several degrees to westward to avord going on the beach The next day we received a rado to the effect that that hght had not been in order for two nights Yet we had seen it. We had expected it to be there, and our straming eyes had actually envisioned the thing It's a common enough occurrence, as I sard before The eye often sees what we want it to see"

The members of the court nodded understandmgly The judge advocate made a pertment query
"Is it really the eye that sees this specter of a light that doesn't exist?"

The doctor shook his head
"I would say not," he answered slowly. "In my estumation it is not the eye that sees it at all It's the brain behind the eye The braun knows that the light ought to be seen and deludes itself into the belief that it actually does see it. No, it's the brain in such a case rather than the eye"
"But in the defendant's case," came the logical question, "there was no such expectation How do you account for that?"

The doctor shrugged his shoulders Carey moved uneasily in his chair

That was the very question that had troubled him ever since that nıght a week ago He had not expected to see the things that so clearly impressed themselves on his vision He had not even been thinhing about such a thing The lower reaches of the Yangtze had few enough lights, and sparse were ships that ran the river at night His own destroyer had attempted it solely because ordered down from Chefoo for emergency missionary protection upstream For above Hankow was a local uprising led by a Taoist priesthood The river gunboats were five hundred miles farther upstream, and turtle slow The destroyer, though north in Pechili Gulf, could reach the threatened area first So they bad entered the river's upper channel at night

No, he had not expected to see a thing And yet of the half dozen men on the bridge he had, and only he The medico had just stated that such hallucination was of the brain rather than the eye Could it have been his brain-his alone? The fog closed in upon Carey agan He found it hard to think
"In the defendant's case," he felt more than heard the doctor say, "I find no precedent I can sımply testify that he is a steady man, entrrely sane, and has perfect eyesight And yet I do believe that he was dead certan that he saw those lights And as certan, too, that the others did not What he saw must have been a delusion of the mind, yet of a mind that was normal Such things also do occur Yet his eyes are perfect, and he is as balanced mentally as any officer here."

Carey's hands bit into each other
His captain was for hum. And now the medico.
And yet-and yet? What could the court do? He had committed a crime for which in olden days he might have hanged And his excuse for the offense was what? Simply that he had seen something that no other man had seen The mere fact that the catastrophe he saw coming overwhelmed them on the very heels of the captain's interference could have but little weight with a court that must decide his fate on tangible fact

And yet-good Heaven, it must be excuse enough! He had seen the lights, the captan had interfered, disaster had followed It would not have closed upon them had the captan
let him alone Surcly the court must understand that. He had ceplaned it all so carefully, in muntest detail, when his counsel had put him on the stand as witness in his own behalf The doctor was dismissed The court was cleared.

## II

Carcy had the freedom of the ship For a moment he felt that the fresh brecze sweeping from the rice paddies of the lower Whampoo and the Yangtze begond would clear his head and give a little friendly stimulation Then he recalled that other officers would be topside Friends they all were, indeed But Carcy did not desire brotherly companionship just now, nor did he care to feel the pitying glanees of old shipmates He wanted to be alone, to thinh, to go over again the events of the past week, of that night He turned down the passageway to the stateroom assigned him since the disaster Now that he was away from the atmosphere of the court he already felt better

The doctor had said that his cyes were normal He had also declared that his brain was as rational as that of any officer on the court-a fine thing and a daring one for a destroyer medical officer to say He must have meant it, must have wanted to strongly impress the court with his earnestness and his belief Carey drew a breath of relief

Good eyes, good mind The chill fog that in fear for the latter had penetrated his very being, gradually began to dissipate

How clearly it all came back
He had been officer of the deck The captan had snatched a hasty meal from the food brought up by his Filipino boy to the emergency cabin on the bridge The navigator had plotted changes of course, and was below finshing off his coffee with the other officers

A half hour remaned of the second dog watch Carey had been going over some points he wished to umpress upon the chef boatswan's mate when he took the eight o'clock reports A tear in the awning canvas where it stretched tight over the freezing apparatus on top of the ice locker just abaft the bridge was one of these

The awning was beginning to flap, and this might Carey demanded silence on the bridge He could sense better, then, any variation in the hum of the forced draft blowers And in the currents of the lower Yangtze all things must be anticipated The officer of the deck must know as soon as the fire-room watch that something was going wrong Must have the fo'c's'le gang ready to let go the anchor even before word of the lost steam came through the voice tube

He stood on the starboard side of the bridge, near the rack of tubes, leaning on the sull of the open port Fleet sparks from the captain's pipe indicated his almost identical position near the engine-room telegraphs to port Carey was almost tempted to call the boatswan's mate at once to have that awning reparred He had all but turned to give the order when his eye caught something yet dim in the distance.

For a minute or more he gazed steadily at the object. Then, from where they were hanging on one of the searchlight directing wheels on the bulkbead of the emergency cabin, he took up his binoculars Faintly through the glass he could make out that there were three lights instead of one.

He softly called the starboard lookout "Do you see any lights about three points on the bow?" he asked. "Pretty far off?

The lookout stared into the blackness of the night, blinking as the damp breeze bedewed his eyelashes. Then he shook his head "No, sir."
"Try the glass," Carey suggested.
The lad shook his head as before.
"Don't see a thing, sir"
"Certanu of it?"" demanded Carey.
"Absolutely, sir," was the answer.
Carey remembered all this with extreme clearness-every detal Lying on the bunk in his stateroom, he found himself living over agan that fifteen-munute period in which so much had happened

He had taken the bnoculars from the lookout, and ordered him back to his post. Then he glanced at the clock on the emergency cabn bulkhead just behind the man at the wheel This was a matter of habit There was nothing to record He
had not expected to see any lughts, anyway And the flapping of the canvas over the iee locher did not disconcert him now. It had become part of the normal respiration of the ship, and Carey decided that he would not disturb the boatswan's mate about it until the eight ocloch reports

He turned bach to his open port, but discovered the captan staring out into the blachness, charging his pipe with one of the patent fillers he had bought from the Greck in Chefoo He paused tentatively at his elbow, undecided whether to stay there or assume the captan's former position near the annunciators

Then something urged him to reman. The captain acknowhedged his presence with a grunt.
"Did you see something?"
Carey nodded rather hesitantly.
"Thought I did, sur. Loohed to me like a ship's light off to starboard"

The captan lifted his binoculars and focused them in the direction Carey had indicated The latter raised his own glass He recalled that he gave an exclamation of surprise.
"The lights are there, sir, all right Seem nearer now, too"
"Humphl I don't make anything out," grunted the captan
Carey stepped back of him and leveled an arm over hus shoulder with the edge of his hand up, as in aiming
"About two points on the bow, sir. Left a trifle, captan. There-that's 1 . See them now, srr?"

Intently the captain gazed, slowly changing focus with his forefinger on the adjusting wheel Then he dropped the glass
"Don't see a thing, Carey"
He bent to gan the protection of the bulkhead, and a match scratched, then glowed over his pipe
"That's funny," Carey answered, somewhat mystified
He wondered if perhaps his last look at the light-flooded chart had left dancing gleams on the retina of his eye He carefully wiped his eyes with his handkerchief, and cleaned the binoculars with a bit of lens paper Then rased them aganand started
"But the lights are close now, captan" He lowered his glass slightly "Why, I can see them with my naked eye! Rught there, sir" He leveled his arm agan
"Hanged if I can see 'cm, Carey. But this river breeze blurs everything Let's try your glass"

Carey ducked from under the leather strap and banded the binoculars over The captan rapidly found focus, then shook his head agan
"Not a thing, not a thing Better have your cyes examined, young fellow."
"But they're holding steady, captan'" Carcy expostulated "A ship as clear as day Heading from starboard across our course I can see her masthead and port running light. And cabin lights topside" Suddenly be swung to the wheelsman. "What's your compass?"
"Right on, sır. Two forty-eight "
"Come on two sixty," Carey ordered.
"What's that?" demanded the captan
"Get the tume of that change, quartermaster," snapped Carcy Then in answer to the captain "Shifting course a bit to the right, sir She's got the right of way, and there's no use taking any chances"
"Who's got the nght of way?" the captain demanded agan.
"That ship, sir-"
"Dammut, Carey, your eyes must have gone bad There's no ship in sight"
"But, Captan Kennart-"
The captan turned sharply to the wheelsman
"Back on your former course" To the quartermaster: "Get that time" He swung back to the open port, and snapped for the lookouts Sensing something unusual in the very atmosphere, the whole bridge force was now tensely on the alert. "Do you lads see anything abead-llghts?"

