OKS 542 TALES FROM NOT LONG FOR THIS HORROR **STORIES** TO CHILL THE GRISLY IN HEART AUGUST DERLETH AUGUST DERLETH, that extraordinarily prolific writer (these stories are from his 55th book!) is a master of the macabre, an authority on supernatural and uncanny fiction.

The 22 tales which compose this collection are actually a kind of cross-section of Derleth's writing in the field up to 1948, the pick of twenty years of happy delving into the gruesome antics of creatures beyond the threshold of death.

Here are such delicious spine-tinglers as the stories of a gibbet in the clouds, the man who returned to the scene of the crime (except that he had been the victim), the housewife who knew exactly what to do with a vampire, and (for gardeners) the strange effects of using human bodies as organic feeding matter. As well as many others too horrifying to describe . . .

LIGHTS!

In the genre of the weird, August Derleth has written these books:

SOMEONE IN THE DARK • SOMETHING NEAR • THE LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD • NOT LONG FOR THIS WORLD

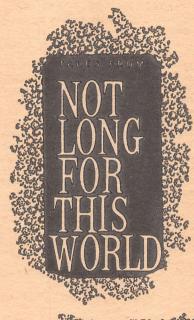
and has edited these:

SLEEP NO MORE: 20 Masterpieces of Horror WHO KNOCKS?: 20 Masterpieces of the Spectral THE NIGHT SIDE: Masterpieces of the Strange and Terrible DARK OF THE MOON: Poems of Fantasy and the Macabre THE SLEEPING AND THE DEAD: Thirty Uncanny Tales STRANGE PORTS OF CALL: 20 Masterpieces of Science-Fiction THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOON

Apart from the macabre, August Derleth has written so many books that there is not space on this page to list all of them. Of them, the most important are:

WIND OVER WISCONSIN • EVENING IN SPRING • BRIGHT JOURNEY
THE SHIELD OF THE VALIANT • COUNTRY GROWTH • SELECTED
POEMS • STILL IS THE SUMMER NIGHT • RESTLESS IS THE RIVER •
VILLAGE DAYBROOK: A SAC PRAIRIE JOURNAL • NO FUTURE FOR
LUANA • "IN RE: SHERLOCK HOLMES": THE ADVENTURES OF
SOLAR PONS • THE EDGE OF NIGHT • THE MILWAUKEE ROAD: ITS
FIRST HUNDRED YEARS • STILL SMALL VOICE: THE BIOGRAPHY OF
ZONA GALE • H. P. L.: A MEMOIR • THE WISCONSIN: RIVER OF A
THOUSAND ISLES • SAC PRAIRIE PEOPLE • WISCONSIN EARTH
(an omnibus containing SHADOW OF NIGHT,

(an omnibus containing SHADOW OF NIGHT,
PLACE OF HAWKS, VILLAGE YEAR)





BALLANTINE BOOKS

NEW YORK

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The Shadow on the Sky

SIR HILARY JAMES saw the thing first at dusk, while returning from a stroll on the fens. He said, half aloud, "I am tired," and passed his his hand over his eyes; but the thing did not vanish. Then he looked at it steadily for a moment, and decided at last that it was one of those inexplicable optical illusions, similar to a mirage, which have come to so many tired wanderers. And though he was not at all tired, this explanation gave him a certain satisfaction, and his vague uneasiness fell away from him. When he got home, he forgot about it entirely.

Then, in the middle of the night, Sir Hilary awoke in sudden, unaccountable terror. He felt that he was stifling, and threw back the covers. Then he got up and raised the window. At that moment, he saw the thing for the second time. There it was on the slate-gray sky—a great black shadow, fixed upon the gray and white of the clouds, the shadow of a gallows-tree, and a man hanging from it.

A gigantic thing it was, an utterly impossible thing, and he continued to watch it in fascination. It struck him suddenly that the thing rose out of the fens and up into the sky. But he knew there was nothing on the fens. Now he saw that there was a movement about the shadow, and as he watched, he saw that the man hanging was swinging gently to and fro in the sky. Then, abruptly, Sir Hilary reached up and pulled the shade across the window. A moment later, he turned up the light.

Sir Hilary James was not a model English gentleman. The countryside was rather soured on him, and he, while not an unplesant gentleman, cared not a whit for the opinion of his neighbors. Most of them were simple country people, but there were not a few titles among them. Sir Hilary was himself a baronet of a rather obscure family. To the unfounded irritation of his titled neighbors, he refused to attend their social functions. To add to this, he strove noticeably to cut short their friendly calls, so that in time they stopped entirely. Nor did he ever return their visits. His general attitude was not conducive to intimacy, or even to a sort of vague friendliness. It was not that he was a disagreeable person, and his neighbors seemed somehow to realize this, but that for some reason their presence disturbed him.

He was unmarried, and lived in his house on the fringe of the fens with his four servants. The secret of his attempts at isolation was variously interpreted by his neighbors. There were some who thought of him as hiding from the law, and some who looked upon him as a man with some dark secret to cloak. It had never occurred to these simple people that there might at some time be in the house near the fens a James who had no interest in them. As a matter of fact, Sir Hilary James was writing a book, a sort of history of his family, and, with some journalistic experience behind him, he realized that interruptions of any kind might be fatal to his end. He took his recreation in lonely walks over the fens and in short runs up to London.

James had almost completed the history of his line when the apparition came upon him. After the occurrence on the fens, he took no more strolls and after what he saw from the window, he avoided the windows at night. But he could not escape the thing as easily as that. It was very difficult to keep from looking out the windows, and the sky was very easy to see. Besides, the shadow had about it a disconcerting irregularity in its appearance. He was not long in discovering that the shadow had no stationary form, but seemed designed, rather, to catch his eye. The history of James' line was destined not to be finished soon, and Sir Hilary James realized that the shadow on the sky was the distracting influence. When the thing began to appear by day, he yielded to his better judgment and called in Sir Halstead Massingham, a nerve specialist and authority on psychic disorders arising from the nervous system.

Sir Halstead, somewhat of an austere individual and the owner of a nature similar in many respects to that of Sir Hilary James, found his patient on the verge of a nervous collapse—not so much for fear of the shadow as from an inner conviction that he would not be able to complete the history on which he had set his heart and mind.

Sir Halstead, with the air of the specialist who is reasonably certain of what his first analysis will disclose, made a preliminary examination of his patient, together with a thorough inquiry into his daily habits. The examination disclosed scarcely anything abnormal, a discovery which so disconcerted Sir Halstead that he suggested to Sir Hilary the advisability of calling in a consultant. James readily consented. Consequently, Sir Halstead wired to London for Dr. Robin Davey, an alienist. Dr. Davey, in the midst of his rise to prestige, could not very well afford to disregard Sir Halstead's request. He arrived within twelve hours after his receipt of Sir Halstead's wire.

Together, the two of them gave James a rather rigid and uncomfortable cross-examination. This brought them nothing more than Sir Halstead had already learned from his patient. The tale of the shadow on the sky was regarded somewhat skeptically. Sir Halstead had been unable to see the shadow the preceding night, and that night Dr. Davey

was likewise disappointed.

James assiduously avoided the windows, though in the middle of the night he called out, and, when Sir Halstead came to him, told him that the shadow had been reflected in the mirror opposite the window, and that he had seen the man hanging, and that the man was laughing silently

and horribly. Could the shade be lowered?

The immediate result of this incident was a consultation between the two specialists. Sir Hilary James was regarded as suffering from a most peculiar illusion, brought on perhaps by his isolation, added to the intense mental stress of his studies. In the end it was thought best to suggest to James that he force himself to face the shadow and watch it carefully as long as he could stand up under the strain of the thing. After some persuasion, James submitted hesitantly and the following night was fixed upon for the experiment.

It was decided that James was to watch the fens from the window of his chamber; he was to sit and stare steadily at whatever seemed to appear, and with the specialists on either side of him, try to convince himself that the thing was an optical illusion. To this arrangement Sir Hilary agreed with less reluctance than he had shown when the plan was first proposed.

Eight o'clock that evening found the three of them sitting at the window, James gazing earnestly out across the lowlands, and the doctors closely observing their patient. It was to be expected that nothing would occur for the first hour or two. After an early excitement, James became amazingly calm, and toward ten o'clock took to joking with the specialists.

He had taken his eyes from the fens for a moment, and was looking at Sir Halstead when the thing came. When he turned again to look from the window, he stiffened per-

ceptibly.

"It's there," he murmured.

Sir Halstead shot a quick glance at Dr. Davey; they nodded to each other, and began to watch their patient with redoubled vigilance.

"You will watch it carefully, and report every movement

to us," said Sir Halstead in a low voice.

"Do not forget," put in Dr. Davey, "that it is in all possibility an optical illusion."

"But surely you can see it?" asked James in a distressed

voice.

The specialists looked at each other again.

"It does seem—" began Dr. Davey, but Sir Halstead cut him short.

"There is nothing there!" he snapped.

"The man is swinging," said James, as if he had not heard.

Involuntarily Dr. Davey shot a quick glance out upon the lowlands, pale in the light of the full moon. There was nothing save a vast expanse of grass, and the sky was clear.

"He is swinging . . . faster and faster."

Sir Halstead reached forward and opened the window; a refreshing breath of air entered the room.

"It seems he is coming closer . . . closer. He is!" Sir Hilary James involuntarily jerked himself backward. At once he felt the strong hands of Sir Halstead pushing him forward again; and he had a short flash of the psychiatrist's determined face.

"Go on," whispered Sir Halstead.

"He is very close now," said James jerkily. "I am horribly afraid of him."

Simultaneously both specialists reached out and touched him; Sir Hilary appeared reassured.

"He is laughing in a silent voice—Oh! this is ghastly. I cannot stand it much longer."

"Go on," repeated Sir Halstead inexorably.

"He is just outside the window now, swinging to and fro . . . like . . . like a pendulum." At this point James became strangely silent.

"Watch him," persisted Sir Halstead. "Watch him closely."
"He is waving his hands now. . . ." Sir Hilary paused again, but presently he went on. "Now he is putting them

up to his neck . . . and he is taking the rope from his neck. He is laughing. He is pointing at the looped rope in his hands. . . . He seems to be beckoning to me." Sir Hilary leaned forward suddenly; then he gave vent to a horrified scream: "No—no! My God, the window . . . the window"

Neither Sir Halstead nor Dr. Davey had any clear conception of exactly what happened then. Both agreed that with one accord they had risen to lower the window at James' frantic scream; then both of them had been felled to the floor by a blow. They thought that James had got up with them, and, in flinging out his arms violently, had felled them. They were not hurt, but when they got up to look about them, James had vanished utterly. The window was still open. Together the two of them ran to the window and looked out; but James was not below the window, as they had supposed he might be. There was no movement upon the fens, save the slowly undulating whiteness of the mists that were beginning to rise.

Then suddenly Dr. Davey looked up into the sky. He stumbled backwards and laid a trembling hand on Sir Hal-

stead's arm. "My God, Massingham. There is something swinging in the moon—a man, I think."

Sir Halstead snorted and looked from the window up at the face of the moon. There was nothing there. "Nonsense," he snapped. "Seems to have got you, too. I think—"

But his sentence was never finished, for suddenly out of the night came two faint cries, one following close upon the other. They came from somewhere out over the fens, and they were unmistakably cries for help. Then there was complete and awful silence.

For a moment the two men stood there; then Dr. Davey

ran from the room, Sir Halstead in his wake.

"Rouse the servants, Massingham," shouted Dr. Davey. "Hounds, too. I'm going to search every blessed inch of that bog land out there."

But Sir Halstead needed no urging. He had been struck by the same preposterous thought that had come to Dr. Davey.

Sir Halstead and the servants, most of them only half clothed, were out upon the fens before Dr. Davey appeared. There was no inclination to wait for the specialist, and Sir Halstead set out at once with the servants. Sir Halstead was soon outdistanced by the younger servants, but he could hear the dogs running aimlessly about ahead of him, whining softly, not quite certain of their quarry.

Sir Halstead had paused for breath when Dr. Davey

caught up with him.

"Massingham," he jerked out, "look at this."

He had a flashlight and he turned this on the paper that fluttered in his hand. Sir Halstead saw that the paper was quite yellow with its age, but the writing was still clear. He read silently:

"On ye Knoll this year, 1727, hath ye Lord of Furnival, Guy James, condemned and hanged one Hamish Inness, for poaching, who, dying, pronounced this curse upon ye line of Furnival: 'Thy line shall pass in ye seventh generation, when I shall come unto him in this generation in his thirty-seventh year and hang him here upon this tree. This by ye Branches of ye Inverted Cross, by ye arm of this Gallows-tree, and by ye all-knowing Trinity.'"

"Where did you find this?" asked Sir Halstead.

"In the library. Right among all those papers he'd been using for his book," He took a deep breath, "What do you think?" he asked.

"Nothing. I don't want to think," snapped Sir Halstead.

"But, Massingham, the shadow on the sky-the gallowstree—the man hanging—then this. And James is in his thirty-seventh year!"

Whatever Sir Halstead might have said was cut off by the sudden baying and howling of the dogs in the distance, at a point to which the bobbing lanterns of the searchers were slowly converging.

"They've found him," shouted Dr. Davey, and he was off.

Sir Halstead was not far behind.

Their passage over the fens was necessarily slow, but after some minutes, the men got there. Sir Hilary James was lying face downward in the long grass on a small knoll that rose out of the marshy land.

"Has anyone touched him?" asked Sir Halstead.

There was an unanimous shaking of heads.

"Who found him?"

"The hounds, sir. They made for Gallows Point right off."

There was a sharp exclamation from Dr. Davey, and a muttered repetition, "Gallows Point!"

Sir Halstead affected not to notice, and went on. "Dogs strike a trail?"

"No; the wind, sir. There was no trail."

Sir Halstead nodded and bent to examine the body. He looked up after a second, his face yellow in the lantern light. "Heart failure," he said dully. "Someone go for a stretcher."

"Already gone, sir," said one of the servants.

"Very well; we'll wait here. No one touch him, please." "Dead, is 'e, sir?" came a quavering voice from the small knot of servants.

Sir Halstead nodded.

When the improvised stretcher came, Sir Halstead and Dr. Davey carefully arranged the body of Sir Hilary on it. Then the servants took it up and went ahead; the two specialists walked a short distance behind.

"What are we to do?" asked Dr. Davey.

Sir Halstead took a deep breath. "This is the very first

time that I am glad of my prestige, and yours, Davey. We must do all in our power to prevent an examination of the body. We shall have to call in the necessary officials, but I am sure they will take our statements at face value. Sir Hilary James ran out upon the fens during treatment for his heart. Here his heart gave out. That must be the substance of our statement. Under no conditions must we allow anyone to see his neck."

"His neck!" exclaimed Dr. Davey in surprise.

Sir Halstead grasped his companion's wrist in a vice-like grip. "Be more discreet, Doctor. Mr. James' neck is broken, and there is a mark there. The man has been hanged!"

Birkett's Twelfth Corpse

THE WALL of hate that stood between the two old rivermen, Fred Birkett and Hank Room, had grown from a strange and gruesome rivalry—finding bodies of persons drowned in the Wisconsin River at Badger Prairie.

At the time of the tragic drowning of Bud Enters, the rivermen were tied. Each had found eleven bodies in the past forty years. It was said by each of them, and repeated in Badger Prairie, that Bud Enters' body would decide the contest.

The sympathy of Badger Prairie was with Birkett, a kindly old man, as opposed to the sullen surliness of Room, who was somewhat younger. Birkett had always joked about his odd luck at finding bodies in the river, and still looked upon his almost uncanny way of knowing where the bodies had been taken by the swift current as more amusing than not.

But Room had brooded upon his rival's luck ever since Birkett had earned a five-hundred dollar reward for finding the corpse of a young student who had fallen into the Wisconsin while drunk almost a decade before. Room made no effort to conceal his violent hatred for Birkett, nor could Birkett keep down his dislike for his rival.

Bud Enters was drowned on a warm night in July, and twenty boats put out from Badger Prairie within an hour after he went down. Fred Birkett and Hank Room were among them. Both men headed downstream, knowing by long past experiences that the swift current in midchannel, where the youth was drawn under, would quickly roll the body below Badger Prairie toward the long clay river-bank southeast of the village, which was locally known as the Yellow-banks district.

Toward dawn, Fred Birkett found Bud Enters' body, rolling along in shallow, swift water crossing a sandbar just above the Yellowbanks. The moon was out, and he had no difficulty seeing the body, which he immediately caught with a boathook and secured to the boat without removing it from the water. Then he edged his boat out of the current and headed swiftly upstream.

Just where Hiney's Slough enters the Wisconsin, he met

Room. He could not help boasting.

"Just made my dozen," he called to Hank in a gruff, yet faintly triumphant voice.

Room turned his boat and swung across current toward

him.

Birkett rested on his oars. Unaware of the fury that consumed his rival, he went on.

"Well, we couldn't both find him," he said, agreeably. "Let the best man win, I always say." He smiled in the satisfaction of feeling himself the better of the two.

Room said nothing. He was looking cautiously upstream and down, his eyes scanning the surface of the water for sight of any boat, his ears waiting to catch any sound that might indicate the approach of other searchers. The two boats lay in quiet water, away from the current.

Whether or not Birkett heard Room loosen and jerk out one oar is problematical. He turned toward Room just as oar descended and dealt him a glancing blow on the side

of the head.

He toppled from his boat, turning the vessel with him. With a savage lunge, Room pushed Birkett's boat out of reach of the older man, just as he came coughing and gasping to the surface of the water. With another quick movement, Room detached Enters' body from the overturned boat. He made no attempt to catch the body, knowing that the current would not carry it from this quiet water, and he could always return and find it.