All hands intently stared out moto the blackness of the night.

Their opinon was unanımous "Not a thing, sir"
Carey gave a cry of alarm "Captan"" He turned savagely on the man at the wheel. "Fifteen degrees right On the jump now!"

The captan's suddenly livid face glared in the glow of the binnacle light.
"Dammit, sir, get off the bridge!" he crned peremptorily.

To the wheelsman. "Back to your former course. Snap into it' You're tahing your orders from me now Livelyl"

Carey recalled how the men had loohed at each other in consternation He recalled his own utter dismay For the first tume in his carecr he was ordered off the bridge That shiplights looming up now not a cable length array. Holding steadily on the same angle-collsion surcl And he, officer of the dech, when the life of his ship was a matter of seconds and every one blind but hum, ordered below. Good Heaven! It meant shupwreck, the captan was bound for destruction. Mad He resolved on one last frantic appeal.
"But Great God, captain-it's on our very bows! We'll hit sure' We'll-"
The captan turned on hum with an oath Then as Carey stood his ground the captan's face became hard and grim A deadly implication chilled in the icc-level tone his voice held
"Mr Carey, consider yourself under arrest You're either mutinous or mad Thus will be reported when we finish the business upriver and return to Shanghar Get out!"

The lights were withon a hundred yards, Carey saw He was ordered off in disgrace The captan was mad himself. The whole bridge force bad gone mad That ship-

His answer was literally forced from him "By Heaven, sur, I will not leave'" he cried in utter desperation

And he leaped to the annunciators and jerked the signals for both engines to full reverse Then jumped for the steering gear, shoved the man aside, and madly spun the wheel to starboard.

With an oath the captain seized him, cried to the lookout to drag him below A struggle ensued The ship throbbed as the power of therty thousand horses strove to stop its forward rush Carey remembered the cloud of horror and mpotence that almost overcame hum His one thought was for the shup, and of the vessel even now across their knufe-like stem

He recalled his last hopeless words, forgetful of naval disciphne and the men about.
"The lights! Too late! Too late! Captann, you damn fool-"
And then the crash had come

## III

Lying in the bunk, the racking shock of it was a physical blow again Carcy recalled sickeningly his own releasetoo late The startled outcries of the men, the intermittent raucous honking of the general alarm someone had retained command enough to switch on from the bridge The shrill prping of the boatswan's mate, his bellowing roar of. "All hands abandon ship!"

And then the siren's scream.
His station in such an emergency was in charge of No 2 life raft Later he found himself clinging to this bobbing float, mind and body benumbed by the whispering waves of the swirling Yangtze

Rescue Court martial
The captan for the loss of his ship He humself for mutsnous insubordination

And yet-he had seen those lights.
A fog gathered about him again.

## IV

Pulsations beat upon his brain Dimly he recognized them as rapid footsteps in the passageway outside his room He aroused somewhat as his door was flung open and a shipmate burst in upon him Blinking, he noted that the newcomer was excited to an extreme
'News, by thunder, news for you, Warren! The admural says be's going to quash every court martal that came out of the wreck. News from the divers down the river just came up, and set him all in a daze He's pacing the deck now We did not hit an uncharted rock last week, Warren We tore our bottom out on the hulk of the Kew Li, whose boilers blew up, and only two men left to tell the tale And what gets the admiral, Warren, is that you swore you saw those lights on the night of the wreck, but the Kew Ll went down four months agol"

## Harold Lawlor

## The Silver Highway

It is only in justice to myself that I set down thes complete account of the happenings in the Museum of Industry last September In the affair of the 1905 Pope-Hartford runabout, I have known bewilderment and suffered a haunting sense of guilt And yet the three local newspapers were most unfar at the tume One ignored my story altogether, another misspelled my name, and the third chose to treat the whole thing facetiously-as if I were a senule old fool for whom the wagon should be sent
It is not that I wish boastfully to pose as a deus ex machma, but I was surely an instrument of Fate that September afternoon as I walked up the broad shallow marble steps of the Museum For this I feel to be a certanty it was only to someone like me-so close to death myself-that the secret of the Pope-Hartford runabout could have been revealed.

I am seventy-three years old, a retired ralroad executive living on a small pension, slowly dying of an incurable disease I have no wish to excite your pity, Death, to me, will come only as a welcome release I have no family, my frends are gone, my life's work done No, my condition is nether sad nor pitiable

But one can't sit around, bleakly wating for the grave to yawn So I have fallen into the habit of visiting the many museums for which this city is noted And of them all the Museum of Industry interested me most on that first visit.

As a retired ralload man, the early trans-the actual coaches and locomotives themselves, not mimatures or replicas, set up on the Museum floor-fascinated me So I hngered over them, and it wasn't untul late in the afternoon that I finally visted the exhibit known as A STREET IN 1905

I'm not sure in my own mind even now whether I should regret having entered it

This display is housed in a separate room to itself And it
is exactly what its name umplics There's a red-cobbled street, hned with shop-windows filled with figures dressed in the clothing of that day Therc's a nickelodeon where you may view cinemas featuring Fatty Arbuckle, Mabel Normand and other early stars of the motion picture industry-all to the tune of a jangling piano. And at intervals along the curbs there are perhaps a dozen motorcars of that era, as bright of brass and shiny of enamel as if they had at just that moment been driven from the showroom floors

Almost you feel as if you might get in and drive away. Gas street lamps of the period flicker duskily, and it is only after your eyes have become accustomed to the dim light that you see the cars are elevated slightly on blocks of wood so that their tires might not rot from contact with the cobblestones

The exhbit was to me a mixture of pleasure and pain. Oldsmobile, Brush, Simplex As I recognized the different cars, I felt pang after pang of nostalgra, remembering back to that time forty years before when I, too, was young Many of the makes were obsolete, and had been for years. Soon now, I also-

I sighed, and went slowly on And then I stopped There stood a Pope-Hartford runabout, proud in the splendor of its bright red paint and glittering brass headlughts I can't tell you of my delight I almost cried out, as if meeting an old friend. For the very first car I'd ever owned had been its twin

And so, halting, thus it was that I met-her.

## "I beg your pardon," came a voice

I blinked in the dim light, and settled my glasses more firmly upon my nose At first I thought her a wax figurine, placed on the front seat of the Pope-Hartford to add to the authenticity of the exhibit, for there had been other such figures in the cars I had passed But, no

She was dressed in a long linen duster and a linen hat, bound round with an emerald veil tied in a bow under her chin Modish clothing for motoring-in 1905 And she was looking at me, and smiling She wasn't beautiful, but she had the prettiness of youth. An arr of breathless expectancy
hovered about her, and ohl there, was a lovely eager light in her eyes

It's strange now to remember that I was not particularly startled when she spoke Perhaps at my age one becomes like a chuld again, and accepts things as easily as children do. Perhaps it was just that I was a little dazed at discovering she was flesh and blood, and not a model of wax. For I didn't cry out in alarm or surprise I just stood there, blinking a little in confusion
"I beg your pardon," she sand again, leaning forward a trifle eagerly. "I wonder if you know what's keeping Arthur?"
"Why-why, no, I don't," I sard.
"Oh, dear" The car had no doors, and I could see her tiny foot tapping umpatiently on the rubber-covered floorboard "I've been watting so long He savd he'd be right out." She blushed then, and cast down her eyes, as if her impatience embarrassed her "I suppose you're one of the wedding guests?"

I didn't know what to say She appeared not to notice my confusion, so engrossed was she in her own thoughts.
"I've been wating hours and hours, and stlll he doesn't come" Her pink mouth pouted prettly "I'm so excited, and he knows excitement is bad for my heart. That's why Papa objected to our marnage just at first, you know, even though he likes Arthur so much and says he has a fine busmess head on his shoulders
"And so he has, but-" She dimpled and leaned forward with a pretty arr of confiding in me. "What $I$ like best about him is that he has such a poetic nature, too Last nught he said, 'Soon now, Lucy, we'll be niding down that sulver high-way-to happiness'"

She blushed, and looked at me from under her long lashes "Isn't that lovely? Oh, I can hardly wattl If you see Arthur, will you please tell him to hurry?"

Her voice stopped, and she looked at me implonngly
I put a hand to my forehead. For some minutes past I'd been feeling very odd It had been so long sunce I'd had lunch that I was a little dizzy I couldn't seem to understand what this was all about. For the first tume the whole business began
to strike me as queer. Why should she be sittung here all alone? She kept looking expectantly past my shoulder, but when I turned there was nothmg to see save one of the Inghted shop-windows in the exhibit. Everything was flickering eerily in the dim light that only emphasized the general gloom.

It was while I was standing there, wavering, uncertan how to answer but unable to move away, that a new voice spoke up.
"Is anything the matter, sr2 Are you ill?"
I looked aside to find a blue-unformed guard standing near, watching me anxiously.
"Why, no," I said "I was just talking to the young lady."
"What young lady, sir?"
I looked at hum, wondenng. She was sittung there, right in front of him He couldn't help but see her. "The young lady in the car," I said.

He looked from me to the car, and back again. His anxiety deepened, judging from his frown. "There is no young lady in the car."

I could see no point to his joke, if joke it was The girlshe'd called herself Lucy-was still gazung expectantly past my shoulder, looking durectly into the guard's face. I smiled at her uncertanly. "The attendant says you're not sittung there in the car."

She looked at me, wide-eyed. "What attendant? There's no one here but you and me."

I could feel myself going then The lights of the exhibit, dim before, were now flashing brillantly, on and off, like lightning Or so it seemed I was having trouble with my breathong, and my heart was beating in sickening, erratic tempo I felt a strong arm across my back, just under my shoulders, supporting me

Then everything went black
There was the sharp sting of ammonia in my nostrils I turned my head away, protesting thickly. Then someone was holding a glass to my lips Someone was murmurng soothingly. "Take it easy now. Take it easy now, sur, and you'll be
all right There," as my eyes opened, "you're feeling better already, aren't you?"

Instantly my head cleared I felt none of the usual bewilderment that attends a return to consciousness I remembered distinctly, vivdly, all that had happened in A STREET IN 1905
"The grl," I mumbled "The girl in the Pope-Hartford runabout."
"He's stlll dazed" It was the guard speaking to another. They flanked me on etther side We were sitting on one of the marble benches in the foyer of the Museum. "He keeps talking about a girl, and there wasn't any girl in the car."
"Poor old codger," the other sald "The exhubit probably brings back memories to hum, Mullen "
I began excitedly to explan the whole thing, but they hushed me up "Come now, sir," sald Mullen, "if you're feeling better, I'm afrad you'll have to leave It's way past closing time"
It seemed useless to protest any more, to hammer aganst the wall of their unbelief Besides, I wanted time to think. I dechned Mullen's offer to call me a cab, and walked down the marble steps The Museum, if you remember, is stuated in one of our large public parks When I was far enough away to attract no attention in case the guards were still watching, I sank onto a park bench

I was shaken by my expenience, and I couldn't clarify it in my mind How much did I actually remember, how much had I magined? If the girl, Lucy, had really been there, why had I seen her when the guard couldn't? Why had she seen me, when she couldn't see the guard? Had they both been lying? And, if so, to what purpose? Why should they attempt to deceive me, a total stranger? It was pontless

There remained only one plausible explanation My illness was causing me to have hallucinations But this theory I rejected instantly I was positive that I badn't magined anything I remembered too vividly seeing the gril, talking to her I could describe her to the last detanl, recall every word we'd exchanged

I got to my feet, sorely puzzled But of this much I was
determined: on the morrow I would revisit the Museum of Industry.

My actions on the next day would undoubtedly have been amusing to anyone save myself. I returned to the Museum, but for hours I pottered about, visiting every exhibit except A STREET IN 1905.

You may wonder that I didn't go there immediately. It was like this with me. For the first time in months, my curnosity was thoroughly aroused, and I had a consuming interest in life And so I was determined to savor it as long as possible I hesitated to return to the exhibit for fear I should find an empty motorcar containing no pretty garl, no mystery, nothing. I not only feared it, I expected it And I knew, and was afraid, of the sick disappointment I'd feel when I learned it had all been an illusion.

There was one thing I meant to find out first, if I could. Accordingly I made my way to the office of the director of the Museum on the top floor I paused outside the door lettered• Albert J Hawkes, but finally brought myself to enter.

Mr. Hawkes was a fussy little man in his forties I belteve he rather welcomed my appearance, for he wasn't very busy. By indirection, I led the conversation to the real object of my visit
"Do you have in your files," I asked, "the names of the ongral owners of the cars in A STREET IN 1905?"
"In some mstances, yes, Mr. Ellis Where the owner kept the car for years, finally donating it humself to the Museum Sometimes, though, the cars were bought from dealers specialzing in such things-in which case, they'd probably changed hands many tumes"
"I'd like to find out, if possible, who owned the PopeHartford runabout now in the exhibit."
"May I ask why?"
I had no intention of telling him the truth And I was determined to avoid all mention of Lucy, for I wanted no doubts raised as to my sanity I thought I knew what to expect, after my experience of the day before with the guards
So I answered evasively, "I once owned a car very like it. It would please me to think it was my car that had come to had been demolished in an accident years before

Hawkes nodded, with a tolerant smile for my vanty He spoke into the inter-office annunciator, and presently his secretary brought in a file

But I was doomed to disappointment.
Hawkes looked through the file, and shook his head regretfully "I'm sorry, Mr Ellis The Pope-Hartford runabout was bought from a dealer down in Indiana who was going out of business "

I hid my disappointment as well as I could, and shortly afterward took my leave, prepared to forget the whole thing But after I'd lunched in the basement cafeteria, I found I couldn't bring myself to leave the Museum without another visit to A STREET IN 1905

It was just as Id remembered from yesterday-the redcobbled pavement, the shop-windows, the motorcars that were a far cry from today's streamlined models

I'm not ashamed to confess that my heart was pounding as I approached the Pope-Hartford runabout.

But I needn't have feared
For she was there, stll looking mpatiently off to the right, her expectant expression a little stramed by now, her eyes seemungly a little tured.

Her smile for me was absent-munded.
"I'm sorry I left you so abruptly yesterday," I apologized. "I was taken suddenly ill"
"Yesterday?" She frowned slightly. "Why, you've only been gone a second."

I scarcely heard her I had so little tume The guard was not in sight but he mught reappear at any moment And I had no wish to attract his attentron again I said, "Won't you tell me how you happen to be here in the Museum?"
"Museum?" She cocked her head like an mquisitive bird. 'I don't understand you."

I gestured around, mpatently "But surely you can see? We're here in the Museum of Industry In the exhibit called A STREET IN 1905 You're garbed in the clothing of forty years ago You're stttung in a car that's forty years old."
"But-that's silly! My clothes are brand-new. And so 15 the car" She looked at me in faint alarm
"This is 1945," I insisted. "Wby, the Museum itself wasn't built forty years ago."

She was cowering away from me "Please go away!" she begged "You frighten me Nothing of what you say is true"
"But it 1s, it is" I was growing excited "Look about you! Who are you? What are you doing bere?"
"Stop 1t, stop it" She was really frightened now. Her eyes were wide with terror. "This is no Museum. We're here on the graveled driveway. There's the porte-cochere overhead Therc's the door to my father's bouse! Oh, I wish Arthur would come' He'll-he'll hut you! Yes, be will, for scaring me sol You're a horrible old man!"
"I'm telling you the truth!" I was almost beside myself. I was shoutung in my effort to convince ber I was waving my arms wildly, when I felt myself grabbed roughly from behind.
"See here now, sirl" It was Mullen, back again. "You'll have to stop this!"
'There were ten or twelve people behind him, all staning curiously, speaking together in alarmed whispers the whle they eyed me apprehensrvely. Then a portly little man was pushing them aside, bustling forward importantly.

It was Hawkes, the Museum drector.
"What's all this to-do, Mullen?" he asked the guard testily.
"It's this old gentleman, Mr Hawkes He's creatung a disturbance He was in here yesterday and was taken ill, raving about some grl he said he could see in this car. He's probably harmless enough, but a little-you know." Mullen made a circular motion whth his forefinger at the side of his head
"I'm not crazy!" I sputtered, outraged "I'm only tryng to convince the young lady in the car bere-"
"Come now, my dear sir, we simply can't have this sort of thing going on here in the Museum at all." Mr. Hawkes latd his hand gently enough on my arm. "There's no young lady in the car, as anyone can sce for himself."

I looked around The others present were nodding their beads in agreement. I forced myself to speak quietly.
"Just a minute, please." I shook off Hawkes' band, and
turned to the girl in the car "Lucy, please believe that I have no desire to frighten you But all that I told you is true There are a dozen other people here bestdes mysclf Can you see them?"