Then he shot away, unmindful of Birkett's despairing cries, secure in the knowledge that Birkett could not swim very well. A little way upstream he paused and listened. There was no sound from below. Birkett had gone down.

A cunning smile touched Room's lips. Edging the boat into shallow water, he let himself fall fully clothed into the river, wetting himself thoroughly, except for his torn hat. This he threw into the bottom of the boat to give it the appearance of having been hastily torn away from his head and thrown there. Then he got back into the boat and rowed furiously toward Badger Prairie.

The circle of boats was now further downstream, and he did not have to row up quite as far as he drifted down. He timed his entrance well, for Enters' cap had just been found along-shore, and the searchers were excited over their find. Quite suddenly he shot from under the bridge into the yellow glow of lanterns held high above the water.

"Birkett's gone under," he shouted frantically. "His boat

tipped just above the Yellowbanks!"

Anyone who might have doubted his cries was easily convinced by his bedraggled appearance. It did not require his explanation that he had gone into the water after Birkett to explain the wetness of his clothes. He told hastily that the old man fought hard, that he had had to hit him, finally, and

had reluctantly let him go in order to save himself.

He led the rowboats to a spot a hundred yards above the entrance to Hiney's Slough, where in the quiet water the two bodies still lay. Room was enjoying the irony of the knowledge that his twelfth body would be that of his old rival. He broke into speech again, excitedly telling about the accident, and explaining that the boat had long since gone downstream, swept away by the powerful current in which it had tipped. He pointed out approximately the place where the accident had occurred, and went glibly over his story a third time. Then he left the searchers, and pulled

into the current toward the dark waters where Birkett had

actually gone down.

That much Badger Prairie was later able to piece together. What happened after that is more obscure and fraught with horrific suggestions. It is certain that Room went downstream, and equally certain that he seemed to be heading for Hiney's Slough, though one or two disputed this point later. Despite the moon, it was difficult to observe Room's progress downstream, for he was soon lost in the dark, heavy shadow on the quiet water surrounding the slough's junction with the river.

In the babble of sound made by the searchers above the slough, Room might have called for some time and not have been heard. At any rate, during a lull in the conversation, someone picked up the sound of frantic calling. Everyone stood and listened. Once again came a sharp call, in a voice which was immediately identified as Hank Room's. The call was heavy with horror and fear. Then another call began to sound, but was abruptly stopped, almost as if it had been rudely shut off by a hand clapped over the lips through which it came.

The boats immediately pulled away toward Hiney's

Slough.

At first there was nothing to be seen except the bottoms of two overturned boats, one of which was Room's, the other Birkett's. Then someone saw the body of Enters against one bank, apparently just washing up from deep water. Quite near it, partly submerged, they found the bodies of Hank Room and Fred Birkett.

Room was dead, yet he had not drowned. He had been strangled. For when the horrified searchers pulled him out of the water, they found Fred Birkett's dead fingers sunk deep in the flesh of Room's neck.

Birkett had found his twelfth corpse.

The White Moth

Paul Blake took the crape band from his arm and laid it very carefully away. Then he glanced at himself in the large mirror and reflected that he looked properly grieved. He sighed with relief, and was about to turn away from the mirror when he saw Alice. She was standing just behind him, laughing silently, and the glass gave back her reflection as clearly as his own. He spun around, but there was nothing there. Nerves, he thought, and shrugged his shoulders. At any rate, Alice could not have known—when he himself was not sure. That arsenic had taken infernally long to get down to business; three years of feeding it to her, before the end came. Paul Blake felt that his relief was justified.

As he stepped out of his chamber into the hall, he saw Alice a second time. She was walking along the hall not very far from where he stood, and as he looked at her, she turned and gave him a swift, mocking glance. He leaned weakly against the wall, and continued to lean there even after she had disappeared where her room was. When he had recovered himself sufficiently to stride away from the wall, he felt that indeed his nerves had been strained unduly, and that perhaps he had better go away for a while. And then immediately Alice was there at his side; he almost fell on the stairs, but caught himself in time.

"You can't get away like that, Paul," she was saying. Oh! that was her voice, all right; there was no mistaking it.

"Alice!" he muttered.

"Oh, it's Alice, right enough," she said. "This is the first time I've seen you worked up for three years—that's correct, isn't it, three years? Dear me, how the years go on!"

Paul took a firm hold of the banister and began to descend the stairs. It was as if he could feel Alice over his left shoulder; there was no use in trying to shake off the feeling because he could hear Alice's voice all the time, and at the same time he was trying very hard to forget how she

looked as she lay in her coffin those last few days.

"Of course, I knew it all along," Alice was saying. "Such infinite patience, Paul; who would ever have thought it of you? Your idea of gradually weakening me was quite good—it worked, at any rate."

"Alice—please—my God, Alice," and Paul Blake found that, standing there, half-way down the stairs, there was nothing in the world he could say to Alice. There was absolutely nothing; he could only listen, and he found in one brief attempt to stop his ears that he must do that.

"Goodness," said Alice in a mocking voice, "you seem to be at a distinct loss for once; unusual, not, Paul?" And then, receiving no answer, she went on, "Now that I'm dead, I suppose you'll want to see Beatrice, won't you? You have waited quite a decent interval, at that."

"Is there anything . . . ?" he managed to ask, and then thought of how ridiculous his position was—poisoning her, and then asking if there was anything he could do.

She laughed, having read his mind with perfect ease, as he sensed immediately. "I shouldn't advise you to see Beatrice," she went on, and her voice seemed somehow changed, hardened almost, "because I shall consider it my duty to be there if you do. And that would be rather inconvenient, I'm afraid. You'd best be rather careful all around, because I shall manage to get through to you occasionally. At least, until you come to me. Whenever you see a white moth, think of me, Paul."

Then, abruptly, Paul Blake felt that Alice had gone. He went forward hesitatingly, expecting every moment to hear her voice at his ear. But there was nothing, and he slipped into his topcoat feeling somewhat more at ease. An evening at the club served to dispel his temporary depression still more.

When, three days later, he went to see Beatrice, he felt convinced that Alice was securely and permanently dead, and he looked upon the incident of her postmortem appearance as a severe attack of nerves, or, at the least, a warning from his conscience. He was inclined to accept the latter, distasteful as it seemed, because his physician had told

him there was absolutely nothing the matter with his nerves. Paul Blake looked forward with genuine enthusiasm to an

evening at the opera with Beatrice.

Chaliapin was in the midst of Mephistopheles' O Night Draw Thy Curtain, when Paul Blake became suddenly conscious of a small white moth fluttering about in his box. He looked at Beatrice; she had not noticed it, at any rate, for she was still absorbed in the opera. He wondered whether he could kill it without her seeing, and began to watch it covertly, hoping it would come to rest where he could strike at it. And this it presently did. He fixed his eyes on it, measuring its position, and then suddenly swept his hand outward to catch and crush it in his fingers. But the moth eluded him, though he was sure he had touched it at least, and worse, Beatrice noticed his maneuver and turned.

"What is it?" she asked.

He looked at her foolishly. "I was trying to catch that white moth, before it could annoy you," and he pointed to where it was circling the fan in Beatrice's hand.

Beatrice looked at her fan, and back at Paul Blake with the faintest trace of annoyance on her features. "You'll have to do better than that, Paul; how could a moth get in here?"

"Can't you see it?" asked Paul, and he smiled at her in order to hide the dismay at the answer he foresaw he would get.

"Silly. Of course not. There's nothing there."

But Paul Blake could see the moth as clearly as anything else in his box, and as he looked at it, he thought he heard Alice laughing; since he did not want to recognize the thought, he contented himself with believing that it was some one on the stage, though the action at that point was anything but a matter for laughter.

After that, he did not go to see Beatrice for almost a week, and when he did, he saw the white moth again. As he looked at it, he fancied that it had grown much larger. They were sitting in the garden, and for a moment Paul Blake wondered whether it would do any good to go into the house. But he knew it would not, and for the second time he pointed out the moth to Beatrice.

"I think you've got a moth complex," she said. "Really, I

can't see it at all. Do you really see it, or is it just a joke?"

And at that, Paul Blake felt for the first time the irony of Alice's appearance. If he told Beatrice he really saw the moth, she would begin to doubt his sanity, and if he passed it off as a joke—well, it was a mighty poor joke at best. In the end he grinned rather stupidly, and the matter was dropped. Paul Blake went home early, and he noticed the white moth fluttering along before him until he reached his door.

Next day, when he went to the telephone to make his apologies to Beatrice—for he felt that she deserved them—there was the white moth, fluttering about the instrument. As he came toward it, the moth settled itself on the mouthpiece. Paul Blake made a savage swipe at it, but either he had missed it completely, or the moth had fluttered up and back down again, for it was still on the mouthpiece despite his attack. For a moment he stood looking at it, and then he turned abruptly on his heel and left the room; he could telephone as well some other time. As he closed the door behind him, the sound of Alice's mocking laughter came to him too distinctly for him to pass it off.

Two nights later, when he left the house to call on Beatrice, the white moth, now grown much larger, appeared within a block of his door, and after a short hesitation he turned back to the house, called Beatrice and gave a sudden

illness as his excuse for not coming.

After that, he began to haunt the club. He came to suffer from long spells of melancholia, and fellow club members one by one fell away from him. He noticed their attitude, but there was nothing he could do about it. Hemingway stuck with him, and Dillon—and they'd stick for a good long while yet. There was one thing he had set his mind on: no one should know about the white moth; he would suffer in silence, no matter what happened.

Hemingway was with him when the end came, and even he did not recognize that anything had happened to Paul Blake until the morning papers had come in. He told it

later at the club.

"If it hadn't ended so tragically, the thing would have been funny. We were walking along the drive that night, talking about nothing in particular; it was raining just a little, but not enough for us to open our umbrellas. Just as we came out of the light of a street lamp, a rather bedraggled-looking white moth came fluttering toward us from the darkness.

"Blake saw the moth, and since I was talking to him at the time, I had my eyes fixed on him. As he looked at the moth, his jaw dropped, and he stood stock-still as if waiting for the thing to pass. Then he began to glare at it in the most unusual fashion, so that for a moment I thought he'd gone suddenly mad. You know, that happens sometimes. I put my hand on his arm, but he shook it off. Then he gave a sort of cry-it sounded, you know, as if he were saying 'Alice'-too bad about his wife; I've always felt that her death was a pretty hard blow for him-and then he aimed at the moth with his umbrella. Of course, he missed it, and it flew off into the darkness, and then, to my amazement, he began to race along after it, striking at it with his umbrella. At first I thought of going after him, but I remembered his condition and thought it would be best if I left him alone.

"I feel rather bad now—ever since I saw the papers that carried the story of his drowning last night. When he raced off like that, I'd forgotten all about the river being right in his path. And I can't think why I didn't remember that he couldn't swim a stroke."

Nellie Foster

Mrs. Kraft came hurriedly from the house, closed the white gate behind her, and half ran across the dusty street. With one hand she held her long skirts clear of the walk; with the other she pressed a white handkerchief tightly to her lips. Her dark eyes were fixed on the green and white house at the end of the block, almost hidden in the shade of overhanging elms of great age.

The gate stood open, and Mrs. Kraft stepped quickly on to the lawn, forgetting to close the gate behind her. She avoided the low veranda, going around the side of the house, and entered the kitchen through the open door at the back.

Mrs. Perkins was leafing through her recipe book when the shadow of Mrs. Kraft momentarily darkened her door. She looked up and said, "How do, Mrs. Kraft? You're out early

this morning." She smiled.

Mrs. Kraft did not smile. She stood quite still, her handkerchief still pressed tightly against her mouth, nodding curtly to acknowledge her neighbor's greeting.

Mrs. Perkins looked at her oddly. "What is it, Mrs.

Kraft?" she asked a little nervously.

Mrs. Kraft took the handkerchief away from her mouth, clenching it tightly in her hand, and said, "It happened again last night."

Mrs. Perkins put her recipe book aside suddenly. "How do you know?" she asked breathlessly. Her eyes were unnat-

urally wide. "How do you know, Mrs. Kraft?"

Her visitor opened her hand jerkily. "It was my niece this time. She saw the woman, too. I didn't want Andrew to let the child go out last night, but she would have her way. She wanted to go to her Aunt Emmy's."

"Beyond the cemetery," breathed Mrs. Perkins. "But she

came back before dark, surely?"

Mrs. Kraft shook her head. "No. At dusk, just before the street lights went on. The woman was there, standing in the road. The child was afraid, even when the woman took her hand and walked along with her."

"What did she do? Oh, I hope nothing serious happened!"
"The same as before. The woman kissed the child, and the little one went to sleep. This morning she is so weak, she couldn't get up. Loss of blood, the doctor said."

Mrs. Perkins clasped her hands helplessly in her lap. "What can we do, Mrs. Kraft? Nobody would believe us if

we said what this must be."

Mrs. Kraft made an impatient movement with her head. Then she leaned forward, her dark eyes shining, speaking in a low voice. "The child knew the woman."

Mrs. Perkins started. "It wasn't . . . wasn't-"

Mrs. Kraft nodded. "Nellie Foster—not yet a month dead!"

Mrs. Perkins wove her fingers together nervously. She had gone pale, and her uneasiness was more pronounced than her visitor's.

"My niece is the third child, Mrs. Perkins. We must do something, or it will continue—and the children may die."

Mrs. Perkins said nothing. Her visitor went on.

"I'm going to do something, if you won't, she said. "To-night I'm going to watch at the cemetery. There won't be another child to be taken like that."

"I don't know what I can do," murmured Mrs. Perkins quietly. "I get so nervous. If I saw Nellie Foster, I'd probably scream."

Mrs. Kraft shook her head firmly. "That would never do," she admitted.

"Did you go to the minister?" asked Mrs. Perkins.

Mrs. Kraft pressed her lips tightly together before she spoke. Then she said, "He said there were no such things. He said only ignorant people believed in vampires."

Mrs. Perkins shook her head in disapproval.

"He asked me how Nellie Foster could have become one, and I told him about the cat jumping over her coffin. He smiled, and wouldn't believe me." Mrs. Kraft stood up, nodding her head. "And I know it's Nellie Foster, because I was out to the cemetery this morning, and there were three little holes in the grave—like finger holes, going 'way down deep."

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know yet. But I'll watch, and I won't let her get out of the cemetery."

"Maybe the men could do something," suggested Mrs.

Perkins hopefully.

"It would be worse than telling the minister, to go to them. They'd laugh. If he wouldn't believe it, they wouldn't," said Mrs. Kraft scornfully. "It will be left for someone else to do."

"I wish I could help," said Mrs. Perkins.

Mrs. Kraft looked at her reflectively, her eyes hardening. "You can, if you want."

Mrs. Perkins nodded eagerly.

"If I'm to go to the cemetery, I've got to be protected."

The other woman nodded. Mrs. Kraft pursed her lips firmly. "I need something," she went on, "and I'd like to use that blessed crucifix your son brought from Belgium, the one Cardinal Mercier gave him, a very old one, he said it was."

For a moment Mrs. Perkins wavered. Her lips faltered a little. Then, quailing before the stern eyes of Mrs. Kraft, she moved noiselessly to get the crucifix.

Mrs. Kraft attached it to a black ribbon around her neck, and tucked it out of sight in the bosom of her black

dress. Then she rose to go.

"I'll tell you what happened in the morning, Mrs. Perkins. And if I don't come"—Mrs. Kraft faltered—"then something's wrong. And if I'm not here before noon, you'd best go to the cemetery, perhaps, and look around a bit."

Mrs. Perkins quavered, "You don't think she'd go for you,

Mrs. Kraft?"

"They don't only go for children, Mrs. Perkins. I've read about them. If they can't die, they have to have blood—and we've blood, too."

Nodding her head sagely, Mrs. Kraft went from the house, her lips still pursed, her hand still tightly clenching her handkerchief.

Mrs. Kraft sat on the back porch with Mrs. Perkins a little after sunrise the next morning. The dew was not yet gone; it hung heavy on the hollyhocks and delphinium. The early sunlight threw long shadows across the garden.

Mrs. Kraft was talking. "I got there just after sunset and hid behind the oak tree near old Mr. Prince's grave, and watched for Nellie Foster. When the moon came up, I saw something on her grave, something gray. It was like a part of some one lying there, and it was moving. It was misty, and I couldn't see it well. Then I saw a hand, and then another, and after that a face." Mrs. Kraft coughed a little; Mrs. Perkins shuddered.

"And then?" prompted Mrs. Perkins. She leaned forward,

fascinated.

"It was Nellie Foster," Mrs. Kraft went on in a low voice. "She was crawling out of her grave. I could see her plainly

then in the moonlight. It was Nellie, all right. I'd know her anywhere. She pulled herself out-it was like mist coming out of those holes in the grave, those little holes."

"What did you do?"

"I think I was scared. I didn't move. When the mist stopped coming there was Nellie standing on the grave. Then I ran toward her, holding the cross in my hand. Before I could reach her, she was gone."

Mrs. Kraft's face twisted suddenly in pain. "This morning they found the little Walters girl, like the others. I should have watched beside the grave. I should have stopped Nellie. I shouldn't have let her get out. It's my fault that the little Walters girl was attacked. My fault. I could have stopped Nellie. I could have watched there all night. I should have gone forward before she got out of the grave."

She rose suddenly, disturbed. "I'm going now, Mrs. Perkins. Let me keep the cross a little longer. I'll need it

tonight."