She shook her head doubtfully "Only you."
"And they can't see you! I'm the only one who can"
She sensed at last the sincerity in my voice She must have Sick dismay was dawning in her cyes. "But then-what has happened to me?" Terror replaced dismay. "Y'm afraid Afrad' Oh, can't someone help me?" She looked about imploringly Then, with a strangled sob, she covered ber face with her hands and began to weep hopelessly, hunching her shoulders like a forlorn bird in the rain trying to cover itself with its wings

If I had had only a moment more then, I thunk I might bave learned the truth But Hawkes was tugging impatiently at my arm
"Really now, sir," he stuttered "I must mssist that you leave It's for your own good I feel you are unwell "
I did what I could I protested vehemently I gave them my card bearing my name and address, and begged that they investagate me But they ignored my request. Hawkes and Mullen tightened their gnps on my arm They wanted only to get rid of me, to get me out of the Museum, presumably before I grew violent And I knew that, try as I would to enter again, I was barred from the Museum forever more They'd give out my description to all guards, and I'd be demed entrance at the door

Gently they hustled me from the exhibit. I stranned my eyes, looking back through the dimness The last I saw of her, Lucy was sull huddled there in her finery, crying quetly, hopelessly, on the front seat of the Pope-Hartford runabout

I returned home, common sense telling me I should try to dismiss from my mind the whole affair But I slept poorly that night and next day I knew it was useless I couldn't forget the sick despair in Lucy's eyes I'd torn the vell, destroying her illusion of happiness I must tear it yet a little more, trying to learn the truth I must help her, or I'd never rest peacefully

There was only one thing to do Investigate for myself The problem was where to begin It seemed hopeless The trall was so old And then it occurred to me that surely there couldn't have been many Pope-Hartford runabouts on the road in 1905. And hardly more than one whose owner's first name was Arthur To be sure, the car maý never have been registered in this city, but that was the chance I bad to take.

Luckily, this city is the capital of the state I looked up the address of the license bureau and went down there They weren't eager to look through their files for comparatively ancient and dusty tomes, but a greenback discreetly slipped into the hand of one of the attendants gamed me entrance to the vault itself where the books were kept After a prolonged search, I found the volume of regstrations for 1905

Going through the book was slow work and tedious, for there were more cars registered that year than one would have supposed But at last I found it A Pope-Hartford runabout registered in the name of Arthur H Comstock of 194 Beverley Drive.

I dropped in at the nearest drugstore and looked at the telephone durectory And here I drew a blank There was no Arthur H Comstock listed in the directory at all

Well, that was that Dejectedly I boarded a streetcar for home. But I hadn't gone two blocks before I was exctedly ringing the bell to stop the car. Of coursel The suburban drectory! After all, forty years had elapsed. The man might have followed the trend to the suburbs.

My hunch was proved night. There was an Arthur H. Comstock on Roscommon Place, out in Glen Oaks I was shaking with excitement and hope as I boarded the interurban

A Filipino man-servant admitted me to Arthur Comstock's home after taking my card, vanishing for minutes, and returning with his employer's permission to let me in.

Comstock was perhaps five years younger than myself-a tall, thin man with white harr, cold eyes, and an embittered expression on his face He was wearing a dinner jachet, and on the left lapel was a decoration I recognuzed-the tiny bright red ribbon of the Legion of Honor.

He was standing before the fireplace looking at my card in a puzzled manner as I entered diffidently, but he thawed enough to ask me to sit down Now that I was there, I felt decidedly uncomfortable and at a loss as to know just bow to begin

There was nothung else to do I plunged "Mr Comstock, I believe you were once the owner of a Pope-Hartford runabout?"

I was hardly prepared for his reaction to my question For a second he looked stunned, then all He turned the color of unset cement And then the angry red surged into his face
"Who are you?" he clipped "What do you mean by coming in here and asking -"

I sad, "Please Won't you hear me out? I've been very much disturbed these last few days Do you know that the car, which I believe to be yours, is on exhbit in the Museum of Industry?"

His eyes were fixed on me coldly "I know nothing about 1t. I sold it long ago But, even so, I can't possibly conceive your object-"

He broke off But he seemed rather wary Anyone could guess that in some manner the Pope-Hartford runabout had played an mportant part in his life It had been more than a means of transportation or source of pleasure And because I sensed this so very strongly it gave me the courage to go on.
"Is there any reason," I asked, "why someone should be wating for you on the Pope-Hartford runabout? A young girl, in a linen duster, with an emerald vell? A grl with hazel eyes and soft brown har? A grl named-Lucy?"

I stopped, appalled Comstock was staring at me His mouth was opening and closing soundlessly And on his face there was a well-mıgh indescribable expression. An expression compounded werrdly of horror and nausea and malevolence. For a moment I thought he meant to attack me And then he collapsed, utterly and completely I was never more alarmed in my life

There was a decanter on a stand, next to the divan on which he'd fallen I took it upon myself to pour him a drink, place it in his shakang hands He tried to refuse it. He kept shaking his head, luke a man with palsy.
"Get out!" he muttered hoarsely "Get out' I don't know who you are, but-"
"I had no idea-" I began helplessly, gultily. My own bands were shaking in reaction

By a visible effort, he regained control of himself, and his face was an icy mask of barely restrained fury and resentment "You're a feature writer, I suppose," he sneered "Anything for a story. Raking over the dust of forty years like a ghoul, exposing the grief and unhappiness of others to earn a miserable dollar for yourself. Get out of my housel"

I stood my ground I'd started this and I meant to finsh it.
"I'm as unhappy about this as yourself," I sand "I've had no rest for two days-not since she spoke to me in the Museum."

And quickly, before he could halt me, I poured out the story of the girl in the exhibit He listened Unwillingly at first, but he listened And as I hurried on eagerly, my words almost tripping over themselves in my haste, I could see reluctant belief begin to dawn in his eyes, to grow, until at last he was listening raptly with a faraway look on his face I knew he was no longer even aware of my presence I knew he believed.
"Lucy," he said softly "Lucy""
"You can't misunderstand me now," I finished "What would be my object in making up so preposterous a story? What have I to gain? Surely you can see it's only for my own peace of mind that I've persisted in following up what clues I had?"

He said heavily, "Sit down, Mr -Ellis."
"You do know the gril?" I asked eagerly. "There is some story about the Pope-Hartford runabout?"

His face was drawn and haggard as he nodded. "Yes She was my wife Forty years ago, Mr Ellis, we were marned The reception was held at ber father's house. I parked the Pope-Hartford runabout under the porte-cochere at the side It was new, I'd just bought it for our honeymoon trip Our friends knew nothing about it. They thought we were leaving in the carnage at the front door. The carriage was
only a decoy, of course, for them to the their signs and tin cans on "

He had a faum smule for the memory of that past gacty.
"Well, the plan was that I should hold them back, while Lacy changed into her going-away clothes, and slipped down a bach starway to wat for me in the car I'd join her there, and then we'd be off, giving our friends the slip-"

The faint smule had faded And I've never scen such sadness in the eyes of a human bcing
"And then?" I prompted softly Though I really didn't need to hear

He looked at me numbly "When I joined her, she was sttug erect in the front seat. I thought she had fallen aslecp But when I touched her gently to awahen her, she slumped forward She was dead, Mr Ellis, of a heart attack brought on by the excitement Dead, and we hadn't yet begun to heel I'd loved her deeply. I was nearly insane in my grief "

His hands opened emptuly, and he sighed "Well, and that was the end of 3 , the shattering of a dream As for the car, I couldn't stand the sight of it. I never wanted to see it again It lay there in her father's driveway for weehs until finally I had someone tow it away, and it was sold And that was the last I ever heard of it But now-now-"

He looked at me bleakly "I've never been able to believe m a life after death, Mr Ellis In my bitterness at losing Lucy, I've lived life to the full, plunging into experiences sometimes sordd, grabbing anything I cared to take, feeling it was no more than my due Because Life itself, you see, had cheated me of the only thing l'd ever really wanted But if I thought Lucy had been watting fathfully all these years, while I-" He winced, and added, low, "Ah, what must she think of me?"

I glanced away It seemed indecent to look at the naked pain in his face I sadd, "I wish you'd go to the Museum with me tomorrow afternoon Will you?"

And he sand, "Yes" But his voice was dull As dull as his eyes

I left hm there alone And though be'd made the appountment with me readly enough for the next afternoon, I felt
the first faint qualms of distrust. Had he been right? Were it better I had not stirred up the dust of forty years? And oh! would Lucy see hım?