Mrs. Perkins nodded, and her visitor was gone, her black-clothed figure walking quickly across the road. Mrs. Perkins watched her go, wondering about Nellie Foster, hoping that soon something might be done to stop her coming from her grave. There was her own little Flory to think about. What if some day Nellie Foster should see her, and then they would find little Flory? Mrs. Perkins shuddered. "Oh Lord, give me power to do something," she thought. "Let me help." Then she thought, "And Nellie Foster was always such a nice girl! It's hard to believe." She went into the house, shaking her head.

She had intended to go over to see Mrs. Kraft just after dinner, to talk about doing something, but a sudden storm struck the town, and for six hours it raged, pouring rain, darkening the village. For six hours only lightning flashes brightened the darkness. Then, at seven o'clock, the sky cleared abruptly, and the setting sun came out to finish the July day in a blaze of rainbow glory.

Mrs. Perkins finished washing the supper dishes, saw her Flory go out to play until dark, and finally started for Mrs. Kraft's. Going out to the sidewalk, she saw an elderly man coming quickly down the street. Mr. Shurz, she thought.

Seems in a hurry, too. She pondered this. Something on his

mind, likely. She purposely slowed her pace.

At the gate she met him. He would have gone past had he not spied her suddenly. Then he stopped breathlessly. "Miz' Perkins, have y' heard the news?"

Mrs. Perkins shook her head. "Lightning strike some-

where?" she asked.

"If only 'twere that, Miz' Perkins, ma'am." The old man shook his head dolefully. "The like of this we've never had in this town before, 'slong as I can remember. This afternoon during the storm, some one got into the cemetery and dug open Nellie Foster's grave!"

Mrs. Perkins leaned over the gate, her hands tightly clenched on the pointed staves. "What?" she whispered

hoarsely. "What's that you say, Mr. Shurz?"

"'Tis just as I say, Miz' Perkins. Some one dug into Nellie Foster's grave, in all that storm, too, and opened the coffin, Miz' Perkins, Ma'am, and druv a stake clean through her body!"

"A stake . . . through her body!" She shook her head. "Just what Mrs. Kraft said should be done," she murmured

to herself.

Mr. Shurz did not hear her. He nodded vehemently. "Clean through, Miz' Perkins, Ma'am. And a powerful lot of blood there were, too; 'twas a surprize to Doctor Barnes. A strange, unnatural thing, the doctor said."

"But surely the coffin was covered again?"

"Partly, only partly, Miz' Perkins. Seems the man got scared away."

"Oh . . . it was a man, then?"

Mr. Shurz looked at her, smiling vacuously. "'Course 'twas a man, Miz' Perkins."

"He was seen, then?"

Mr. Shurz shook his head. "Oh, no, he wasn't seen. No, ma'am, he wasn't seen. Too slick for that, he was."

Mrs. Perkins felt her heart pounding in her breast. She

felt suddenly that she was stifling. She opened the gate and stepped on to the sidewalk at Mr. Shurz's side, walking along with him. She did not hear what he was saying.

Mrs. Kraft was out on her lawn. She was pale, dishevelled. Mrs. Perkins was thinking: I hope he won't

notice anything; I hope he won't notice anything. Mr. Shurz stopped with Mrs. Perkins. Mrs. Perkins could hardly

bring herself to say, "How do, Mrs. Kraft?"

Then, as Mr. Shurz was repeating his story to Mrs. Kraft, Mrs. Perkins' eyes fell on the stain of red clay on Mrs. Kraft's hands, a stain at first difficult to wash away. She wanted to look away from Mrs. Kraft's rough hands, but she could not. Then she noticed that Mr. Shurz had seen the stain, too.

"Bin diggin' in red clay, have you, Miz' Kraft?" He laughed hollowly. "Looks mighty like that clay they dug away off Nellie Foster's coffin, now." He wagged his

head.

Mrs. Perkins felt faint. She heard him talking, rambling on. Deep down in her she wanted to say something, anything, to change the subject, but she could not. Then she heard Mrs. Kraft speaking.

"I've been digging in the garden, Mr. Shurz," she smiled politely, despite her white, drawn face. "This stain is mighty

hard to get off your hands."

Mrs. Perkins heard herself saying, "That's right. I warned Mrs. Kraft not to touch the red clay when we were digging up her sweet william right after the storm, but she wouldn't listen." She was thinking, "Oh Lord, don't let him look into the garden; don't let him see how black the ground is there."

Mr. Shurz grinned broadly and shrugged his shoulders. "'Tis a good time to dig garden, after rain. Well, I must be off. We'll be catching him who meddled with Nellie Foster."

The women, standing one on each side of the fence, watched the old man go down the street. Mrs. Perkins was afraid to look at Mrs. Kraft. Then she heard her neighbor cough lightly, and turned.

Mrs. Kraft was holding out the crucifix. "I don't think I'll need it any more, Mrs. Perkins," she was saying.

Wild Grapes

THE ECHO of his neighbors' mocking voices lingered in Luke Adam's mind—"Wild grapes!" scornfully said, pityingly whispered from mouth to ear, from farm to farm and on into Sac Prairie. Standing there on his rickety porch, he smiled, his grim lips curving only slightly, his eyes hard and cold. His gaze went from the farmyard across the fields to the clump of cedars fringing his land to the southwest. Dividing the trees from the fields were the wild grapes he had planted.

He had planted them at night. Did those fools think of that? Not they, and the better for him. Darkness was a welcome cloak for his work, since the body could not have

been handled in the daytime.

Twilight did not obscure the strong green of the wild grapes. He considered them in the growing darkness, the long line of them curving along the slope, and finally drove his eyes to the thick clump growing where the boy of his Uncle Ralsa lay. He complimented himself again on the sagacity he had shown in setting wild grapes to grow on the spot where the body was buried. No expense had been incurred, and the broken earth on the edge of the field had excited no comment but the scornful voices of his farming neighbors, who thought him crazy to go to any trouble about wild grapes when there were so many of them in the bottoms not far from his land.

He was glad, too, that the old man had the reputation for taking long and mysterious journeys and staying away for months at a time without communicating with anyone. All the old man's friends nodded solemnly and said, "Ralsa's gone on another tear." No one had suspected anything. Luke could appreciate the irony of their laughter over his wild grapes.

The stars brightened, and the afterglow faded to a fan

of emerald light flung upward against the western sky. Luke lit his pipe and watched the slow smoke trail upward from his lips. A whippoorwill began to call from the bottoms. Abruptly a small dark shape dropped noiselessly to the roof of the corn-crib and shrilled its flute-like call into the growing night.

Luke thought of the legend about whippoorwills calling for a dying man's soul. He caught up a clod of earth and

flung it at the bird on the corn-crib.

"Get out," he muttered harshly. "You got Uncle Ralsa—you don't get me." He laughed at his words, grimly.

One by one the whippoorwills assaulted the silence, and from the sky came the harsh calls of nighthawks and woodcocks. An owl hooted mournfully from the grove of cedars. Presently the moon pushed itself into the sky above the low range of hills to the east, and long shadows haunted the ground.

Thinking of his uncle, Luke experienced a shudder of irritation at himself that he had not killed the old man with one blow. "They'll get you for this, Luke, and if they don't, I will," he had had time to say before the second blow. And he had cursed him, too. Luke smiled, took his pipe from his mouth, and spat at a stone not far from the porch steps.

"C'mon, Ralsa," he murmured. "I'm still waitin'."

He felt warmth creeping over him at the satisfactory knowledge of his ownership of his uncle's farm. He had always wanted it; now it was his, even if the fools thereabouts considered him only a caretaker. When it would be plain to them that the old man was never coming back, even they would have to acknowledge him as owner.

He knocked out his pipe presently and stood up, stretching himself. Then he turned to go into the house. From the threshold he looked once more toward the line of wild grapes, fixing his eyes on the large clump in the center, now lost against the dark background of the cedars.

As he looked, he reflected that he had never before been aware of that patch of sky showing through between the

trees above the grapevines.

Even as he thought it, the sky moved gently to one side. For a breathless moment Luke felt a shock of terror; then

he took a deep breath, pressed his lips firmly together, and stared long and hard at the patch of sky.

The sky wavered a little, moved casually to the north, and

drifted southward again.

It was not sky! It was a whiteness above the secret grave, standing out against the cedars—not sky showing through from beyond!

Luke flung himself into the house, banging the door behind him, and stood with his back against it. Sweat flecked his forehead, and his hands shook despite his determination to control himself. He strove to convince himself that he had seen nothing, that his eyes and the night had combined to play a ghastly trick on him.

Presently he moved away from the door. He halted just before he reached the west window, hesitation looped about his legs, stopping their advance. If he went forward, he would look out of the window. He would look at the grave.

And his eyes might trick him again.

He stood there, feeling that the house was pressing its walls toward him. A sense of ominous closeness enveloped him. Presently he groped for the table, found the lamp, and the box of matches. He struck one and held the flame to the wick, his shadow grotesque against the wall and the ceiling. The small, poorly furnished room sprang into dubious life.

A feeling of security returned to him with the light, and he sat down at the table, resting his head on his clenched fists. The noise of the whippoorwills dinned into the room, insistence in the wealth of flute-like notes that welled across the fields from the lowlands and the marsh beyond. As he sat listening to them, unreasonable anger grew at their calls, and he determined to go whippoorwill-hunting in the morning, intent upon paying them back for the fright he had got.

The fear having gone completely out of him, he rose abruptly and strode boldly to the window. He looked out. The white mass had grown. It lowered threateningly above the row of wild grapes, uncanny movement breaking its outlines. As he looked, the moonlight faded suddenly, clouds blanketing it away from the earth, and the white shape

against the cedars seemed to glow as if from some inner

light.

He fell back from the window, his heart pounding with maddening insistence. There was something at the grave. Terror possessed him suddenly, terror driven into fierce life at the fear that somehow Ralsa Adam was coming back to get him, as the dead man had promised.

He made a frantic calculation. It was almost a month now since he had killed the old man. No one had suspected. No one had come for him. No solid flesh could rise from that grave. Yet the old man had said that he would return,

if Luke-

The door swung suddenly wide, forced by a gust of wind, and the night gaped blackly beyond. Lamplight lit the porch floor tentatively, fingers of flickering light turned back by the darkness.

Luke looked out through the doorway toward the southwest, where the grave was. The white thing was still there, moving with the wind, now this way, now that, and occasionally there were flaffing white arms seeming to beckon him, or grotesque heads lolling horribly against the night.

He dragged himself from the room to the porch, where he leaned against a post, looking with fear-maddened eyes toward the line of wild grapes. There was something about that whiteness—something that brought sudden hope to

him. He stared, cold sweat smarting in his eyes.

Then he remembered. Phosphorus from decaying bodies. He had read of that somewhere. It sometimes happened. So-called ghosts in graveyards were nothing but phosphorus—he remembered reading about it. He almost sobbed his re-

lief, and for a moment laughed weakly at himself.

He tempered his relief with the thought that he had better make sure about the phosphorescence. Immediately another thought occurred to him and brought apprehension. If it were phosphorescence, someone might possibly notice it and investigate, though the spot was out of sight of all farmhouses and all roads save the poorly marked trail to his own house, and in sight of strange fields only during the day.

He stepped from the porch, leaving the lamplit doorway open behind him, and strode away into the darkness, frightening up whippoorwills as he went. As he came into the southwest forty, uneasiness took possession of him at recognition of the fact that the phosphorescence did not fade, that it seemed to have descended more closely about the clump of grapevines growing from the spot where the body

lay concealed.

He halted uncertainly ten feet from the vines and looked. The whiteness was phosphorescence, he was sure of that. He felt vaguely that it ought by rights to be closer to the ground, but he could not be sure. And it moved oddly, sometimes with the wind, but sometimes not. There was a very odd shape to it, too. He felt misgivings, and cast a glance backward for the reassuring sight of the rectangle of light from the house.

Despite a sudden feeling that he should go no farther, he stepped forward. He came up to the mass of vines and looked carefully down at the unmarked spot where he had nocturnally buried Ralsa Adam almost a month ago.

The ground seemed oddly broken.

He pushed away the grapevines and peered closer.

Suddenly he felt something close about his ankle, felt something whip toward his uncovered head. He jerked upward—and felt his arms, too, caught. Then he looked up.

His hoarse, terror-fraught screams were muffled by the writhing mass of grapevines which descended upon him, their rustling like an echo of Ralsa Adam's dying voice,

their sentient movement vengefully alive.

He was found two mornings after. He had been strangled; there were still vines wound oddly about his throat. It was said in Sac Prairie that he had probably entangled himself somehow and had caused his death. Everybody said it served him right. In his struggles he had kicked up the ground so that the body of Ralsa Adam was discovered.

The farmers who dug the old man out said he was not a pleasant sight. The big grapevine which Luke had planted above his victim had rooted itself firmly in the decaying flesh and clung fiercely to the body when they moved it.

Feigman's Beard

MARTHA FEIGMAN looked cautiously from behind the curtain into her half-brother's bedroom. Her eves swept the room, the unoccupied bed, and fixed upon Eb's big form at the mirror. As usual, he was combing out his beard, the red mop of which he was so fond. He was bent forward, his eyes intent on the reflection of the long red hair which hid most of his face. He passed his comb through the beard again and again, and finally, putting the comb down, he stroked the beard with his blunt fingers.

The woman withdrew softly, her fingers catching nervously together. He had not said a word to her when he came into the house that evening, not a word about those hogs. She knew he had sold them, hers with his, because the hog rack was empty as he drove into the yard. But he had paid her nothing and, worse, he gave no hint that he meant to

pay.

Impulsively, she pulled aside the curtain and stepped into his room. "I want my money, Eb," she said uncertainly.

He turned, his head outthrust. "What're you talkin'

about?" he asked harshly, his eyes flashing anger.

"My money," she repeated. "My money for them hogs. I know you sold 'em. You ain't paid me my share yet." "You ain't got no money comin'," he said shortly.

"I hev so," she replied. "I raised them hogs. They're mine. You went an' sold 'em 'thout me knowin' anything about it. 'Taint no more 'n right I get my money for them hogs."

He rose slowly and came casually over to her, his hands hanging at his sides. Then suddenly he had his fingers at her throat and was shaking her, his rough beard thrust into her face. She flailed weakly with her arms, and screamed until he choked her off. He released her abruptly and flung her beyond the curtain into the adjoining room.

She fell against the floor, and for a moment she lay there.

Then she pulled herself up, her eyes fixed in fright upon the towering hulk of her half-brother standing in the doorway to his bedroom.

"You ain't got no money comin'," he said in a cold voice. "Don't forgit that."

She was too frightened to speak. "You hear me?" he demanded.

She nodded, not daring to make any other move.

He stood for a moment looking down at her, then turned and disappeared behind the curtain, where the noise of a chair being pulled up indicated that he had returned to the table and was now again engaged with his beard.

She got up slowly and painfully, felt gingerly of her throat, and went through the house to the kitchen, where she stood in the dark, looking out over the moonlit fields toward the square of light in the small house where the widow Klopp lived. The sight of the lamp burning in the widow's house gave her hope of getting her money from Eb.

For the widow Klopp, as everybody knew, was a hex, a witchwoman, who could do anything for money. It was whispered that she had once sent her broom over to Hepshell's and killed four of his cows because he had said something about her. And once, too, she had cured a whole family of diphtheria. As Martha thought of these things, she felt that the old woman could help her get her money. If she couldn't, no one could.

She slipped out of the house, hoping Eb had not heard her. But he would be too busy with his beard. As she thought of his beard. Martha wondered if there might not be a way to punish him through his mop of red hair. Perhaps Mrs. Klopp could make it fall out.

She hurried.

The widow Klopp was at home, as the light had indicated. She was a very old woman, almost helpless with age, it seemed. She made Martha welcome in a few short words.

"You've come because that Eb's got to be too much

for you, ain't so?" she asked.

This confirmation of her motive without her having said a word astonished Martha and convinced her at once of the old woman's powers. She nodded.

"That's it," she said. "He went 'n sold my hogs, an' now he ain't figurin' to give me my money."

The widow Klopp looked speculatively across the table.

"What you aim to hev me do?" she asked quietly.

"I want my money."

The old lady grunted. "Didja ever know it was Eb who stole most-a my land from me when my old man died?" she asked suddenly, a curiously hard light in her eyes.

"No!"

"Sure," said the old woman. "I knew I couldn't do nothin' then. And since then, Eb's been might careful bout where he lets his things lay around."

"What you mean?" asked Martha breathlessly.

"I mean I hev t' hev sunthin' that's his before I c'n do

anything 'bout your money."

"Oh," said Martha uneasily. "But it's only my money I want. I don't want nothin' else, except maybe something to make his beard fall out."

"That's it," said the widow. "Go right home, an' when he's asleep you cut off a couple-a hairs from that beard an' bring 'em back here. An' bring the looking-glass he uses, too."

In ten minutes Martha was home again, standing breathlessly in the kitchen, listening for any sound to indicate that Eb was not asleep. She heard only the persistent calls of whippoorwills from the meadow, and the snoring sound of Eb's breathing.

Quickly, she got her scissors, crept into the bedroom, and with great caution snipped a few of the long red hairs from his bushy beard. Then she snatched up the mirror and backed carefully from the room, her heart pounding excitedly.

She went out into the moonlight again and ran across the fields toward the yellow square of lamplight beyond which the widow Klopp waited for her. Once she paused to look back, but there was nothing in the dark silence of the house she had left to indicate that Eb might have awakened.

Misgivings came to Martha at sight of the eagerness with which the old woman took the strands of hair and the mirror from her.

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"What you aim to do?" she asked nervously.

The widow Klopp smiled, exposing her worn and almost

toothless gums. "I aim to ask the devil to sit on this glass. I reckon Eb'll never see such another sight as I aim to make him see. He ain't never seen it, and he won't see it again."