I dreamed of her that night. Or was it a dream? There was the gentlest of caresses upon my cheek, the lightest of butterfly kisses My hand went up to touch the spot where warm pink lips had rested briefly
"Thank you'" she sald "Oh, thank youl"
It was Lucy's voice And she was happy. I couldn't doubt it Her happiness was almost a tangıble thing And suddenly I knew. And suddenly it no longer mattered that I was slowly dying For Death, I knew at last, was not an awesome thing, a specter to be feared Why, Death could be beautuful! You had only to hear Lucy's voice to know.

But why was she thanking me?
Was it a dream?
It was in the morning that Mrs Langdon, my landlady, knocked at my door "Some gentlemen to see you, Mr Ells"
Her voice seemed to waver uncertanly on the word "gentlemen," and she looked at me strangely when I opened my door "They're waitıng for you in the parlor, sur"

There was something odd about her manner, but I went directly downstars Two policemen were standing there And with them was Hawkes, the director of the Museum of Industry.
"This is the man," he sad to the policemen upon my appearance
"What's wrong?" I asked.
One of the officers spoke up. "I'll tell you frankly, sir, we have no warrant for your arrest. But we think $1 t^{\prime}$ 'd be to your own interest to come along with us for questioming "
"But I'm expecting a caller," I protested.
"I'm sorry, Mr Ellis," Hawkes sand "But I know you'll find this more important It isn't that we suspect you, exactlyafter all, there's the question of your age-and, frankly-"
He was growing incoherent He broke off, mopped his brow "I detest mystery!" he said fretfully, and looked at me as if something were my fault.

My curiosity was such, by now, that I would have accom-
panied them any place But they took me only to the Museum of Industry, up the familiar marble steps, into the private office of Mr. Hawhes

And behind Hawkes' desk sat a man they introduced as Inspector Shrewsbury. On his right sat the guard, Mullen "That's the man!" Mullen cried excitedly as I entered "The one who was hanging around the car, actung so funny" I sand quetly, "Perhaps of you"ll be good enough to tell me what this is all about-?"

Inspector Shrewsbury was eyeing me intently "The PopeHartford automobile, in which you were so interested, was stolen during the night."
"Stolen" I hadn't quite expected that "But-"
"Exactly" cried little Mr Hawkes excitedly. "I tell you, it's impossible! The Museum's doors are loched, the guards, the alarm system-" He was growing incoherent again "The car couldn't have been stolen!"
"Yet," Sbrewsbury pointed out gently, "the car is gone We'd like you to tell us, Mr Ellis, just why you were so interested in that particular automobile "

I was shaken. I knew they'd never believe my story But there was nothing for it I asked if I mught sit down, and then I told them all I knew about the Pope-Hartford runabout Told them of my investigations, and my interview with Arthur Comstock, omitting no detanl-every least word exchanged with Lucy and Arthur, every minute detal of therr appearance, even to the French decoration Arthur wore in his lapel I flatter myself that mine is a photographic memory, despite my age

They listened in sılence untul I had finushed.
"If you call Mr Comstock, I'm sure he'll be glad to vernfy everything I've said," I ended

Shrewsbury and Hawkes and Mullen exchanged glances Plainly they all entertaned doubts of my sanity Nevertheless, Shrewsbury pulled the desk phone toward him and dialed

When his call was answered, be asked for Mr Comstock And then it seemed to me he listened for minutes without saying a word, whule my tension mounted. He had a poker face, but his eyes narrowed as he listened
"Did you know Mr. Comstock well?" he asked when he'd hung up finally.

I knew something was wrong "I never met hım before last might Tell me, what has happened?"

Shrewsbury hesitated, then shrugged "Comstock shot and killed himself, sometume just before dawn."

I think I must have known what his answer would be. I felt no shock But there was something -

Lucy. Where was Lucy?
"I'd like to go to A STREET IN 1905," I said.
Wordlessly they accompanied me And there on the cobbled street was the vacant space where the Pope-Hartford runabout had stood Seemingly it had vanished into then arr

Only the four wooden blocks that had held it yet remaned
But I hoped I hoped that somewhere, some place, two light-hearted people were niding down that silver highway-to happiness

I told them so Shrewsbury, Mullen, and Hawkes.
"Of course, I don't expect you to believe me," I sard defensively.

But I didn't really care. $I$ believed What did it matter if they-

Shrewsbury stood motionless, staring thoughtfully down at the red cobblestones Then he uttered a wordless exclamation, and stooped in the dim light to pick up something When he stood erect again, he held out his hand

And resting on the palm of it was the tiny bright red ribbon of the Legion of Honor ...

## The Moonlit Road

## 1

## STATEMENT OF JOEL HEIMAN, JR.

I am the most unfortunate of men Rich. respected, farrly well educated and of sound health-with many other advantages usually valued by those having them and coveted by those who have them not-I sometumes think that I should be less unhappy if they had been denned me, for then the contrast between my outer and my inner life would not be contunually demanding a panful attention In the stress of privation and the need of effort I might sometimes forget the somber secret ever bafling the conjecture that it compels

I am the only chld of Jool and Julia Hetman The one was a well-to-do country gentleman, the other a beautiful and accomplshed woman to whom he was passionately attached with what I now know to have been a jealous and exacting devotion The famuly home was a few mules from Nashville, Tennessee, a large, irregularly built dwelling of no particular order of architecture, a little way off the road, in a park of trees and sbrubbery

At the tume of which I write I was nuneteen years old, a student at Yale One day I recesved a telegram from my father of such urgency that in compliance with its unexplamed demand I left at once for home At the railway station in Nashville a distant relative awaited me to apprise me of the reason for my recall my mother had been barbarously murdered-why and by whom none could conjecture, but the circumstances were these

My father had gone to Nashville, intending to return the next afternoon Something prevented his accomplishing the busmess in hand, so he returned on the same night, arriving just before the dawn In hus testumony before the coroner
he explained that having no latchkey and not caring to disturb the slecping servants, he bad, with no clearly defined intention, gone round to the rear of the house As he turned an angle of the building, he heard a sound as of a door gently closed, and saw in the darkness, indistunctly, the figure of a man, which instantly disappeared among the trees of the lawn A hasty pursuit and brief search of the grounds in the belief that the trespasser was someone secretly visiting a servant proving fruitless, he entered at the unlocked door and mounted the stairs to my mother's chamber Its door was open, and stepping into black darkness he fell headlong over some heavy object on the floor. I may spare myself the details, it was my poor mother, dead of strangulation by human hands!

Nothing had been taken from the house, the servants had heard no sound, and excepting those terrible finger marks upon the dead woman's throat-dear God! that I mught forget them! - no trace of the assassin was ever found

I gave up my studies and remaned with my father, who, naturally, was greatly changed Always of a sedate, taciturn disposition, he now fell into so deep a dejection that nothing could hold his attention, yet anything-a footfall, the sudden closing of a door-aroused m him a fitful interest, one might have called it an apprehension At any small surprise of the senses he would start visibly and sometimes turn pale, then relapse into a melancholy apathy deeper than before I suppose he was what is called a "nervous wreck." As to me, I was younger then than now-there is much in that Youth is Gilead, in which is balm for every wound Ah, that I might again dwell in that enchanted land! Unacquainted with greef, I knew not how to apprase my bereavement; I could not rightly estimate the strength of the stroke

One night, a few months after the dreadful event, my father and I walked home from the city The full moon was about three hours above the eastern horizon, the entire countryside had the solemn stillness of a summer nught, our footfalls and the ceaseless song of the katydids were the only sound aloof Black shadows of bordering trees lay athwart the road, which, in the short reaches between, gleamed a ghostly white As we approached the gate to our dwelling,
whose front was in shadow, and in which no light shone, my sather suddenly stopped and clutched my arm, saying, hardly above his breath-
"God God! what is that?"
"I hear nothing," I seplicd
"But see-sec!" he said, pointang along the road, directly ahead
I sad "Nothing is there Come, father, let us go in-you are ill"

He had released my arm and was standing rigid and motoonless in the center of the illuminated soadway, staring like one bereft of sense His face in the moonlight showed a pallor and fixity mexpressibly distressing I pulled gently at his sleeve, but he had forgoten ms custence. Presently he began to retire bachward, step by step, never for an instant removing his eyes from what he saw, or thought he saw I turned half round to follow, but stood irresolute I do not recall any feeling of fear, unless a sudden chill was its phystcal manifestation It seemed as if an icy wind had touched my face and enfolded my body from head to foot, I could feel the stri of it in my harr.