"An' my money?"

The old woman's laugh came like the lash of a whip. "You'll get your money, Martha. Yes, an' a good deal be-

sides, or I ain't no good at figurin' no more."

For the first time Martha was afraid. A sense of peril took possession of her, and she watched the old woman nervously, marvelling at the speed with which she got around.

The widow Klopp turned the lamp low and hung a red cloth about it. Then she laid the mirror, glass up, on the table, and on the glass she laid the strands of hair Martha had brought. Around it she drew a circle, and the line of the circle she covered with a gray powder.

She turned to Martha suddenly and said, "Better you look

the other way. Ain't a good thing to see."

Then she took a match and touched it to the hairs on the glass, reciting a quaint gibberish, a mixture of broken English and old German incomprehensible to Martha. A green glow of fire circled the mirror, playing on the glass. Martha watched in fascination, unable to draw her eyes away.

Suddenly there was a puff of crimson smoke that seemed to fill the small room, and a ghastly stench came to fill Martha's nostrils. She coughed and gasped against the widow's steady gibbering. Blinded, she half rose, one hand feeling before her.

"It's too much for me," she gasped.

Abruptly the old woman leaned forward, turned up the lamp and took away the red cloth. Just as suddenly, the smoke and flame vanished, and Martha saw dazedly that not only was the widow's table untouched by any mark of fire, but the looking-glass was not marred by any blackness from the flame that had burned on it.

A smile broke into the old woman's face. "That's all," she said, one claw-like hand gently caressing the mirror. "That's all, Martha. You c'n take the glass home now and put it where he keeps it. When he looks into it in the mornin', you'll get that money. But mind you don't look into it on the way home. An' don't look into it before sun-up in the

mornin', nohow."

"How much is it?" asked Martha, hoping it would not cost her too much.

The old woman shook her head. "'Tain't anythin'," she said. "I been waitin' for this chance a good many years now. Who'd-a thought his own half-sister'd give it t' me! But mind you don't look into the glass before the sun comes up, no matter what you might think you'll see there; because then you'll have to pay—an' you won't pay me, you'll pay him as sat on it. An' it won't be nice pay. So mind."

The women parted, and Martha made her way back to the house where her hateful half-brother lay asleep. The widow's spell had taken longer than she had thought, for the moon was slanting westward, and even the whippoorwills were silent. The creak of the kitchen door sounded unnaturally loud, and for a moment fear caught and held

her quiet on the threshold.

But no sound came from Eb's room to break the stillness. Reassured, Martha closed the door, tiptoed to his room, and replaced the looking-glass. Then she went quietly to her room, a sense of relief flooding her. She had got even with Eb at last, for all he had done to her. And in the morning she would have her money, and more, the widow had said. Only she must not look into the glass; even as she thought it, she felt an odd, overpowering urge to see what Eb would see, and it was only with effort that she repressed it.

As she lay in bed, she wondered presently what the widow could have meant when she said that Martha would get a good deal more money than was coming to her from the sale of the hogs. She thought of this for some time, and at last, unable to satisfy herself as to its meaning, she got up and lit a candle to guide her upstairs to the tiny attic where her father had many years ago put the Seventh Book of Moses, in which the secrets of hexerei and witchcraft were hidden away.

After some search, she found the slim volume, and sat by the light of her candle leafing through it. She pondered over cures for falling hair, measels, lumbago, and countless common ailments, and did not notice the passing of time.

Presently she came upon a paragraph which dealt with

death curses. There her eyes were caught and held by a sentence—"To frighten an enemy to death, contrive to get his looking-glass and ask the devil to sit upon it, for the Evil One will put into the glass a being not of this world to bring about the death of the desired one." So that was what the widow Klopp had meant—Eb's death would leave her sole owner of the farm.

At that moment two sounds came to her ears. The old-fashioned kitchen clock began to strike four, and from her half-brother's room came the customary noise of his early

rising.

A match was struck below, and a lamp chimney lifted and replaced. Then came sounds of Eb walking across the floor in his bare feet, the lamp being put on the table, and a chair scraping the floor. Then Eb sat down.

Now he would be taking up his comb, she thought, and

passing it through his hateful beard.

A frightful scream, hoarse with terror, drove into the attic from below. A chair crashed to the floor. Then came the

sound of a heavy body striking the floor.

For a moment Martha made no move. Then she dropped the book in her lap, snatched up the candle, and went hurriedly down the attic stairs. She ran through her room into Eb's.

Eb lay on the floor, motionless, his mouth agonizingly wide, gaping at her from the depths of his bushy beard. On his beard were black marks—as if blackened fingers had

brushed repeatedly through it.

She fell to her knees at his side and felt for his heart. He was dead. She knelt for a moment, looking at his dead body with mingled relief and pleasure. Then she rose and went to the tiny closet where she knew he kept his money. Behind a half-dozen old coats she found it, a heavey bag of

silver hanging on a long leather cord.

She took it down and carried it, with some effort, into the bed room, where she looked into it by the light of her candle. It was almost full of silver dollars, the way in which Eb had chosen to keep his money, since he had always scorned paper. It was probably all the money Eb had, and now it was hers! That was what the widow Klopp had meant.

She looked down at her half-brother's body with fierce joy. Her memory, stirred, brought to her attention some long-lost words of her father's—"Those who invoke the devil's help will have to pay him when the time comes!"—but this she thrust coldly away. She wondered instead, curiously, about the mirror. There was an urge upon her, now that she had the money, to look into the glass and see what had frightened Eb to death. Scorning the widow Klopp's warning, she reveled in the strength she felt with the leather cord of Eb's money-bag in her hand.

She located the glass out of the corner of her eyes—then she faced it and looked into it. The glass was black, and upon its surface played lambent fire, outlining a hellish face, a face that was Eb Feigman's and yet was not, a face without eyes, with rotting, bleeding nose and lips, a face through which yellowing bones pushed out. And behind it was something even more terrible, something alive!

In an access of terror, Martha blew out the candle to blot out sight of the glass. Then she saw something coming out of the mirror, slithering evilly from the black glass. It was looking at her. She screamed, and swung at it with the heavy bag of silver, swinging it wildly, frantically in the darkness. She thought something touched her neck, and whirled the bag around her.

Then something closed about her neck, jerking upward. She fell, striking her head against the bureau, and descended into blackness.

It was the widow Klopp who found the Feigmans. The doctor who examined them said that Eb had died of heart-failure. He had had trouble with his heart for a long time. But Martha's death was strange. She had been strangled. He could not understand how it happened. She had been strangled by the bag of silver dollars—somehow the loop of the cord had caught on a clothes-hook near the bureau, she had fallen unconscious, and the leather cord, looped twice about her neck and weighted by the heavy bag, had choked the life from her frail body.

The Drifting Snow

AUNT MARY'S advancing footsteps halted suddenly, short of the table, and Clodetta turned to see what was keeping her. She was standing very rigidly, her eyes fixed upon the French windows just opposite the door through which she had entered, her cane held stiffly before her.

Clodetta shot a quick glance across the table toward her husband, whose attention had also been drawn to his aunt; his face vouchsafed her nothing. She turned again to find that the old lady had transferred her gaze to her, regarding her stonily and in silence. Clodetta felt uncomfortable.

"Who withdrew the curtains from the west windows?"

Clodetta flushed, remembering. "I did, Aunt. I'm sorry. I forgot about your not wanting them drawn away."

The old lady made an odd, grunting sound, shifting her gaze once again to the French windows. She made a barely perceptible movement, and Lisa ran forward from the shadow of the hall, where she had been regarding the two at table with stern disapproval. The servant went directly to the west windows and drew the curtains.

Aunt Mary came slowly to the table and took her place at its head. She put her cane against the side of her chair, pulled at the chain about her neck so that her lorgnette lay in her lap, and looked from Clodetta to her nephew,

Ernest.

Then she fixed her gaze on the empty chair at the foot of the table, and spoke without seeming to see the two beside

her.

"I told both of you that none of the curtains over the west windows was to be withdrawn after sundown, and you must have noticed that none of those windows has been for one instant uncovered at night. I took especial care to put you in rooms facing east, and the sitting-room is also in the east."

"I'm sure Clodetta didn't mean to go against your wishes, Aunt Mary," said Ernest abruptly.

"No, of course not, Aunt."

The old lady raised her eyebrows, and went on impassively. "I didn't think it wise to explain why I made such a request. I'm not going to explain. But I do want to say that there is a very definite danger in drawing away the curtains. Ernest has heard that before, but you, Clodetta, have not."

Clodetta shot a startled glance at her husband.

The old lady caught it, and said, "It's all very well to believe that my mind's wandering or that I'm getting eccentric, but I shouldn't advise you to be satisfied with that."

A young man came suddenly into the room and made for the seat at the foot of the table, into which he flung himself with an almost inaudible greeting to the other three.

"Late again, Henry," said the old lady.

Henry mumbled something and began hurriedly to eat. The old lady sighed, and began presently to eat also, whereupon Clodetta and Ernest did likewise. The old servant, who had continued to linger behind Aunt Mary's chair, now withdrew, not without a scornful glance at Henry.

Clodetta looked up after a while and ventured a speak, "You aren't as isolated as I thought you might be up here.

Aunt Mary."

"We aren't, my dear, what with telephones and cars and all. But only twenty years ago it was quite a different thing, I can tell you." She smiled reminiscently and looked at Ernest. "Your grandfather was living then, and many's the time he was snowbound with no way to let anybody know."

"Down in Chicago when they speak of 'up north' or the 'Wisconsin woods' it seems very far away," said Clodetta.

"Well, it is far away," put in Henry abruptly. "And, Aunt, I hope you've made some provision in case we're locked in here for a day or two. It looks like snow outside, and the radio says a blizzard's coming."

The old lady grunted and looked at him. "Ha, Henry—you're overly concerned, it seems to me. I'm afraid you've been regretting this trip ever since you set foot in my house. If you're worrying about a snowstorm, I can have Sam drive

you down to Wausau, and you can be in Chicago tomorrow."

"Of course not."

Silence fell, and presently the old lady called gently, "Lisa," and the servant came into the room to help her from her chair, though, as Clodetta had previously said to

her husband, "She didn't need help."

From the doorway, Aunt Mary bade them all good-night, looking impressively formidable with her cane in one hand and her unopened lorgnette in the other, and vanished into the dusk of the hall, from which her receding footsteps sounded together with those of the servant, who was seldom seen away from her. These two were alone in the house most of the time, and only very brief periods when the old lady had up her nephew Ernest, "dear John's boy," or Henry, of whose father the old lady never spoke, helped to relieve the pleasant somnolence of their quiet lives. Sam, who usually slept in the garage, did not count.

Clodetta looked nervously at her husband, but it was

Henry who said what was uppermost in their thoughts.

"I think she's losing her mind," he declared matter-offactly. Cutting off Clodetta's protest on her lips, he got up and went into the sitting-room, from which came presently the strains of music from the radio.

Clodetta fingered her spoon idly and finally said, "I do

think she is a little queer, Ernest."

Ernest smiled tolerantly. "No, I don't think so. I've an idea why she keeps the west windows covered. My grandfather died out there—he was overcome by the cold one night, and froze on the slope of the hill. I don't rightly know how it happened—I was away at the time. I suppose she doesn't like to be reminded of it."

"But where's the danger she spoke of, then?"

He shrugged. "Perhaps it lies in her—she might be affected and affect us in turn." He paused for an instant, and finally added, "I suppose she *does* seem a little strange to you—but she was like that as long as I can remember; next time you come, you'll be used to it."

Clodetta looked at her husband for a moment before replying. At last she said, "I don't think I like the house,

Ernest."

"Oh, nonsense, darling." He started to get up, but

Clodetta stopped him.

"Listen, Ernest. I remembered perfectly well Aunt Mary's not wanting those curtains drawn away—but I just felt I had to do it. I didn't want to but—something made me do it." Her voice was unsteady.

"Why, Clodetta," he said, faintly alarmed. "Why didn't

you tell me before?"

She shrugged. "Aunt Mary might have thought I'd gone

wool-gathering."

"Well, it's nothing serious, but you've let it bother you a little and that isn't good for you. Forget it; think of some-

thing else. Come and listen to the radio."

They rose and moved toward the sitting-room together. At the door Henry met them. He stepped aside a little, saying, "I might have known we'd be marooned up here," and adding, as Clodetta began to protest, "We're going to be, all right. There's a wind coming up and it's beginning to snow, and I know what that means." He passed them and went into the deserted dining-room, where he stood a moment looking at the too long table. Then he turned aside and went over to the French windows, from which he drew away the curtains and stood there peering out into the darkness. Ernest saw him standing at the window, and protested from the sitting-room.

"Aunt Mary doesn't like those windows uncovered,

Henry."

Henry half turned and replied, "Well, she may think it's dangerous, but I can risk it."

Clodetta, who had been staring beyond Henry into the night through the French windows, said suddenly, "Why, there's someone out there!"

Henry looked quickly through the glass and replied, "No, that's the snow; it's coming down heavily, and the wind's drifting it this way and that." He dropped the curtains and came away from the windows.

Clodetta said uncertainly, "Why, I could have sworn I

saw someone out there, walking past the window."

"I suppose it does look that way from here," offered Henry, who had come back into the sitting-room. "But personally, I think you've let Aunt Mary's eccentricities

impress you too much."

Ernest made an impatient gesture at this, and Clodetta did not answer. Henry sat down before the radio and began to move the dial slowly. Ernest had found himself a book, and was becoming interested, but Clodetta continued to sit with her eyes fixed upon the still slowly moving curtains cutting off the French windows. Presently she got up and left the room, going down the long hall into the east wing, where she tapped gently upon Aunt Mary's door.

"Come in," called the old lady.

Clodetta opened the door and stepped into the room where Aunt Mary sat in her dressing-robe, her dignity, in the shape of her lorgnette and cane, resting respectively on her bureau and in the corner. She looked surprisingly benign, as Clodetta at once confessed.

"Ha, thought I was an ogre in disguise, did you?" said the old lady, smiling in spite of herself. "I'm really not, you see, but I am a sort of bogy about the west windows, as

you have seen."

"I wanted to tell you something about those windows, Aunt Mary," said Clodetta. She stopped suddenly. The expression on the old lady's face had given way to a curiously dismaying one. It was not anger, not distaste—it was a lurking suspense. Why, the old lady was afraid!

"What?" she asked Clodetta shortly.

"I was looking out—just for a moment or so—and I thought I saw someone out there."

"Of course, you didn't, Clodetta. Your imagination, perhaps, or the drifting snow."

"My imagination? Maybe. But there was no wind to drift

the snow, though one has come up since."

"I've often been fooled that way, my dear. Sometimes I've gone out in the morning to look for footprints—there weren't any, ever. We're pretty far away from civilization in a snowstorm, despite our telephones and radios. Our nearest neighbor is at the foot of the long, sloping rise—over three miles away—and all wooded land between. There's no highway nearer than that."

"It was so clear. I could have sworn to it."

"Do you want to go out in the morning and look?" asked the old lady shortly.

"Of course not."

"Then you didn't see anything?"

It was half question, half demand. Clodetta said, "Oh, Aunt Mary, you're making an issue of it now."

"Did you or didn't you in your own mind see anything,

Clodetta?"

"I guess I didn't, Aunt Mary."

"Very well. And now do you think we might talk about something more pleasant?"

"Why, I'm sure—I'm sorry, Aunt. I didn't know that Ernest's grandfather had died out there."

"Ha, he's told you that, has he? Well?"

"Yes, he said that was why you didn't like the slope after sunset—that you didn't like to be reminded of his death."

The old lady looked at Clodetta impassively. "Perhaps he'll never know how near right he was."

"What do you mean, Aunt Mary?"

"Nothing for you to know, my dear." She smiled again, her sternness dropping from her. "And now I think you'd better go, Clodetta; I'm tired."

Clodetta rose obediently and made for the door, where the old lady stopped her. "How's the weather?"

"It's snowing-hard, Henry says-and blowing."

The old lady's face showed her distaste at the news. "I don't like to hear that, not at all. Suppose someone should look down that slope tonight?" She was speaking to herself, having forgotten Clodetta at the door. Seeing her again abruptly, she said, "But you don't know, Clodetta. Goodnight."

Clodetta stood with her back against the closed door, wondering what the old lady could have meant. But you don't know, Clodetta. That was curious. For a moment or two the old lady had completely forgotten her.

She moved away from the door, and came upon Ernest

just turning into the east wing.

"Oh, there you are," he said. "I wondered where you had gone."

"I was talking a bit with Aunt Mary."

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"Henry's been at the west windows again-and now he thinks there's someone out there."

Clodetta stopped short. "Does he really think so?" Ernest nodded gravely. "But the snow's drifting frightfully, and I can imagine how that suggestion of yours worked on his mind."

Clodetta turned and went back along the hall. "I'm going

to tell Aunt Mary."

He started to protest, but to no avail, for she was already tapping on the old lady's door, was indeed opening the door and entering the room before he could frame an adequate protest.

"Aunt Mary," she said, "I didn't want to disturb you again, but Henry's been at the French windows in the dining-room, and he says he's seen someone out there."

The effect on the old lady was magical. "He's seen them!" she exclaimed. Then she was on her feet, coming rapidly over to Clodetta. "How long ago?" she demanded, seizing her almost roughly by the arms. "Tell me, quickly. How long ago did he see them?"

Clodetta's amazement kept her silent for a moment, but at last she spoke, feeling the old lady's keen eyes staring at her. "It was some time ago, Aunt Mary, after supper."

The old lady's hands relaxed, and with it her tension. "Oh," she said, and turned and went back slowly to her chair, taking her cane from the corner where she had put it for the night.

"Then there is someone out there?" challenged Clodetta,

when the old lady had reached her chair.

For a long time, it seemed to Clodetta, there was no answer. Then presently the old lady began to nod gently, and a barely audible "Yes" escaped her lips.

"Then we had better take them in, Aunt Mary."

The old lady looked at Clodetta earnestly for a moment; then she replied, her voice firm and low, her eyes fixed upon the wall beyond. "We can't take them in, Clodettabecause they're not alive."

At once Henry's words came flashing into Clodetta's memory-She's losing her mind"-and her involuntary start

betrayed her thought.

"I'm afraid I'm not mad, my dear-I hoped at first I

might be, but I wasn't. I'm not, now. There was only one of them out there at first—the girl; Father is the other. Quite long ago, when I was young, my father did something which he regretted all his days. He had a too strong temper, and it maddened him. One night he found out that one of my brothers—Henry's father—had been very familiar with one of the servants, a very pretty girl, older than I was. He thought she was to blame, though she wasn't, and he didn't find out until too late. He drove her from the house, then and there. Winter had not yet set in, but it was quite cold, and she had some five miles to go to her home. We begged father not to send her away—though we didn't know what was wrong then—but he paid no attention to us. The girl had to go.

"Not long after she had gone, a biting wind came up, and close upon it a fierce storm. Father had already repented his hasty action, and sent some of the men to look for the girl. They didn't find her, but in the morning she was found frozen to death on the long slope of the hill to the west."

The old lady sighed, paused a moment, and went on. "Years later—she came back. She came in a snowstorm, as she went; but she had became vampiric. We all saw her. We were at supper table, and Father saw her first. The boys had already gone upstairs, and Father and the two of us girls, my sister and I, did not recognize her. She was just a dim shape floundering about in the snow beyond the French windows. Father ran out to her, calling to us to send the boys after him. We never saw him alive again. In the morning we found him in the same spot where years before the girl had been found. He, too, had died of exposure.

"Then, a few years after—she returned with the snow, and she brought him along; he, too, had become vampiric. They stayed until the last snow, always trying to lure someone out there. After that, I knew, and had the windows covered during the winter nights, from sunset to dawn, because they never went beyond the west slope.

"Now you know, Clodetta."

Whatever Clodetta was going to say was cut short by running footsteps in the hall, a hasty rap, and Ernest's head appearing suddenly in the open doorway.

"Come on, you two," he said, almost gayly, "There are

people out on the west slope—a girl and an old man—and

Henry's gone out to fetch them in!"

Then, triumphant, he was off. Clodetta came to her feet, but the old lady was before her, passing her and almost running down the hall, calling loudly for Lisa, who presently appeared in nightcap and gown from her room.

"Call Sam, Lisa," said the old lady, "and send him to me

in the dining-room."

She ran on into the dining-room, Clodetta close on her heels. The French windows were open, and Ernest stood on the snow-covered terrace beyond, calling his cousin. The old lady went directly over to him, even striding into the snow to his side, though the wind drove the snow against her with great force. The wooded western slope was lost in a snow-fog; the nearest trees were barely discernible.

"Where could they have gone?" Ernest said, turning to the old lady, whom he had thought to be Clodetta. Then, seeing that it was the old lady, he said, "Why, Aunt Mary —and so little on, too! You'll catch your death of cold."

—and so little on, too! You'll catch your death of cold."
"Never mind, Ernest," said the old lady. "I'm all right.
I've had Sam get up to help you look for Henry—but
I'm afraid you won't find him."

"He can't be far; he just went out."

"He went before you saw where; he's far enough gone." Sam came running into the blowing snow from the diningroom, muffled in a greatcoat. He was considerably older than Ernest, almost the old lady's age. He shot a questioning glance at her and asked, "Have they come again?"

Aunt Mary nodded. "You'll have to look for Henry. Ernest will help you. And remember, don't separate. And

don't go far from the house."

Clodetta came with Ernest's overcoat, and together the two women stood there, watching them until they were swallowed up in the wall of driven snow. Then they turned slowly and went back into the house.

The old lady sank into a chair facing the windows. She was pale and drawn, and looked, as Clodetta said afterward, "as if she'd fallen together." For a long time she said nothing. Then, with a gentle little sigh, she turned to Clodetta and spoke.

"Now there'll be three of them out there."

Then, so suddenly that no one knew how it happened, Ernest and Sam appeared beyond the windows, and between them they dragged Henry. The old lady flew to open the windows, and the three of them, cloaked in snow, came into the room.

"We found him—but the cold's hit him pretty hard, I'm afraid," said Ernest.

The old lady sent Lisa for cold water, and Ernest ran to get himself other clothes. Clodetta went with him, and in their rooms told him what the old lady had related to her.

Ernest laughed. "I think you believed that, didn't you, Clodetta? Sam and Lisa do, I know, because Sam told me the story long ago. I think the shock of Grandfather's death was too much for all three of them."

"But the story of the girl, and then-"

"That part's true, I'm afraid. A nasty story, but it did happen."

"But those people Henry and I saw!" protested Clodetta

weakly.

Ernest stood without movement. "That's so," he said, "I saw them, too. Then they're out there yet, and we'll have to find them!" He took up his overcoat again, and went from the room, Clodetta protesting in a shrill unnatural voice. The old lady met him at the door of the dining-room, having overheard Clodetta pleading with him. "No, Ernest—you can't go out there again," she said. "There's no one out there."

He pushed gently into the room and called to Sam, "Coming, Sam? There are still two of them out there—we almost forgot them."

Sam looked at him strangely. "What do you mean?" he demanded roughly. He looked challengingly at the old lady, who shook her head.

"The girl and the old man, Sam. We've got to get them, too."

"Oh, them," said Sam. "They're dead!"

"Then I'll go out alone," said Ernest.

Henry came to his feet suddenly, looking dazed. He walked forward a few steps, his eyes traveling from one to

the other of them yet apparently not seeing them. He began to speak abruptly, in an unnatural child-like voice.

"The snow," he murmured, "the snow—the beautiful hands, so little, so lovely—her beautiful hands—and the snow, the beautiful, lovely snow, drifting and falling about her..."

He turned slowly and looked toward the French windows, the others following his gaze. Beyond was a wall of white, where the snow was drifting against the house. For a moment Henry stood quietly watching; then suddenly a white figure came forward from the snow—a young girl, cloaked in long snow-whips, her glistening eyes strangely fascinating.

The old lady flung herself forward, her arms outstretched to cling to Henry, but she was too late. Henry had run toward the windows, had opened them, and even as Clodetta cried out, had vanished into the wall of snow beyond.

Then Ernest ran forward, but the old lady threw her arms around him and held him tightly, murmuring, "You

shall not go! Henry is gone beyond our help!"

Clodetta came to help her, and Sam stood menacingly at the French windows, now closed against the wind and the sinister snow. So they held him, and would not let him go.

"And tomorrow," said the old lady in a harsh whisper, "we must go to their graves and stake them down. We should

have gone before."

In the morning they found Henry's body crouched against the hole of an ancient oak, where two others had been found years before. There were almost obliterated marks of where something had dragged him, a long, uneven swath in the snow, and yet no footprints, only strange, hollowed places along the way as if the wind had whirled the snow away, and only the wind.

But on his skin were signs of the snow vampire—the

delicate small prints of a young girl's hands.

The Return of Sarah Purcell

It was inevitable that one of the two Misses Purcell would have to die first, and it was not surprizing that Sarah, the older, was the first to go. But what was disturbing, thought Hannah Purcell, the sisters' niece, as she hurried across the dusty street to the sisters' home, was that Miss Emma should take it so hard. True, the sisters had lived together all their lives, and it was natural that the one left behind would show her sorrow; but to let her grief make her nervous and afraid—no, that was too much.

Hannah Purcell swung open the gate and went rapidly up the garden path. Emma was standing among the zinnias, a garden trowel in her hand, an enormous sun-bonnet shading her lined and worried face. Her hands, Hannah noticed, were trembling a little. Hannah made a barely percepti-

ble gesture of disapproval.

"Did you call me on the telephone while I was downtown,

Aunt Emmy?" asked Hannah.

The old lady nodded, her sun-bonnet bobbing grotesquely up and down. "Yes, I wanted to tell you something."

Hannah nodded impatiently. How like Aunt Emma—to call her over for something that was bound to be trivial!

"What is it?" she asked.

Emma looked up, regarding her niece with troubled eyes. Then she looked hastily away, and presently began to speak jerkily. "It's hard for me to say this, Hannah, but I have to. I didn't want to tell anybody, but now Sarah won't let me rest, and it'll have to come out, and it might as well be you that knows it."

Hannah softened the expression on her face. "You've done altogether too much grieving over Aunt Sarah," she said. "It's not good for you. You know what the doctor said."

The old lady appeared to give this her consideration for a moment or so, then disregarded it, and went on. "It happened before Sarah passed on, and I'd almost forgotten it, she going so soon after it happened, and all." She was fidgeting; she dropped the trowel and began to twist her fingers nervously together, looking slyly at her niece to gauge her reaction.

Hannah had been looking around her, and had seen the amount of earth that had been turned over; so she knew that her aunt had been at work since before dawn.

"You shouldn't fidget so, Aunt Emmy," she said in a

gently reproving voice.

"Can't help it; it's my nerves, I expect."

"What was it that happened?"

"Well, you see, Hannah, Sarah had a little doll. It was just a little thing—I don't know where she got it—but it was a powerful lot of trouble for me, she being a little childish and always wanting the doll around, and always having me do this and that for the doll, as if it were a child or something. That made me nervous, I can tell you."

Hannah nodded sympathetically, moving a little away from the flowers, for the dew was wetting her stockings.

Emma's words came suddenly in a rush, leaving her breathless. "So one day I hid the doll away from her, and then right after that she died, and I had forgotten where I put it. And there she was, a-calling for that doll, and I not knowing where I'd put it!"

"You've found it, then?"

"No, no. I can't remember where I put it. But I think I

ought to find it."

"You shouldn't worry yourself like that, Aunt Emmy. Now that Sarah's gone, there's no need to bother any more about that doll."

"Ah, but—" The old lady stopped talking abruptly; there was a queer, baffled expression in her eyes. For a moment Hannah felt a vague fear for her aunt's health; then Emma came swiftly closer to her, bending her face near, and whispered, "Will you stay with me tonight, Hannah? I don't think I'm well."

Hannah was startled. "Of course, I will, Aunt Emmy," she said quickly. "But don't you think you ought to see the doctor?"

The old lady shook her head violently; the sun-bonnet

came off, swinging on her back by the cord about her neck. Her graying hair shone silver in the morning sunlight. Her face was clearly distressed. "No, no doctor can do me any good, Hannah."

Back home again, Hannah Purcell said to her mother, "You know, I think that Sarah's going has affected her mind. I

do, now."

"How you talk, child!" said her mother, laughing. "She's just getting old and childish." She hesitated a moment, then presently added, "If anything's bothering her, it's most likely her conscience, providing she's got one."

Hannah looked curiously at her mother. "Why?" she asked. "Oh, she wasn't any too good to Sarah in her last days, I'm thinking," she replied. "I don't suppose she stopped to think about it much, but now she's got more time with

Sarah gone."

Hannah came to her aunt's defense. "Well, I suppose Aunt Sarah must have been a trial to her."

"Very likely," said her mother. "Still—Emma could have been a good deal more kind, to my way of thinking. Ah, well," she concluded, "Sarah's gone now, and it doesn't do anybody good to talk about what's done."

That evening Emma did not seem to remember having asked Hannah to stay with her. "But I am glad you've come, Hannah," she said. "I am glad. Then perhaps I can sleep tonight."

And, indeed, the old lady was obviously pleased that her niece was to spend the night with her, for she gave evidence of her pleasure in her hustling actions.

But Hannah thought, Perhaps she can sleep? Didn't she sleep last night, then? Aloud, she asked, "Couldn't you

sleep well last night, Aunt Emmy?"

The old lady shook her head. "Not a bit, Hannah, with her always coming in my sleep and asking me—asking me—" She broke off confusedly. "I'm a bit dizzy, I do believe, Hannah. I had a powerful headache last night—kept me awake most of the night."

They talked together for some considerable time. Despite Hannah's frequent suggestions that they had better be getting to bed, the old lady seemed loth to go, and at last she said definitely that she had some work to do, but that her niece could go on if she wished.

"In that case," said Hannah, "I'll help you do the work.

I'll not go to bed until I see you asleep."

"Oh, well, then it's all right," said Emma. "The work can wait until tomorrow. We'll go to bed right now." But she was obviously nervous and reluctant to leave the well-lit living-room for the semi-darkness of the long stairway.

The old lady went to sleep at last, and Hannah retired to her own room, where she sat watching the glow in the east where the moon would presently rise. There at the window

she fell asleep, still fully dressed.

The moon was hanging above the housetops, not so high but that a chimney might hide it, when Hannah awoke. Realizing abruptly that she had fallen asleep, she was about to get up when she heard a faint, disturbing sound in the hall. She listened intently. Someone was moving along, tapping the wall near the floor-boards. Hannah got up silently, moving cautiously to the door, which she opened a crack, and then suddenly let fall wide. There was the old lady on her hands and knees, crawling along the hall in her long white nightgown, tapping the wall! At first she did not see Hannah, and noticed her at last only because Hannah spoke sharply to arrest her progress.

"Why, Aunt Emmy, whatever in the world are you doing

there?" she demanded.

Emma appeared to be dazed, as if she were not fully awake. She waved her hands weakly, sitting up, resting on her knees, and said, "She—she wants the doll. I've got to find the doll—no rest until I find it."

"What are you saying, Emma Purcell!" said Hannah shortly.

Emma did not notice the sharpness of Hannah's voice. "Don't tell me that you didn't know," she went on in a mild voice.

"Know what?" Hannah leaned forward, sending her shadow sprawling shapelessly across the hall in the light of the rising moon flowing through her room and beyond.

"That Sarah's come back—for the doll."

Hannah gasped. So that was it! Then she bent suddenly,

taking her aunt almost roughly by the arm. "You go back to bed right away, Aunt Emmy."

The old lady got unsteadily to her feet, murmuring in protest. "No, no, I should look for the doll. She won't let me sleep, Hannah. She won't." She tried to loosen Hannah's grasp on her arm but failing, stood quietly looking at her niece.

Hannah was perplexed. "I declare, Aunt Emmy," she said at last, "I don't believe you know what you're saying." Emma said, "I do so, Hannah. I know Sarah's come back."

"Can you see her?" asked Hannah shortly.

"No's it's her shadow that comes, whispering to me in the dark. But I can see the shadow, Hannah. Yes, I can see that. It stands there against the wall in the moonlight, whispering, 'The doll, Emma. Where's the doll? I'm going to have it. You must find it, or you will never sleep again!" The old lady turned an abruptly fear-stricken face to her niece, and added, "And I can't find it, Hannah."

Hannah was alarmed. "I'll help you look in the morn-

ing, Aunt Emmy," she promised.

Only then did Emma allow her niece to lead her back to bed.

But in the morning the old lady seemed to have forgotten the events of the night before. Once or twice Hannah tried to bring up the subject of the doll and her dead Aunt Sarah, but she was cut off.

Hannah wondered, Does she remember nothing of last night?

Abruptly Emma said, "I had a bad walking dream last night, Hannah. I hope I didn't disturb you.' The old lady's eyes were deep pools which Hannah could not fathom; her face was expressionless.

"No," said Hannah. "You didn't disturb me at all,

Aunt Emmy."

"That's good."

Hannah went on. "I think I'll stay here with you again

tonight, if you'll have me."

Emma looked up quickly. "I should like to have you," she said hurriedly, eagerly. Then, so as not to appear too anxious, she added, "That is, if you're sure you don't mind, and if your mother doesn't care."

"I want to stay, and Mother doesn't care in the least," Hannah made haste to say before her aunt could change her mind.

That night Hannah did not go to sleep. She waited, listening for Emma to come from her room. Perhaps it was only a dream after all, as the old lady had said. But Emma's

eyes-how queer they had been!

It was after midnight, and already the late moon had risen, when Hannah heard the sound of Emma's door opening, creaking suddenly in the stillness. An owl called softly twice just beyond Hannah's window, and its shadow gliding silently across the floor in the patch of moonlight there momentarily distracted Hannah. She did not hear the door to her aunt's room close.

There came presently to her the sound of Emma creeping along the hall, and then abruptly a new sound came into the stillness. Someone was whispering harshly—could it be

Emma talking to herself?

Hannah got up hastily and lit the lamp. She stood near the door, waiting for Emma to come closer. It came to her suddenly that the whispering voice was not at all like her aunt's—it was deeper, harsher, almost like—Hannah shook her head, dispelling her grotesque thought. She was about to open the door when she thought, What is that rustling noise? The sound came from the hall, and instinctively Hannah knew that it did not come from her aunt's nightgown.

She opened the door, holding the lamp high. Emma sat back, blinking her eyes foolishly in the lamplight. But Hannah did not see her; she was looking beyond Emma, far down the hall. Was someone standing there, just out of the glow from the lamp? What was that vague, ill-defined

shadow? Was it-could it be-?

Hannah closed her eyes; there was a hurried rustling sound at the far end of the hall. She opened her eyes quickly. The shadow was gone.

The old lady, too, had heard, and had come to her feet. "She's gone now," she breathed. "She's gone. Stay with me, Hannah, or she'll come back. I think she'll kill me if I don't find the doll—I know she will."

But Hannah, suddenly afraid, and yet not daring to ad-

mit having seen anything, having heard anything, said,

"There's no one here but us, Aunt Emmy."