At that moment my attention was drawn to a light that suddenly streamed from an upper window of the house one of the servants, awakened by what mysterious premonition of evil who can say, and in obedience to an umpulse that she was never able to name, had lit a larnp When I turned to look for my father he was gone, and in all the years that have passed no whisper of his fate has come across the borderland of conjecture from the realm of the unknown.

## II

## STATEMENT OF CASPAR GRATTAN

To-day I am said to live, to-morrow, here in thes room, will he a senseless shape of clay that all too long was I If anyone lift the cloth from the face of that unpleasant thung it will be in gratification of a mere morbid curiosity Some, doubtless, will go further and inquire, "Who was he?" In thus writing I supply the only answer that I am able to make-

Caspar Grattan Surely, that should be enough The name has served my small need for more than twenty years of a life of unknown length True, I gave it to myself, but lacking another I had the right In this world one must have a name, it prevents confusion, even when it does not establish identhty Some, though, are known by numbers, which also seem inadequate distinctions

One day, for illustration, I was passing along a street of a city, far from here, when I met two men in uniform, one of whom, half pausing and looking curiously into my face, said to his companion, "That man looks like 767." Something in the number seemed familiar and horrible Moved by an uncontrollable impulse, I sprang into a side street and ran untll I fell exhausted in a country lane

I have never forgotten that number, and always it comes to memory attended by gibbering obscenty, peals of joyless laughter, the clang of iron doors So I say a name, even if self-bestowed, is better than a number In the register of the potter's field I shall soon have both What wealth!

Of him who shall find this paper I must beg a little consideration It is not the history of my life; the knowledge to write that is denied me This is only a record of broken and apparently unrelated memones, some of them as distinct and sequent as brilliant beads upon a tbread, others remote and strange, having the character of crimson dreams wrth interspaces blank and black-witch-fires glowing still and red in a great desolation

Standing upon the shore of eternaty, I turn for a last look landward over the course by which I came There are twenty years of footprints farly distinct, the impressions of bleeding feet They lead through poverty and pain, devous and unsure, as of one staggering beneath a burden-

> Remote, unfrended, melancholy, slow.

Ah, the poet's prophecy of Me-how admırable, how dreadfully admurable'

Backward beyond the beginning of thus via dolorosa-thus epic of suffering with episodes of sin-I see nothing clearly;
it comes out of a cloud $I$ hnow that it spans only twenty years, yet I am an old man

One does not remember one's birth-one has to be told. But with me it was different, life came to me full-handed and dowered me with all my facultics and powers Of a previous eustence I hnow no more than others, for all have stammering intimations that may be memories and may be dreams I hnow only that my first consciousness was of maturity in body and mind-a consciousness accepted without surprise or conjecture I merely found myself walking in a forest, half-clad, footsore, unutterably weary and hungry. Sceing a farmhouse, I approached and asked for food, which was given me by one who inquired my name I did not know, yet knew that all had names. Greatly embarrassed, I retreated, and nught coming on, lay down in the forest and slept.

The next day I entered a large town which I shall not name Nor shall I recount further incidents of the life that is now to end-a life of wandering, always and everywhere baunted by an overmastering sense of crime in punishment of wrong and of terror in punshment of crime Let me see if I can reduce it to narrative

I seem once to have lived near a great city, a prosperous planter, married to a woman whom I loved and distrusted We had, it sometimes seems, one child, a youth of brilliant parts and promise He is at all times a vague figure, never clearly drawn, frequently altogether out of the picture

One luckless evening it occurred to me to test my wife's fidelity in a vulger, commonplace way famular to everyone who has acquantance with the literature of fact and fiction I went to the caty, telling my wife that I should be absent untrl the following afternoon But I returned before daybreak and went to the rear of the house, purposing to enter by a door with which I had secretly so tampered that it would seem to lock, yet not actually fasten. As I approached it, I heard it gently open and close, and saw a man steal away into the darkness With murder in my heart, I sprang after hum, but he had vanished without even the bad luck of identification Sometmes now I cannot even persuade myself that it was a human being

Crazed with jealousy and rage, blind and bestial with all the elemental passions of insulted manhood, I entered the house and sprang up the stairs to the door of my wife's chamber It was closed, but having tampered with its lock also, I easily entered and despite the black darkness soon stood by the side of her bed My groping bands told me that although disarranged it was unoccupied
"She is below," I thought, "and ternfied by my entrance has evaded me in the darkness of the ball"

With the purpose of seeking her I turned to leave the room, but took a wrong direction-the right one' My foot struck her, cowering in a corner of the room Instantly my hands were at her throat, stifling a shriek, my knees were upon her struggling body; and there in the darkness, without a word of accusation or reproach, I strangled her till she died!

There ends the dream. I have related it in the past tense, but the present would be the fitter form, for again and agan the somber tragedy reenacts itself in my consciousness-over and over I lay the plan, I suffer the confirmation, I redress the wrong Then all is blank; and afterward the raus beat against the grimy window-panes, or the snows fall upon my scant attire, the wheels rattle in the squalid streets where my life lies in poverty and mean employment If there is ever sunshine I do not recall it, if there are birds they do not sing

There is another dream, another vision of the night. I stand among the shadows in a moonlit road I am aware of another presence, but whose I cannot rightly determine In the shadow of a great dwelling I catch the gleam of white garments, then the figure of a woman confronts me in the road-my murdered wifel There is death in the face, there are marks upon the throat. The cyes are fixed on mine with an infinte gravity which is not reproach, nor hate, nor menace, nor anything less terrible than recogntion Before this awful apparition I retreat in terror-a terror that is upon me as I write I can no longer rightly shape the words See! they-

Now I am calm, but truly there is no more to tell the incident ends where it began-in darkness and in doubt.

Yes, I am again in control of myself "the captain of my soul" But that is not respite, it is another stage and phase of expiation My penance, constant in degrec, is mutable in kind.
one of its variants is tranquillity After all, it is only a lifesentence "To Hell for life"-that is a foolsh penalty the culprit chooses the duration of his pumshment. To-day my term expres

To each and all, the peace that was not mine

## III

## STATEMENT OF THE LATE JULIA HETMAN, THROUGH THE MEDIUM BAYROLLES

I had retired early and fallen almost ummediately into a peaceful sleep, from which I awoke with that indefinable sense of peril which is, I think, a common experience in that other, earlher life Of its unmeaning character, too, I was entrely persuaded, yet that did not banush it My husband, Joel Hetman, was away from home, the servants slept in another part of the house But these were familiar conditions, they had never before distressed me Nevertheless, the strange terror grew so insupportable that conquering my reluctance to move I sat up and lit the lamp at my bedside Contrary to my expectation this gave me no relief, the light seemed rather an added danger, for I reflected that it would shine out under the door, disclosing my presence to whatever evil thing mught lurk outside You that are still in the flesh, subject to horrors of the imagnation, think what a monstrous fear that must be which seeks in darkness security from malevolent existences of the ought That is to spring to close quarters with an unseen enemy-the strategy of desparr'

Extingurhing the lamp I pulled the bedclothing about my head and lay trembling and silent, unable to shriek, forgetful to pray In this pitiable state I must have lan for what you call hours-with us there are no hours, there is no tume

At last it came-a soft, irregular sound of footfalls on the stars' They were slow, hesitant, uncertain, as of something that did not see its way, to my disordered reason all the more terrifying for that, as the approach of some blind and mendless malevolence to which is no appeal I even thought that I must have left the hall lamp burning and the groping of this creature proved it a monster of the mght. This was fool-
ish and inconsistent with my previous dread of the light, but what would you have? Fear has no brans, it is an idiot. The dismal witness that it bears and the cowardly counsel that it whispers are unrelated We know this well, we who have passed into the Realm of Terror, who skulk in cternal dusk among the scenes of our former lives, invisible even to ourselves and one another, yet biding forlorn in lonely places; yearning for speech with our loved ones, yet dumb, and as fearful of them as they of us Sometimes the disability is removed, the law suspended by the deathless power of love or hate we break the spell-we are seen by those whom we would warn, console, or punsh What form we seem to them to bear we know not, we know only that we ternfy even those whom we most wish to comfort, and from whom we most crave tenderness and sympathy.