Emma nodded. "Not now, Hannah. But later—she'll come back again as soon as you're gone. Then I'll have to hunt and hunt and hunt again. Tonight she said to me, 'When I have the doll, Emmy, I shall have you, too!' You stay with me, Hannah."

Hannah shook her head. "If you need me, Aunt Emmy, you just call, and I'll come. I'll be here in my room all the time. Aunt Sarah's dead, and you're letting yourself get worked up something frightful because of that doll."

Emma protested, mumbling uncertainly to herself. She allowed herself to be put to bed, and made no protest when

Hannah left the room.

In the hall, Hannah stood for a few moments listening for any sound from the room she had just left. Then she looked carefully around her, holding the lamp high; there was nothing there. Her aunt's fear had upset her, too. She went on down the hall to her own room.

But just as she closed the door of her room behind her, Hannah heard as from a great distance, a faint, hardly distinct sound, a rustling coming from far away, moving momentarily closer. For a moment she hesitated; then she shook off the feeling of fear which had come suddenly upon her and, hearing nothing more, went to bed.

She could not have slept long, when she was brought suddenly awake by a voice shrilling into her consciousness. She jumped quickly from the bed and ran to the door. There was nothing in the hall. She was about to run to her aunt's room, when she heard Emma's shrill voice from the stairs behind

her.

She turned and ran to the top of the stairs. Then she saw her aunt. Emma was standing on a chair on the landing half-way down, standing before a large protrait on the wall. The portrait stood awry, and in her hand Emma was swinging a doll, holding it aloft. "Here," she was shrilling into the night. "Here, Sarah. Take it. It's yours. Go away now, go away." Then there was a moment's terrifying silence, and Emma's voice rose in a scream of fear. "No, Sarah, no—no ... don't ... push ... me!"

Hannah froze to stone at the top of the stairs. From some-

where above Emma, standing white in her nightgown, two shadowy arms reached down toward her, pushing, pushing. . . . Before Hannah's eyes, Miss Emma swayed, clutching wildly for the portrait with her free hand, and crashed to the stairs, rolling all the way down and coming to a grotesquely crumpled heap at the bottom. Her out-flung arm still grasped the doll.

Hannah ran quickly down the stairs and came to her knees beside her aunt's ominously still form. Her trembling hand felt for Emma's heart-beats. There was a briefly sluggish movement, then none; Emma was dead. For a moment she continued to kneel there, while a thousand thoughts besieged her. She must call the doctor, she remembered,

and got slowly to her feet.

She had gone only a few steps from the body, her mind confusedly turning over and over Emma's fear of her dead sister, and her tale of Sarah's warning—that she was coming for the doll, and Emma, too—when she heard a sound that struck icy terror into her heart. She stood still, listening. It was the sound of hurried whispering, together with a near-by rustling—the same sounds Hannah had heard before that night, save that now there were two voices. She whirled about, staring with wild eyes toward the stair-way.

Coming slowly down the stairs were two shadows, one unmistakably Emma's; the other—a tall, thin shadow, slightly bent—Sarah's. They floated gently down the stairs, whispering together, preceded by a subdued rustling sound as of a long skirt sweeping the steps, and came to a halt beside the body at the foot of the stairs. Then they bent slowly together above the still hand that held the doll.

As they straightened up, they faded toward the partly

open window at the end of the lower hall.

Hannah's frightened eyes were drawn toward the doll. It was moving, slowly, surely toward the window at the end of a shadowy arm—like that arm she had seen before, from above, pushing at Emma. It crossed the hall, floating in the dim darkness. Then it vanished out the window. With a strangled cry, Hannah stumbled forward and ran to the window. She looked out into the moonlit lawn. There was nothing there.

Logoda's Heads

"ALL RIGHT, here we are," said Major Crosby, halting. He glanced briefly at the four men who formed his body-

guard, and then turned to young Henley.

"Now, Henley," he said, "I don't want any interruption from you. I'm going to handle this thing myself, understand? You know how much influence these native witch-doctors have, and it's no go angering them needlessly. And Logoda's a bad one—he and his filthy heads."

Henley flushed beneath his bronze. "One of those heads

may be all that's left of my brother," he said shortly.

"Logoda knows too much to bother an Englishman," re-

turned the major.

"My brother knew his magic. He knew too much of his magic," said Henley, staring through the bushes toward the squat hut of the witch-doctor, Logoda.

"Well, for God's sake, don't start anything."

The major started forward, but Henley caught his arm. "Wait, Major," he said.

"What is it?" Crosby snapped.

"Talk to him in his own language," said Henley.

"I haven't mastered the native tongue yet," returned the major crossly.

"I didn't mean that," said Henley significantly.

"Oh," said the major, startled for a moment. Then he shook his head moodily and strode on across the clearing, with Henley at his heels.

A few natives scattered warily as they came on, leaving the door to Logoda's hut clear. There was a collection of trophies about the entrance; some of them were not pleasant to look at. Major Crosby reflected briefly upon England's inability to stamp out certain practices. Then he turned and curtly ordered his men to stay outside.

Major Crosby lifted the matted doorway and went in-

side, followed by Henley. It took them a minute to get used to the darkness. Then he saw Logoda—the ugly, stained heads dried and strung along on poles above the witch-doctor's head.

Major Crosby had been in the hut once before, not so very long ago. There were ten heads then; now there were eleven. The additional one, in the light of Bob Hen-

ley's disappearance, made him uneasy.

Logoda, an ungainly hulking man, sat on his haunches in a corner. He wore an odd head-dress, apparently hastily put on at the intimation of visitors, but apart from this and a few streaks of none too fresh paint, he looked very little different from his fellow natives. Yet the man was a very tangible and irritating power to the English stationed at the nearby post.

"Logoda, a white man is missing," said the major, coming directly to the point of his visit. "He was known to have come in your direction. A week ago, seven days.

Seven times the sun he came this way. Where is he?"

"No white man," said Logoda serenely.

He moved the upper half of his body slightly forward, so that his outflung arms came to rest on palms pressed flat against the ground. "No white man," he said again.

"Logoda," Crosby replied sternly, "many men will come to search. They will burn your village, they will put you in

a room with many bars."

Surprisingly, Henley interrupted. "You're wasting our time, Major. I told you to talk to him in his own language. Will you let me talk to him?"

"No," snapped the major angrily. "I'm convinced you're needlessly worried. We've no actual proof that your

brother's dead, and there's-"

Once again Henley interrupted him. "I'm going to look at those heads," he said, and before Crosby could stop him, he stepped forward.

Instantly Logoda pointed furiously at Henley and shout-

ed, "You go 'way!"

But Henley paid no attention. He stood under the dried heads, gazing at them imperturbably mid Logoda's furious mouthings and Major Crosby's nervous scrutiny.

Suddenly Henley caught his breath, and expelled it again with a sharp, hissing sound.

"Bob!" he muttered.

Major Crosby expostulated. "Now, look here, Henley—Logoda's not had time to dry a head. Only a week, hardly that."

Henley looked at him. "You are too new here, Major Crosby," he said. "I know how quickly they can dry them."

There was something about Henley's cold stare that

stayed Crosby's angry words on his lips.

Abruptly Logoda crossed his hands before his face, bowed his head quickly to the ground, and turned toward the dried heads, flinging out his arms as if in entreaty to them, his palms turned upward toward them. From his mouth issued a stream of weird gibberings.

"He is talking to the heads," said Henley softly. "Do not

be surprised if they answer."

"You don't actually believe in this tomfoolery, Henley?" demanded the major incredulously.

"Yes," said Henley simply. "I do. Bob and I have studied

it a long time. There is more in it than you think."

Logoda's gibbering quickly ceased. For a moment there was complete silence. The major was about to stalk out, disgusted—

Then there sounded, as if from far away, a shrill, strange tittering—it grew—it mounted—until it sounded all about them . . . and then it subsided into a subdued whispering, which was gradually lost in silence again.

Above them, Logoda's heads were swaying back and forth,

though no one had touched them.

"Good God," whispered the major.

"Major," said Henley in a strong voice, "will you take Logoda out of the hut for a minute or two. I want to be alone here."

Logoda sat smiling to himself, his eyes half-closed, rocking back and forth a little, like a drowsy joss.

"But I thought you promised—," stammered the major.

"Nothing will be disturbed, I promise you. Logoda will have no cause for complaint."

"But then why must he go out?" The major's skepticism

was shaken and he was trying not to show it.

"Will you do me this favor, Major? I will not bother you again, on my honor. I want to talk to Logoda's heads, and I do not want him to hear what I say to them."

The simplicity with which this request was uttered was

in strange contrast to the weirdness of its content.

The major swallowed with some difficulty and asked in a thick voice, "Will you go after that?"

"Yes, I'll go then," replied Henley.

"Very well."

The major stepped to the doorway and signalled to two of his men, knowing they would be needed to move Logoda, who would certainly not go of his own volition. Despite his furious protests, Logoda was dragged to the doorway, where he rose and walked, so that his natives might not see this indignity being visited on him.

Henley was left alone in the hut, and his whispering voice drifted eerily to Major Crosby and his men, who looked questioningly at each other. Henley was speaking

in a native tongue.

Only a few minutes elapsed. Then Henley stepped from the hut, his eyes glittering strangely, and Logoda, after glaring at him in murderous fury, entered his home again. "I'm ready now, Major," said Henley.

"Very well," said the major in a low voice.

The five men made their long way back to the English post, where they arrived just in time for supper.

For a long time Henley and the major did not speak to

each other, but over coffee at last, Henley spoke.

"How much would you people give to be rid of Logoda?" he asked softly.

Major Crosby was startled, but resolved not to show it. "A good deal, I think. But if you're planning to go back there to get him, stop now. We could have potted him a long time ago, but for an Englishman to be seen anywhere around when a witch-doctor dies suspiciously is certain to cause an insurrection—and a nasty one."

"Will you guarantee me passage to the coast?" pursued

Henley.

"I told you it was impossible, Henley. I need all my men

here, anyway."

"I didn't mean protection—I meant money. I have money waiting for me in Cairo—but that's a hellish long way off. I want to get there, and I haven't enough money."

"Oh," said the major, softening. "I had no idea. Well, you don't have to earn it," he went on, smiling now. "I'm glad

to be able to help you out."

"And get rid of me," murmured Henley, smiling, too. "But there's one more favor I want to ask of you before I leave."

"I want you to tie me to my cot tonight, and set a guard over me," said Henley grimly.

"What an extraordinary request!" exclaimed Major

Crosby.

"Nevertheless an earnestly meant one. Will you, Major?"
"Well . . . if you insist. And will you go then, in the morning?"

"Yes."

"I feel very odd about this," said the major some hours later, as he sat beside the cot to which Henley had been tied.

"You needn't," said Henley shortly. "I'm just protecting myself. Logoda's afraid of me. He isn't afraid of you, if you'll forgive my saying it. He knows I know too much. Bob did, too, and Bob's a dried head now. I have decided I don't want to die, and there are so many ways of bringing about my death for a man like Logoda. He could call me, and I would have to follow. Or he could come himself—maybe a little white dog, or a snake—almost anything. That's the why of all this, you see."

"Really, Henley," said the major somewhat stiffly, "you're talking like the most impossible madman. I find it difficult to believe that you're the same man who has been so sane

in my company the previous weeks."

"Yes, I understand that," said Henley. "I know how you feel. I am sorry to disturb the waters like that. Most of us like them smooth. But there are things like this, and they do happen. Bob and I have studied them too long to deny

them. You don't have to believe them—you'd probably be better off without knowing anything about them."

"Who made the laughter this afternoon, and who made those heads sway like that?" asked the major curiously, and obviously against his will.

"I told you-Logoda spoke to them, and they answered."

"That's not telling me a thing," replied the major.

"Perhaps not. That's the only answer, though. Now—forgive me—I've got a long journey ahead of me, and I've got to get some sleep."

In the morning Henley awoke to find the major bending over him, untying the ropes that bound him.

"Good morning," Henley said. "Hope you slept well."

"Thanks," said the major, smiling. "I didn't."

"Did anyone call for me in the night?" asked Henley, his

voice grim.

"No one. I watched for dogs and snakes and things, and even considered potting a couple of birds that got lost in the clearing."

"Good old major. Thanks. I think it was too late for

Logoda to send for me."

"I suppose you'll be leaving directly after breakfast?" asked the major then.

"I am expecting a message—and as soon as it comes, I'll be on my way."

"From whom?" asked Major Crosby bluntly.

"That I can't say. But you have scouts out, haven't you?"
"Of course," said Crosby shortly. Henley smiled.

They were at breakfast when one of the major's scouts came dodging out into the clearing. He was excited and breathless from the exertion of running.

"There's my message, I think," said Henley calmly. "How

about my passage money, Major?"

The scout came up to them. "Logoda's dead," he said jerkily. "He's been killed!"

"Killed!" echoed the major. "Good God! I hope there weren't any Englishmen around. How'd it happen?"

"The natives say his magic killed him. It's a queer business, sir. His guards didn't see anyone enter the hut or anyone come out. They heard Logoda talking to his heads and

they heard the heads answer. Then they heard him cough once or twice, and finally he slept. That was all. This morning he was found in his hut with his throat torn out—terribly mutilated, cut and torn as by thousands of rats."

"Go back and find out whatever else you can," ordered

Major Crosby.

The scout disappeared at once into the jungle.

Crosby turned to Henley. "You were on the bed all night, Henley. I know. And you guessed Logoda would be killed. Who did it?" the question came angrily.

"I did," said Henley simply.

Major Crosby flushed. "Nonsense," he snapped. Henley stood up, smiling. Yet his voice was grim.

"I told you it wasn't good to know about forbidden things. But I'll tell you. You heard Logoda and those heads and you will recall my insistence on being left alone with them. Logoda knew how to make them talk and sway back and forth. I knew how to make them rend and tear!"

The Second Print

OLD WEMYSS gave him the packet without question, and Moncati stood politely listening to him, his head cocked a little to one side. His bright, dark eyes were smiling coldly, but his thin lips remained devoid of any movement.

"I confess I'd have been afraid of your stepfather myself," said Wemyss. "There were some very strange stories about him, and the man himself always impressed me as

something evil."

Wemyss coughed nervously and cast a glance over his shoulder to where his law partner was at work on a brief. Belatedly lowering his voice, he added, "I admire your fearlessness, Moncati."

"Thank you," said Moncati, and left him.

Outside, his lips smiled, and he said within his mind: Wemyss, you had the secret!

His hand tightened a little about the packet and the photograph in it. This kind of blackmail would never have

occurred to Wemyss.

As he walked through Piccadilly in the sunlight so unusual for London, Moncati held his smile, and his thoughts dwelt upon the photograph and the occasion upon which he had taken it. About his step-father, Wemyss had put it mildly indeed. Moncati himself had heard the old man boast: "I am the Lord of Evil!" Proudly. Sure of himself.

Moncati remembered it well and had reason to believe it on natural grounds. Wemyss had not been wrong when he had warned him that the old man had an eye on the legacy coming to Moncati at twenty-five. Moncati's dabbling in photography had saved his life—just as Teddifer, his stepfather, was preparing to leap upon him, fingers already curved for his throat, the flashlight bulb had gone off!

Moncati had risen from his simulated sleep, thrust Teddifer away, and gone with the camera and film. He remembered yet the fury and chagrin on the old man's face when he had learned about Moncati's elaborate precautions but he remembered, too, that already then he had known

that some day he would have to take other steps.

Moncati paused to tear into little pieces the letter that had been with the packet, for Wemyss, which began: "In case of my death, please forward immediately to Inspector Winslow at New Scotland Yard . . ." and went on, chuckling to himself now, light-hearted and gay, with eyes for every pretty girl he met.

Deep in his mind he was well satisfied with himself, as proud as old Teddifer had ever been of his magic and necromancy, and not a little scornful of the evil old man who

had come to such a prosaic and untimely end.

Moncati felt not a qualm at remembering how carefully he had tied the cord which had tripped Teddifer at the head of the stairs and left him at the bottom with his scrawny neck broken. After all, Moncati had had every provocation; he had known that by some design or other, Teddifer had meant to accomplish his death and take his legacy, and the thought had irritated and at last had worried him into action. If a fly bothers me, I kill it, he had told himself then. Why not Teddifer?

When Moncati reached home, he unpacked the enlarged photograph, found a frame, and hung the picture on the wall squarely over his desk, so that he might remind himself from time to time of his own cleverness in circumventing the evil old man who had been his stepfather. He had already burnt up most of Teddifer's books and papers, and had begun to rearrange the house to suit his own convenience.

He went whistling up the stairs and left the picture there in the patch of sunlight on the wall: the evil-faced old man with head half turned toward the hidden camera and the flare that had surprised him: Moncati himself in bed, the glare of light that made strikingly clear the huge, cruel old hands and the designing mind behind. The sunlight was additionally merciless, and there the picture hung: Moncati in bed and Hercules Teddifer about to reach for his neck.

For some days the picture comforted Moncati; it gave him a deep-seated feeling of contentment, of satisfaction with himself and the world, and he glanced at it, smiling, once or twice a day. Then he went down to Sussex for a weekend and when he came back, he felt for the first time a disquieting note about the picture. It was something intangible, something upon which he could not put a finger, but it was there.

The photograph gave him the old pleasure and satisfaction, but there was something more, something malevolent about it, and he was irritated to think he did not know what it was. For a brief moment he thought that the old man's expression had subtly altered, become more calculating, but, being careful about his imagination, he dismissed the thought.

Two evenings later, as he sat at his desk writing a difficult letter, he glanced absently at the photograph and saw a movement there.

Because the indirect light threw a diffused glow over the picture, he thought at first that the movement he had seen was a normal hallucination springing from the slight refocusing of his gaze from paper to photograph, but almost instantly his eyes fixed unconsciously upon the spot where

he had thought the movement to have been: Hercules Ted-

difer's hands.

With a faint tremor he knew that he had seen the old man's large, bony hands flex—open and close—and he involuntarily waited, fascinated, for the hands to move again. But only for a second. He recollected himself and turned the light full upon the photograph, a faint feeling of panic guiding his hand.

He looked at it closely, but nothing happened; there was nothing changed about it, and he suffered a brief moment of distaste before he felt the old pleasure creep over him again, the sense of proud security he had made for himself by so fortunately ridding himself of his menacing

stepfather.

He sat down again presently, and resumed the letter, but every little while he caught himself looking expectantly up at the photograph, watching nervously and uncertainly; so that in the end he was obliged to give up the letter; somehow his mind would not return to it, would not concentrate properly on the task before it.

With a faintly derisive smile, half for himself, half for

the photograph, he left the desk.

He had no doubt that his eyes had played a trick on him, and he slept well that night, without dreams. He rose in the morning, got at his letter again, and finished it without any trouble.

On his way out of the house to the Victoria and Albert Museum, he gave the photograph a fleeting glance with his customary good humor, and went whistling into the morn-

ing's fog.

Not until he was seated comfortably in the underground did it occur to him that Hercules Teddifer's face, as he had seen it in the photograph that morning, was no longer turned toward the hidden camera. He had not actually realized it at first, but his eyes had seen, the image had been transmitted, and now suddenly he remembered it with a certain definiteness which he found difficult to escape.

The possibility of any physical change in the photograph was too absurd to entertain seriously; he began to think very clearly around what his eyes had seen in an attempt to find some explanation of it. But the more he thought, the

greater his confusion grew, until he knew that he must return to the house and assure himself that such a change had not actually taken place. He made a mental note at the same time to see about his eyes; glasses certainly were indicated.

He let himself in the house with trepidation and went directly to the picture. He looked and looked again; stepped back a little and stared, his mind in outraged tumult. There was a change! The old man's face no longer peered out at him; instead, it had turned ever so slightly, and taken new cognizance of the figure in the bed, the head bent a little, and the eves lost in contemplation. It was incredible, but it was true.

Moncati took the photograph off its hook and peered closely at it. He rubbed his fingers over it as if he might feel some subtle difference his eyes could not see; but there was nothing. Baffled, he put it back and stood looking at it for a long time, until he became conscious of the fact that he was waiting for change to take place there before his eyes.

Then, angry with himself, he turned away and went grimly out of the house intending to complete the day's itinerary as he had set it for himself. But somehow, before he knew it, the museum palled on him, and he found himself sitting down to tea with old Wemyss, who eved him a little askance.

"Investment trouble?" asked the barrister.

Moncati shook his head. "No danger of that. I've just developed some curiosity about my late stepfather."

Wemyss put on his pince-nez and looked at him. "God bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "What's put you in mind of him now? He's dead, and the world's the better for it

-you particularly."

Moncati smiled his most persuasive smile. "Agreed, Mr. Wemyss, but I have a reasonable amount of curiosity and I'd rather like to know something of the nature of those 'strange stories,' about which you hinted the last time I called on you."

Wemyss' eyes narrowed. "What misguided impulse roused your curiosity?" he asked.

Moncati shrugged. "Is it misguided?"

"I hesitate to talk about things I don't myself understand and yet must put some belief in," replied Wemyss, "because I dislike being held up to ridicule even if only in the private opinions of my clients. I don't suppose you believe in such things as magic and sorcery, eh?"

Moncati smiled pleasantly and said, "Only a fool refuses

to keep an open mind."

"Well said," answered Wemyss shortly. "Teddifer practiced that sort of thing—squares and circles and spirit rites and such. I don't hold with it myself, but I understand that some very unusual occurrences took place in that house of his."

Wemyss shrugged, a little irritated, but went on. "The best I can say is that some people died very oddly—servants. Two that I know of. Both strangled. But of course your stepfather was out of the city at the time. No question

about that."

Wemyss smiled a little oddly, with a kind of menace behind his lips. "He had some queer theories about the projection of psychic doubles and astrals, and the like; for that matter, no one ever found any prints of any kind on those two dead servants."

Of a sudden Wemyss gulped his tea and was off, saying over his shoulder, "God bless my soul! I've forgotten my

appointment with Dotson."

Moncati waved at his back, but he was puzzled; the inference behind Wemyss' words was clear enough, and somehow Moncati could not get his thoughts away from Hercules Teddifer's huge, ungainly hands, the tough, claw-like appendages that had so greedily threatened his own throat. He shook himself presently, paid for the tea, and wandered somewhat reluctantly homeward.

He looked at the picture, but there was no further change. He was conscious of a slight feeling of relief; but this was dissipated at once in the memory of the first change. He took the photograph down again, and examined it anew, but could discover nothing remarkable about it.

For the first time, he began to be aware of something akin to fear; he began to search his memory for some clue to this strange occurance; and at the same time he began to cast around for some manner of escape from the intangible dread

akin to that same fear he had known when first he had become aware of his stepfather's evil design to kill him.

Doggedly he put the picture back on the wall, and went about his small tasks. By evening he had sufficiently recovered his composure to contemplate coolly some means of combatting the subtle dread that lay in the back of his mind. He could not refrain from looking at the picture again, but there was no further change, and he felt a renewal of faith in himself.

He had thought once, fleetingly, of burning the picture, but this seemed to him somehow a reflection upon the resourcefulness and courage that had brought it into being, and he could not contemplate with equanimity the resultant drain upon his self esteem.

Throughout the evening, he sat in the room reading, his desk light thrown upward upon the picture, but nothing happened, nothing whatever. He had come almost to expect some further development, but this absence of anything again set him doubting what he had first seen.

Had there been any change in the first place? Or had his imagination over-reached itself? Certain as he was that the old man had first been looking out at him from the photograph, he was equally certain that he was now no longer doing so, but if this change had indeed taken place, it was utterly against natural law.

This thought gave him but little comfort until he realized that he could settle the question of whether or not his imagination had been remiss by taking the negative and having a separate print made for comparison. At once he was flooded with a strange feeling of freedom from dread; he felt that he was about to do the right thing. The possibility that his confidence did not come entirely from within himself did not occur to him.

In the morning, he took the negative and made a second print, enlarged to the same size as the original. He came to his desk with it and stood it up below the framed photograph.

What he saw was so far from reassuring that he caught hold of a chair and eased himself into it. Not only was the second print as he had originally believed the framed photograph to have been, but the latter had again changed in the night: Hercules Teddifer had moved closer to the

figure in the bed, and his hands were clenched!

Moncati began to perspire, coldly. For a moment he sat there at a loss to know what to do, and he thought confusedly of the old man's strange beliefs. Somehow it had not before occurred to him that by photographing the old man, he had managed, however obscurely to himself, to perpetuate Teddifer and his evil design. But in the height of his misery, hope came to him. He came to his feet and in two strides he had torn the photograph from the wall.

Three minutes later all that was left was a small drift of

ashes.

He was utterly relieved at once. How the old man could have managed recourse to his magic sorcery in this way was beyond Moncati, but the knowledge that he had circumvented him a second time was not. His opinion of himself soared.

He went out to celebrate. He made a night of it, hilariously told some acquaintances that he was celebrating his freedom, and congratulated himself upon shaking off the dread he had known so briefly again. He came in late, after midnight, his mind a little sluggish, and threw himself partly dressed on to his bed, where he fell asleep at once.

Not quite an hour later he awoke. The clock had struck two, and he lay drowsily staring into the darkness for some minutes before he heard the sound, like the rattling and rustling of paper. Even at that, he did not come fully awake; he pondered the sound sleepily and was not aware of its approach until it was almost upon his room.

Then he listened carefully, wondering what it might be. It was like nothing he had ever heard before, save for its

dry rustling and crackling.

He raised himself tiredly on one elbow just as the door of his room opened. This distracted him momentarily from the sound of movement, and he thought a draft had drawn it open, for at the moment there was nothing but darkness flowing in upon him.

Not until an uncanny chill pervaded his senses did he realize that the darkness he saw was not the shadows in the hall, but that it was something alive, something malignant. Instantly he was caught in a cloud of dread; he saw

the darkness resolve itself into a dim, human figure, one side aglow as if a light were falling upon it, and heard a dry chuckling all too familiar.

It was Hercules Teddifer's grim face that looked down

upon him.

Even as an outcry rose to Moncati's lips, the ungainly hands closed around his neck.

The last thing Moncati remembered was the thing he had unfortunately forgotten: the second print.

Mrs. Elting Does Her Part

THE MEDIUM came around to it at last, and agreed to Richard Alder's plan: to put fear into Sanders Hawk, if possible, now that Prother had done his part and talked Sanders Hawk into coming to see her. No easy task, that. She was a little dubious, even though it involved no great violence to her principles.

"He's retired and living off what he made on those poor suckers," urged Alder. "And it's all of five years since my

brother Jack killed himself."

"I don't know, I'm sure, Mr. Alder," she hesitated. "The

spirits may be angry."

"I doubt it," said Alder dryly. "I'll be in the neighborhood waiting for Hawk; he doesn't know me, and I look enough like Jack to put the fear of God into him. I'll come

back and pay you afterward."

That much arranged, he felt considerably better. He left Mrs. Elting's place and went out into the twilight. There was time now for a little supper, and after that he could take up his vigil nearby, so as not to miss Hawk when he came out. He had an uncanny feeling that he had done the right thing, that he had taken at least a step in the direction of the vengeance coming to Hawk for Jack's sake—for Jack, who had taken his life after Hawk had mulcted him of his small savings.

As Richard Alder walked to his car, he smiled at the medium's simple belief in her after-world—"the spirits may

be angry. . . . "

Mr. Sanders Hawk, his hair just beginning to gray, but as sauve as ever, arrived with Prother. He left Prother at the door and went into the medium's rooms for the seance. He was the last to arrive, and was none too eager. A master of skepticism, he. Prother had prevailed upon him, and he had come, but for spiritualism and supernaturalism in general he had a profound contempt.

He sat down, watched the lights dim, joined hands, and smiled derisively to himself. Rigmarole. A kind of magic that depended for its success upon the gullibility of the people who came to see it worked. He told himself that he could

foresee each step the medium might take.

In this he was wrong. The medium had hardly gone into her trance when something obviously not scheduled took place. This was Mrs. Elting doing her part, which, of course, Hawk could not have anticipated.

A convincing shudder of terror, a half-voiced cry, the urgent words moaned into the pregnant air from the revolt-

ingly lax body of the medium:

"There's someone haunted here, someone who is haunted! I can't go on—with him here. He is Hawe or Hawk—and there is a malignant spirit with him: a tall man with a mustache. His name is . . . his name is Alder, John Alder."

The incident startled Hawk; the long, terrified groan

shook him.

"Please go-please go away!" the medium said.

Hawk was astounded and not a little upset. His skepticism was for the moment put from his mind. He got up hastily and drew away, and with unaccustomed speed, he left the house, admitting within himself a certain relief at being again in the city's refreshing night air. He regretted not having brought his car, and damned Prother briefly for convincing him that the walk would do him good. He considered 'phoning for a taxi, but dismissed the thought; the fact was, he was loath to reenter the house from which he had just taken his hasty departure.

He stepped briskly to the sidewalk and strode away into the night. After the first block, he began to go over the thing that had happened in the seance room. He began to wish Prother had stayed, so that he could relate his incredible experience. Thinking about it, he confessed himself just a bit shaken.

He remembered John Alder, a little dimly, yet well enough. The woman's description of him was vague, but it was Alder all right, and Hawk began to wonder how she might have got hold of such an idea. Of course, she must have learned something about his past before he came there—but on second thought, he reflected that he and Prother had taken adequate precaution. Still, there must have been means of informing herself.

His confidence and skepticism coming back to him, he half thought of returning to denounce the medium for a fraud, certain that a hoax had been perpetrated upon him. But in a moment he reflected that there was nothing to be gained by such a hoax; the woman had done herself out of her petty pay and had helped herself and her reputation not at all.

Hawks felt a faint, uneasy sense of chill, and had the impulse to turn and look around. But he did not immediately yield to it, because within himself he had admitted to uneasiness, and was loath to signify it so outwardly as to turn and look behind him, like any child in the dark. But presently the impulse became overpowering, and he looked around, certain that he was alone in the shadowed street.

He saw Alder at once, because Alder was at that moment passing under a street light, but, as so often happens, Hawk did not assimilate what he saw immediately; he turned away and had taken four or five steps before the face under the brief glow of lamplight came back to him with the force of a blow, and he glanced over his shoulder again, only to see the figure plodding steadily after him.

Hawk paused grimly, closed his eyes, and looked again.

There was no one there.

Courage returned to him. Impulsively he turned and walked rapidly back down the half block separating him from the man he thought he had seen, confident of finding someone crouched in a doorway. But he found no one, and, turning again to continue on his way home, he went at an increased pace, firmly repressing a growing feeling of

fear and a faint sense of helpless anger, this partly at himself for giving way to fear, partly at the nebulous person

or persons responsible for this shabby deception.

He was certain that some form of deception was being practised upon him, and, knowing full well how often he had got away with other people's money, often considerable sums, by means of one clever scheme after another, he understood that there was motive enough, and many a man alive who might want to strike back in some way. But despite thinking so, he continued to hurry, as if by haste to leave his fear behind.

Half a block onward, he glanced again behind him. There was Alder still. The same distance from him, a dim figure, but certainly Alder, for his face was quite clear despite the darkness all around. Hawk began to feel a coolness on his forehead and knew that perspiration stood there. Yet he steeled himself to wait. Whatever it was must pass him by.

The muscles of his jaw tightened, and he waited.

But nothing whatever passed him.

The figure of Alder came on and was lost suddenly in deep shadows lying upon the walk there. Once more Hawk thought that he must have hidden. Once more he ran back, and again he saw no one, no living thing save a nocturnal bird darting and swooping with harsh cries among the moths

and insects about the nearest street light.

This time Sanders Hawk went toward his home at a running walk. Fear and terror had him and held him, impelling him at last to rapid flight. It may have been that in this extremity Hawk remembered the misery and tragedy he had caused wherever he had gone with his plans and schemes, the trust and faith he had broken time and again, the source of his comfortable income. But now, uppermost in his mind, was the thought of reaching the haven of his house, the security of his room.

He did not once look behind him.

He reached the house safely, though once or twice he fancied he heard running footsteps behind him. But he did not turn to see. He ran into the house and locked the door behind him, his breath coming in gasps, and without pausing to turn up the lights, he raced up the long stairs to the second floor.

That was his mistake. The light might have given him some additional security, might have lent his fear-distorted mind some stability. As it was, he saw Alder coming toward him down the hall, coming with incredible speed, it seemed, just as he reached the top of the stairs.

He cried out, stepped back, clawed for the rail, and missed it. His legs crumpled grotesquely beneath him, his fingers closed on air, and Sanders Hawk rolled down the stairs. Hawk was no longer young enough to withstand such an acrobatic feat without danger to himself; he broke his neck.

Ten minutes later, Richard Alder came to the medium's

house and went in.

Mrs. Elting glowed at him. "Mr. Alder, I know everything's all right. How you got in behind his chair and stood there is more than I can understand!"

Paying her, he looked at her a little curiously, but smiled glumly. "You've got an imagination," he said wryly. "I wasn't able to carry out my plan. I've just now come back from two hours at the police station explaining an accident I got into."

Ironically, for one in her profession, it did not occur to Mrs. Elting for some time after he had left, that the man she had seen behind Hawk at the seance had a moustache considerably larger and grayer than Richard Alder's.

Mrs. Bentley's Daughter

SAC PRAIRIE sweltered in the July sun. The warm, dusty air was lifeless, and in the heat of early afternoon the green of the trees was lost in the dull gray haze. The drooping flowers made curious splotches of color around Mrs. Vaile's porch; the light pink of late roses, the red of garden carnations, the orange and yellow of nasturtiums, and the deep blue of canterbury bells and clematis, that crept up along the porch floor and trailed along over the rail and the pillar.

The door of her house opened, and Mrs. Vaile herself came out upon the porch. She was dressed for the street, and as she came out she drew on her white gloves, holding her sunshade close to her body with the pressure of her elbow. She had trouble with the gloves and finally put the sunshade down to get at them better. One was already on, the other half-way on, when she drew them both off again and flung them to a chair on the porch.

"It's too hot to wear them, anyway," she said.

Then she raised her sunshade and stepped out into the sun. A car came down the road and swung around the corner

in a perfect storm of dust.

"Land's sakes!" exclaimed Mrs. Vaile. "Never saw such dust." She reflected that unless they had rain soon, the house and the flowers would soon be a dusty brown. She turned and looked at the flowers, bent away from the sun.

Then she went on her way, marching sedately down the walk and out upon the street. From the shade of her parasol she looked over at the house that was her destination. She should really have called sooner, she reflected, it being her place as a new neighbor to do so. Oh, well. She crossed the dirt road with little, mincing steps and came up before the white-washed fence about the house. She opened the gate and began to walk up the path toward the house.

Then she saw the child. It was sitting on the stone curb of an old, evidently unused well, for the opening was neither covered over nor marked with the paraphernalia of usage. The child was playing about, quite dangerously, too, Mrs. Vaile thought. It was a little girl, Mrs. Vaile saw as she came closer. What if she should fall into the well? The thought sent Mrs. Vaile from her path over to the child.