Forgive, I pray you, this inconsequent digression by what was once a woman You who consult us in this imperfect way-you do not understand You ask foolsh questions about things unknown and things forbidden Much that we know and could impart in our speech is meaningless in yours We must communicate with you through a stammering intelligence in that small fraction of our language that you yourselves can speak You think that we are of another world No, we have knowledge of no world but yours, though for us it holds no sunlight, no warmth, no music, no laughter, no song of birds, nor any companionshup O God' what a thing it is to be a ghost, cowenng and shivering in an altered world, a prey to apprehension and despar!

No, I did not $d_{1 e}$ of fright the Thing turned and went away. I heard it go down the stars, hurriedly, I thought, as if itself in sudden fear Then I rose to call for help Hardly had my shaking hand found the doorknob when-merciful heaven!-I heard it returning Its footfalls as it remounted the stairs were rapid, heavy and loud, they shook the house I fled to an angle of the wall and crouched upon the floor I tried to pray. I tried to call the name of my dear husband Then I heard the door thrown open. There was an interval of unconsciousness, and when I revived I felt a strangling clutch upon my tbroat-felt my arms feebly beating aganst somethung that bore me backward-felt my tongue tbrusting
itself from between my teeth! And then I passed minto this life.
No, I have no knowledge of what it was The sum of what we knew at death is the measure of what we know afterward of all that went before Of this existence we know many things, but no new light falls upon any page of that, in memory is written all of it that we can read Here are no heights of truth overlooking the confused landscape of that dubitable doman We still dwell in the Valley of the Shadow, lurk in its desolate places, peering from brambles and thickets at its mad, malign mhabitants How should we have new knowledge of that fading past?

What I am about to relate happened on a nught. We know when it is nught, for then you retire to your houses and we can venture from our places of concealment to move unafraid about our old homes, to look in at the mindows, even to enter and gaze upon your faces as you sleep I had lingered long near the dwelling where I had been so cruelly changed to what I am, as we do while any that we love or hate reman Vainly I had sought some method of manifestation, some way to make my continued existence and my great love and poigoant pity understood by my husband and son Always if they slept they would wake, or if m my desperation I dared approach them when they were awake, would turn toward me the terrible eyes of the living, frightening me by the glances that I sought from the purpose that I held.

On this nught I had searched for them without success, fearing to find them, they were nowhere in the house, nor about the moonlit lawn For, although the sun is lost to us forever, the moon, full-orbed or slender, remans to us Sometumes it shines by night, sometumes by day, but always it rises and sets, as in that other life

I left the lawn and moved in the white light and silence along the road, aumless and sorrowing Suddenly I heard the voice of my poor husband in exclamations of astonishment, with that of my son in reassurance and dissuasion, and there by the shadow of a group of trees they stood-near, so near! Their faces were toward me, the cyes of the elder man fixed upon mine He saw me-at last, at last, be saw mel In the consciousness of that, my terror fled as a cruel dream. The
death-spell was broken Love had conquered Law' Mad with exultation I shouted-I must have shouted, "He sees, he sees he will understand"" Then, controlling myself, I moved forward, smiling and consciously beautiful, to offer myself to his arms, to comfort hum with endearments, and, with my son's hand in mine, to speak words that should restore the broken bonds between the living and the dead

Alas! alas' his face went white with fear, his eges were as those of a hunted animal He backed away from me, as I advanced, and at last turned and fled into the wood-whther, it is not given to me to know

To my poor boy, left doubly desolate, I have never been able to impart a sense of my presence Soon he, too, must pass to this Lufe Invisible and be lost to me forever

## E. M. Forster

## The Curate's Friend

It is uncertan how the Faun came to be in Wiltshire Perhaps he came over with the Roman legronaries to live with his friends in camp, talking to them of Lucrethls, or Garganus or of the slopes of Etna, they in the joy of their recall forgot to take hum on board, and he wept in evile, but at last he found that our hills also understood his sorrows, and rejoiced when he was happy Or, perhaps he came to be there because he bad been there always There is nothug particularly classical about a faun it is only that the Greeks and Italians have ever had the sharpest cyes You will find him in the "Tempest" and the "Benedicte", and any country which has beech clumps and sloping grass and very clear streams may reasonably produce hum.

How I came to see hum is a more defficult question For to see hum there is required a certan quality, for which truthfulness is too cold a name and animal spirits too coarse a one, and he alone knows how this quality came to be me me man has the right to call humself a fool, but I may say that I then presented the perfect semblance of one I was facetious without humour and serious without conviction Every Sunday I would speak to my rural panshoners about the other world in the tone of one who has been behind the scenes, or I would explan to them the errors of the Pelagians, or I would warn them against hurrying from one dissipation to another Every Tuesday I gave what I called "straight talks to my lads"-talks which led straight past anything awkward. And every Thursday I addressed the Mothers' Union on the duties of wives or widows, and gave them practical hints on the management of a famuly of ten.

I took myself in, and for a tume I certanly took in Emily I have never known a grl attend so carefully to my sermons, or laugh so heartly at my jokes It is no wonder that I became engaged. She has made an excellent wife, freely cor-
recting her husband's absurdities, but allowing no one else to breathe a word aganst them, able to talk about the subconscious self in the drawing-room, and yet have an ear for the children crying in the nursery, or the plates breaking in the scullery An excellent wrfe-better than I ever imagned. But she has not married me.

Had we stopped indoors that afternoon nothing would have happened. It was all owing to Emily's mother, who insisted on our tea-ing out Opposite the village, across the stream, was a small chalk down, crowned by a beech copse, and a few Roman earthworks (I lectured very vividly on those earthworks they have since proved to be Saxon) Hither did I drag up a tea-basket and a heavy rug for Emily's mother, while Emily and a little friend went on in front The little friend-who has played all through a much less important part than he supposes-was a pleasant youth, full of intellngence and poetry, especially of what he called the poetry of earth He longed to wrest earth's secret from her, and I have seen him press his face passionately into the grass, even when he has believed himself to be alone Emily was at that time full of vague aspirations, and, though I should have preferred them all to centre in me, yet it seemed unreasonable to deny her such other opportunities for self-culture as the neighbourhood provided

It was then my habit, on reaching the top of any eminence, to exclaim facetiously "And who will stand on etther hand and keep the bridge with me?" at the same moment nolently agitating my arms or casting my wide-awake at an imagnary foe Emily and the friend received my sally as usual, nor could I detect any msincerity in their mirth Yet I was convinced that some one was present who did not think I had been funny, and any public speaker will understand my growing uneasiness

I was somewhat cheered by Emily's mother, who puffed up exclaiming, "Kind Harry, to carry the things! What should we do without you, even now! Oh, what a view' Can you see the dear Cathedral? No Too hazy. Now I'm gong to sit right on the rug"-She smiled mysteriously "The downs in September, you know"

We gave some perfunctory admiration to the landscape,
which is indeed only beautiful to those who admire land, and to them perhaps the most beautiful in England. For here is the body of the great chalk spider who straddles over our is-land-whose legs are the south downs and the north downs and the Chilterns, and the tips of whose toes poke out at Cromer and Dover He is a clean creature, who grows as few trees as he can, and those few in tidy clumps, and he loves to be tickled by quichly flowing streams He is pimpled all over with earthworks, for from the begnning of tume men have fought for the privilege of standing on him, and the oldest of our temples is built upon hus back

But in those days I liked my country snug and pretty, full of gentlemen's residences and shady bowers and people who touch their hats The great sombre expanses on which one may walk for mules and bardly shift a landmark or meet a genteel person were still intolerable to mc I turned away as soon as propriety allowed and sard, "And may I now prepare the cup that cheers?"

Emily's mother replied "Kind man, to help me I always do say that tea out is worth the extra effort. I wish we led ssmpler lives" We agreed with her I spread out the food. "Won't the kettle stand? Oh, but make it stand" I did so There was a little cry, faint but distinct, as of something in pan
"How silent it all is up here!" sard Emily.
I dropped a llghted match on the grass, and again I heard the little cry
"What is that?" I asked
"I only said it was so silent," sard Emily.
"Silent, indeed," echoed the little friend.
Suent' the place was full of noises If the match had fallen in a drawng-room it could not have been worse, and the loudest noise came from beside Emuly herself I had exactly the sensation of going to a great party, of wating to be announced in the echoing hall, where I could hear the voices of the guests, but could not yet see therr faces It is a nervous moment for a self-conscious man, espectally if all the voices should be strange to him, and he has never met his host.
"My dear Harryl" said the elder lady, "never mind about that match. That'll smoulder away and harm no one. Teaee-
ee' I always say-and you will find Emily the same-that as the magic hour of five approaches, no matter how good a lunch, one begins to feel a sort of -"

Now the Faun is of the kind who capers upon the NeoAttic reliefs, and if you do not notice his ears or see his tall, you take him for a man and are horrifed
"Bathing'" I cried wildly. "Such a thing for our village lads, but I quite agree-more supervision-I blame myself. Go away, bad boy, go away!"
"What will he think of next!" said Emily, whule the creature beside her stood up and beckoned to me I advanced struggling and gesticulating with tiny steps and horrified cries, exorcising the apparition with my hat. Not otherwise had I advanced the day before, when Emily's meces showed me their guinea pigs And by no less hearty laughter was I greeted now Until the strange fingers closed upon me, I strll thought that here was one of my parishioners and did not cease to exclaim, "Let me go, naughty boy, let go" And Emily's mother, believing herself to have detected the joke, rephed, "Well I must confess they are naughty boys and reach one even on the rug: the downs in September, as I said before."

Here I caught sight of the tall, uttered a wild shriek and fled into the beech copse behind
"Harry would have been a born actor," said Emily's mother as I left them.

I realized that a great crisis in my life was approaching, and that if I farled in it I might permanently lose my selfesteem. Already in the wood I was troubled by a multitude of vorces-the voices of the hill beneath me, of the trees over my head, of the very insects in the bark of the tree I could even hear the stream licking little pieces out of the meadows, and the meadows dreamly protesting. Above the din-which is no louder than the flight of a bee-rose the Faun's voice saying, "Dear priest, be placid, be placid: why are you frightened?"
"I am not fraghtened," said I-and indeed I was not. "But I am grieved: you have disgraced me in the presence of ladies"
"No one else has seen me," he said, smillng idly. "The
women have tught boots and the man has long hair Those kinds never see For years I have only spoken to chuldren, and they lose sight of me as soon as they grow up But you will not be able to lose sight of me, and untul you die you will be my friend Now I begin to make you happy lue upon your back or run races, or clumb trees, or shall I get you blackberries, or harebells, or wives-"
In a terrible voice I said to hum, "Get thee behind me!" He got behind me "Once for all," I continued, "let me tell you that it is vain to tempt one whose happiness consists in giving happiness to others"
"I cannot understand you," he sard ruefully. "What is to tempt?"
"Poor woodland creature!" satd I, turning round "How could you understand? It was idle of me to chide you It is not your little nature to comprehend a life of self-denial. Ah! ff only I could reach you!"
"You have reached him," sard the hill.
"If only I could touch you!"
"You have touched him," said the hill.
"But I will never leave you," burst out the Faun "I will sweep out your shnne for you, I wll accompany you to the meetings of matrons I will ennch you at the bazaars"

I shook my head "For these things I care not at all And mdeed I was minded to reject your offer of service altogether There I was wrong You shall help me-you shall help me to make others happy"
"Dear priest, what a curious lifel People whom I have never seen-people who cannot see me-why should I make them happy?"
"My poor lad-perhaps in time you will learn why Now begone commence On this very hull sits a young lady for whom I have a high regard Commence with her Aha! your face falls I thought as much You cannot do anything Here is the conclusion of the whole matter!"
"I can make her happy," he replied, "if you order me! and when I have done so, perhaps you will trust me more" Emily's mother had started home, but Emuly and the little friend still sat beside the tea-things she in her white piqué dress and biscuit straw, he in his rough but well-
cut summer suit The great pagan figure of the Faun towered insolently above them

The friend was saying, "And have you never felt the appalling loneliness of a crowd?"
"All that," replied Emuly, "have I felt, and very much more-"

Then the Faun lard his hands upon them They, who had only intended a little cultured flirtation, resisted him as long as they could, but were gradually urged minto each other's arms, and embraced with passion.
"Miscreant'" I shouted, bursting from the wood "You have betrayed me"
"I know it I care not," cried the little friend "Stand aside. You are in the presence of that which you do not understand In the great solitude we have found ourselves at last."
"Remove your accursed hands!" I sbrieked to the Faun,
He obeyed and the little friend continued more calmly "It is idle to chude What should you know, poor clerical creature, of the mystery of love of the eternal man and the eternal woman, of the self-effectuation of a soul?"
"That is true," said Emily angrily "Harry, you would never have made me happy. I shall treat you as a friend, but how could I give myself to a man who makes such silly jokes? When you played the buffoon at tea, your hour was sealed I must be treated seriously. I must see infinities broadening around me as I rise. You may not approve of 1 t, but so I am. In the great solitude I have found myself at last."
"Wretched grill" I cned. "Great solitude' O pair of helpless puppets-"

The little friend began to Iead Emily away, but I heard her whisper to him. "Dear, we can't possibly leave the basket for Harry after this and mother's rug, do you mind having that in the other band?"

So they departed and I flung myself upon the ground with every appearance of despair.
"Does he cry?" sad the Faun.
"He does not cry," answered the hill "His eyes are as dry as pebbles"

My tormentor made me look at hum. "I see bappiness at the bottom of your heart," sald he
"I trust I have my secret springs," I answered stiffly And then I prepared a scathing denunciation, but of all the words I mught have said, I only said one and it began with "D." He gave a joyful cry, "Oh, now you really belong to us To the end of your lufe you will swear when you are cross and laugh when you are happy Now laugh!"
There was a great slence All nature stood watting, whule a curate tried to conceal hus thoughts not only from nature but from humself I thought of my mjured pride, of my baffled unselfishness, of Emuly, whom I was losing tbrough no fault of her own, of the little friend, who just then slipped beneath the heavy tea basket, and that decided me, and I laughed

That evening, for the first tıme, I heard the chalk downs slinging to each other across the valleys, as they often do when the air is quet and they have had a comfortable day From my study window I could see the sunlt figure of the Faun, sitting before the beech copse as a man sits before his house And as nught came on I knew for certan that not only was he asleep, but that the hills and woods were asleep also The stream, of course, never slept, any more than it ever freezes Indeed, the hour of darkness is really the hour of water, which has been somewhat stufled all day by the great pulsings of the land That is why you can feel it and hear it from a greater distance in the might, and why a bath after sundown is most wonderful

The joy of that first evening is still clear in my memory, in spite of all the happy years that have followed I remember it when I ascend my pulpit-I have a living now-and look down upon the best people sitting beneath me pew after pew, generous and contented, upon the worst people, crowded in the ansles, upon the whiskered tenors of the choir, and the high-browed curates and the church-wardens fingering their bags, and the superchious vergers who turn late comers from the door I remember it also when I sit in my comfortable bachelor rectory, amidst the carpet slippers that good young ladies have worked for me, and the oak brackets that have been carved for me by good young men, amidst my phalanx of presentation teapots and my illumunated testimonials and all the other offerings of people who beleve that I have given them a helping hand, and who really have belped me out of
the mire themselves And though I try to communicate that joy to others-as I try to communicate anything else that seems good-and though I sometimes succeed, yet I can tell no one exactly how it came to me For if I breathed one word of that, my present life, so agreeable and profitable, would come to an end, my congregation would depart, and so should I, and instead of being an asset to my parish, I might find myself an expense to the nation Therefore in the place of the lyrical and rhetorical treatment, so suitable to the subject, so congenal to my profession, I have been forced to use the unworthy medium of a narrative, and to delude you by declaring that this is a short story, surtable for reading in the tran.


[^0]:    *Note. Every effort has been made to get in touch with the authors designated by an asterisk, to obtain permission to include their stories in this reprint edition. However, as of going to press the search has been unsuccessful Permussions were granted for the ongenal edition, and the necessary formalities will be completed for this reprint whenever the authors get in touch with the editor

[^1]:    * Please note the acknowledgnent in the final paragraph of thes Introduction G C

[^2]:    "Hı, Tom," she sard

[^3]:    'What's the Cheetah's mongspan, Jake?" she asked
    "Twenty-mine feet," he said and then, curnously, "What's yours?"
    "Fifteen four, tup to tup," she smiled, and she stretched them to the celling She yawned "Feels good!"
    "Do you realize I don't even know what to call you?" "Call me Bess"

[^4]:    The judge advocate put another question.
    The doctor answered with promptness and certitude. 'Yes, I have heard of such cases They are not of uncommon occurrence I have heard them discussed in many a wardroom Last spring, when the division was proceeding