"Hello, darling," said Mrs. Vaile in her kindest voice.

The child looked up at her. "H'lo!" she said.

"Does your mother know you're out here, sitting at the well?" asked Mrs. Vaile, leaning slightly forward.

"Mama doesn't care."

Mrs. Vaile puckered her brow. She smiled a bewildered smile, and looked more closely at the child. The little girl smiled back at her.

"I don't think you ought to sit on the curb there, darling;

you might fall into the well."

The child turned her head slightly and looked down into the well. She laughed gayly and tossed her curls. Then she shook her head.

"I can't fall down into the well," said the child simply. Mrs. Vaile glanced nervously toward the house, half expecting the child's mother to come out to her. She thought it very odd that they should leave the well uncovered with a child about the house. Once more she entreated her.

"Do come with me to your mother, won't you? Come to

the house with me."

"Oh, no, I couldn't. I must stay here." The child shook her

head vehemently.

Mrs. Vaile sighed. "Oh! very well, then." She picked her way over the grass back to the walk and went on up toward the house. She mounted the porch steps and rang the bell; then she looked back at the child. Somewhat un-

ruly, that girl; Mrs. Vaile felt it.

Then suddenly she saw her neighbor's smiling face framed in the doorway, and in a moment she was sitting in a rather old-fashioned parlor—there were so many of them in Sac Prairie, she had been told. The walls were papered with light tan paper, on which were great red splotches of flowers—almost gaudy, thought Mrs. Vaile—but she was smiling at her hostess who was saying something about her flowers. The horsehair furniture felt very odd, somehow. Across from her on the mantel she saw several old chromos. On one of these she saw three people—a woman, a man—her husband, no doubt—and a child. The woman was her hostess, and the child was the child on the well curb. A family group, thought Mrs. Vaile. She turned to her hostess now, and smiled as if she had heard and appreciated every word that had dimly come to her.

"I know I should have come sooner, but I was frightfully busy. Moving, you know. And if it hadn't been for your adorable little girl, whom I saw on the well curb as I

came in-"

Mrs. Vaile stopped abruptly. There was a sudden odd pallor on the face of her hostess. She heard the woman saying, more to herself than to her:

"On the well curb again?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Vaile affably. "She was sitting there quite pertly, and answered me when I spoke to her."

"Ah!" the woman exclaimed, and leaned forward. "And

what did she say?"

Mrs. Vaile hesitated. Would it do to tell this woman that she had reprimanded her child? "Not much, certainly not," said Mrs. Vaile. "I told her I thought she hadn't ought to sit on the well curb, but she said you didn't mind; so I came on in."

"Ah! yes. Dorothy was always like that. A bit unruly, perhaps, just a little bit. But such a dear, and such a comfort to me. She comes and she goes, but she seems to like the well curb best. It's a bit extraordinary, too, when you come to think of it."

Mrs. Vaile thought her hostess was becoming steadily more incoherent; she thought it best to change the subject. She led off on the last meeting of the Ladies' Aid, and her

hostess entered into this topic with fervor.

It was after five when Mrs. Vaile emerged from the house. She saw as she came down the path that the child was no longer at the well. She was most probably playing in the dense bushes to the left, from which came the shrill screaming of a group of children at play. Behind her, the woman was leaning over the porch railing and staring at the well.

She closed the gate after her, and stepped briskly across the street. It was at her doorstep that she met Mrs. Walters, from the other end of the block. Mrs. Vaile did not like Mrs. Walters; she had been warned that Mrs. Walters was an accomplished gossip, and she detested gossip. But she was already coming to feel that gossiping was one of the few means of passing the time in Sac Prairie.

She greeted Mrs. Walters, and the woman responded with

a sharp nod.

"Have you been visiting Mrs. Bentley?" she asked.

Mrs. Vaile nodded. "Yes. We have had a very pleasant chat about"—she could not tell this woman that they had been discussing the Ladies' Aid—"about Mrs. Bentley's daughter, Dorothy."

Mrs. Walters jerked her head about and stared at Mrs.

Vaile in open-eyed astonishment.

"Do you tell me she talks about her?" she demanded. "Why, yes," answered Mrs. Vaile. "After I saw the girl on the well curb—"

"Saw the girl on the well curb!" Mrs. Walters almost screamed the words; she seemed to be leaning away from Mrs. Vaile, and at the same time boring her eyes into her.

Mrs. Vaile was nonplussed. What had she said now? Dear me! she thought, what a queer person! But something Mrs. Walters was saying brought her up sharply.

"How you talk, Mrs. Vaile! Why, that girl fell into the well over a year ago. I can't believe that Mrs. Bentley

would talk about it!"

Mrs. Vaile nodded. "It is rather queer, isn't it? If a daughter of mine fell into the well once, I'd be sure not to let her play around it again. But there she was, smart as you please, sitting right on top of the well curb!"

"What are you saying, Mrs. Vaile?" asked Mrs. Walters coldly. Then, in a voice that seemed to come from far away, "Surely you know that the child drowned when she

fell into the well!"

Those Who Seek

JASON PHILLIPS had no intention of going to the abbey, but when young Arnsley discovered that he was an artist, he had to go—there was no getting out of it. He had protested mildly at first; he had still to finish the painting of the castle, and he had promised himself a few spare moments in which to ramble around the estate of Lord Leveredge, Arnsley's father. But his objections were over-ruled by a wave of the hand, and consequently Phillips found himself on this October morning seated before his easel, staring miserably at the ruins of the abbey that had so caught young Arnsley's fancy.

It was very old, and quite like many other abbeys that

Phillips had had the pleasure of seeing. However, Phillips noticed at once that the building was fairly well preserved for its age—which Arnsley said, dated back into the Roman invasion period, some said long before. The second and third floors of the building were almost gone; only a few supports projected into the air here and there. But the first floor, hidden for the most part by a dense growth of vines and bushes, was remarkably well preserved. Deep-set windows could be seen through the bushes, and over toward the cloister walk was a huge door which so engaged the artist's fancy that he decided to paint the abbey so as to feature the cloister walk and the door.

Phillips started his charcoal drawing. He made a few tentative strokes and erased them. After a moment of study, he repeated the process. There was something about the view of the cloister walk that escaped Phillips. He leaned away from the canvas and regarded the abbey in silent irritation. He tried the charcoal drawing again, with more precision this time. After a short time he put down his charcoal. He did not seem to be able to sketch the abbey as he saw it—there was a feeling as of someone guiding the charcoal. Phillips felt vaguely and unreasonably ill at ease.

It was due perhaps to the gruesome history of the abbey with which Arnsley had regaled him on the way up, added to his own previous knowledge. Of the actual building of the abbey, little seemed to be known. There was one date, the earliest, at 477 A. D., which Lord Leveredge had given out as the date the abbey was taken from the Celts by the Saxons. It was Lord Leveredge's idea that the Celts had erected the abbey first as a temple of Druidic worship, and recent discoveries about the grounds had unearthed nothing to oppose the theory. Indeed, several of the leading authorities were in agreement with Lord Leveredge, and in a subsequent history of the place, this point was emphasized beyond all proportions. There was then a gap of three hundred years in the abbey's history. In 777 A. D. the abbey appeared in contemporary histories once more. There was a curious story of the strange disappearance of a party of Danes who besieged the place at the time still a temple. Phillips recalled that he had read of old-time bards who sang about this legend. This was perhaps the first of the

incidents that gave the abbey a sinister reputation. Another occurred in 1537, during the time of Henry VIII, when the temple, then an abbey, was raided by a band of His Majesty's Reformation mercenaries. The abbey was at the time unoccupied, but strange unaccountable rumors had reached from generation to generation hinting at the awful things that happened there at the time of the raid. Armsley recalled newspaper accounts of the "dark people" of the Abbey, the ghosts of long-dead monks who marched forever along the cloister walk, telling their beads and reading their breviaries. The abbey had, in consequence,

got a reputation of being haunted.

There was, too, a story not so legendary, that had happened only four years before. A fisherman had wandered into the abbey to sleep; it was common for these fisher folk to sleep in secluded places along the near-by coast where they plied their trade. The following morning this man was found wandering in a dazed condition on the sea coast. At first he could say nothing, and later, when some semblance of speech had been restored, he mumbled incoherently about songs and prayers, and there had been something of green eyes watching him. Two days after he had partly recovered; he disappeared. When a searching-party had been sent out, he was found dead and horribly mangled in the abbey. Of the means by which he came by his death, nothing was subsequently discovered. There were curious marks on the man's body, deep claw-like tears in the flesh, and a ghastly whiteness led to the examination which showed that there was little blood in the body-the man had apparently bled profusely.

But this rumination was taking time, and Phillips, suddenly coming back to reality, reached quickly for his charcoal and again began his sketch, which seemed to go some-

what more easily this time.

Phillips had just completed his charcoal drawing when Arnsley appeared from inside the abbey and called to the artist to come in for a moment. With an annoyed smile, Phillips rose and made his way slowly through the bushes to the spot where Arnsley stood.
"Well, what is it?" There was a petulant note of vexation

in his voice which quite escaped Arnslev.

"I came across an inscription, old man, and I wonder if you could read it. It's Latin, I think, but so curiously wrought and so old, that I'm not sure if I'm reading it rightly-though I seem to be able to make out the lettering."

"Oh!" said Phillips, somewhat nettled.

"Just follow me," said Arnsley. He turned and entered the abbey and progressed swiftly along the corridor parallel to the cloister walk. "It's along in the corridor here," his voice came over his shoulder to Phillips, and he half turned to regard the artist in the subdued light of the corridor

"Go on," said Phillips quickly, thinking of the charcoal

drawing he was about to paint.

"Seems to be on some sort of slab, I should say," continued Arnsley, as if he had not heard. "And it's almost obliterated—you'd expect, that, wouldn't you?" Arnsley stopped suddenly. "Here we are."

Arnsley had come up before a rectangular slab of stone, set, as closely as the artist could determine, directly in the center of the corridor. Phillips bent to peer at the inscription that Arnsley indicated with his cane.

"What is it?" asked Arnsley after a moment. "It's Latin, of course-just as you thought."

"Well, that seems to indicate that this place has Roman

beginnings after all, eh?"

Phillips grunted irritably; he remembered that despite the authorities, Arnsley had held to his belief regarding the abbey as a product of the Roman invasion, "If this building was founded by the Romans of the first invasion, that inscription was put on a considerable time after. As nearly as I can make it out it reads OUI. PETIVERENT. IN-VENTIENT., and that, literally translated, is a quotation from the Christian Bible-'Those Who Seek Shall Find.' Where did you get the idea that this place is Roman, Arnsley?"

"Oh! I strike upon that as the best bet," said Arnsley, shrugging his shoulders. "I'm told, though, that there's a priest over in Wallington who's got an old paper on the abbey, and he seems to think much as I do. I went over once to see his paper, but the old fellow wasn't at home, and his housekeeper was pretty chary about letting strangers mess about the priest's papers. The name's Richards, Father Richards; I've an idea you could get quite a bit of material from him if you want it. He's an authority on old abbeys and cathedrals."

Phillips raised his eyebrows. "Surely your father must

have something on the abbey?"

Arnsley shook his head. "Though he's custodian of the abbey for the government, he hasn't anything in his library pertaining to this place. Nor, curiously enough, has he ever cared to discuss the abbey with me. Off and on, he's given me a few vague facts, but most of what I know I've picked up from hearing conversations with archeologists who visit him. He clings pretty strongly to the Druidic beginning of the place, but when I said something to him about it one day, he dismissed the subject pretty sharply. Also, he seems to believe that there's something pretty much wrong about this place. I daresay that grows out of an experience he had here himself.

"He was up and around this region hunting one day. Coming by here after dark, he swears he heard some one chanting here, and saw in a yellowish-gray half-light a procession of black cowled figures. He recalled that there were stories of the ghostly monks who haunted this place. None of us pays any attention to the story; his flask was perfectly empty when he reached home—and he can't usually carry

that much in him."

Phillips laughed cautiously.

Arnsley looked down at the slab. "Do you suppose it means anything?" he asked. "Perhaps it refers to some definite thing?"

It's quite probable that the monks had that inscription put there. You'll find others, I daresay, if you look."

Arnsley looked at Phillips with a curious smile on his face. "It's odd that you should think of that at once. I thought so, too, and I took the trouble to look around before I called you. There aren't any other inscriptions."

"You see that this inscription is almost obliterated. Perhaps those others were not so fortunate," returned Phillips

imperturbably.

Philips shrugged his shoulders and clumped out of the building to where his easel stood. Arnsley sank to his knees and began to examine the slab in the most minute detail. Contrary to Phillips, he did not believe that the inscription had been put there merely as a matter of devotion, so that the monks who walked this path hour after hour in years long gone by, heads cast down, lips moving in silent prayer, should see as they passed, this eternal word, and seeing, hope and seek to penetrate the veil. But nothing came of the

scrutiny Arnsley gave the slab.

He rose at last, and, filled with a sudden hope, cast his eye about for a lost stone, or an old worn bracket. He had suddenly conceived the idea that this slab might hide some secret passage, long forgotten—probably even now impassable. A stone about three times the size of his clenched fist, almost hidden in the semi-darkness of the corridor, rewarded his search. Without hesitation, he seized it and began to pound upon the slab. After some moments he stopped; the effort seemed quite futile. He thought he detected a hollow sound from behind the slab, but he could not be sure; the difference that had caught his attention was at all events very slight. Then, too, he argued, the stone must be very thick—so thick that the pounding of this small instrument would not establish much. He stood up and dropped the stone, throwing it over toward the corridor wall.

Through a cloister window he caught sight of Phillips industriously daubing his canvas. He began to wish that they had not planned to stay here during the night, so as to give the artist ample time to put the finishing touches to his picture the following day. If only Phillips had protested against carrying the blanket rolls! Arnsley could not explain his attitude; it was he, in the first place, who had suggested staying the night. It was perhaps the impending heaviness in the atmosphere that depressed Arnsley-so, at least, he concluded, after looking at the ominous black clouds low on the horizon. With an impatient sigh, he went out and got the blanket rolls and the little kit of tools they had brought, and took them into the abbey. He deposited them in the corner of one of the most sheltered rooms; then he came out toward Phillips, who had painted in his background, and was starting now on the cloister walk, which he could not do completely because the background might mix with the color of it at the edges.

It was late afternoon before Phillips put aside the painting. Then Arnsley and he had a light lunch, after which they spent the remaining hour of daylight wandering about the abbey and the woodland surrounding it. They had decided to retire early, so that they could leave the abbey before noon of the following day; consequently there was still a faint red line on the western horizon when they disrobed and rolled themselves into their blankets.

Although Arnsley slept immediately, Phillips tossed restlessly about for almost an hour. He could not rid himself of an uneasy feeling of impending disaster, and fear crept upon him from the darkness of the starless night. He sank at last into a state of dream-haunted slumber. He dreamed of vast expanses of blackness, where life crept about shrouded forever in the darkness of the pit. He saw immense black landscapes, where great gaunt figures of ancient Saxons. whose hard, cruel faces gleamed beneath their hoods, were arrayed like giant colossi. From the blackness a shape took form; there was a great gray stone building, crude as only the hands of far past ancestors could make it. And there were rows upon rows of cowled figures marching in triumphant procession about the stone circle, and away into the blackness of the sky. There was a huge stone pillar, from the flat top of which great streams of red ran into black maws open to receive it. There was a sudden flash of white, and Phillips saw in his dream a great green thing, faint against the sky, that flailed the air with long red tentacles. suckers dripping blood and spattering it over the kneeling figures of supplicating worshipers. There was a haze again, that dropped like a velvet curtain, and again came the black ones, moving in and out among the worshipers, here and there signing to one to follow. Then this, too, was gone; covered with a great whiteness, like an impenetrable fog that swirled impotently about.

There was a familiar landscape now, and there were figures of men running wildly from something that slobbered and gibbered as it came after them, catching them one after the other with its swinging tentacles. In his dream Phillips saw suddenly the whiteness of fear-stricken faces. There were great towering hulks of men who cringed in abject fear. From the far north these Danes had come to conquer, and a

sudden, awful death had come forth to meet them. There were others, too, smaller, frailer men, arrayed in the colors of the Tudors, who gibbered and frothed, thrown flat upon the ground. Some, maddened, beat their heads upon the rocks on the countryside, while ever there loomed that great green-black thing that flailed these helpless men with reddened tentacles. Then there came a single face, a countenance so horrible in its fear that it caused Phillips to move uneasily in his sleep. The face vanished suddenly, and there was a man running, stumbling over the fields, fleeing aimlessly, and coming at last upon the place from which he had started—the ghoul-haunted ruins of the abbey! Again, flight, and black-robed priests who sat and waited, watching for the return of him who fled away into the night. There was an unholy light about the faces of the watchers.

Gradually, now, other things took shape. In his dream Phillips recognized the cloister walk of the abbey, and he saw in flaming letters the inscription on the slab-forming out of nothingness, one by one, QUI. PETIVERENT. INVENIENT. There was an endless dancing motion of the letters, and a brightness of flames, and a timelessness of meaning that awed the haunted mind of the sleeping artist. The letters stood alone in whiteness, but there were suddenly great clouds of swirling mist, and a blackness of figures impinged again upon Phillips' dream vision. From the darkness below he saw a long greenish-red thing licking out into the mist, where now formed the fear-drawn faces of men -Saxons, Danes, and there were the round faces of monks, grotesque in fear. There was a great redness, as of blood, and a chanting, a mumbling indescribable came up from below. There was a knowledge in his dream that enabled Phillips to know this ancient chant, this ceremonial prayer which was wafted to him. There now arose a ghastly ululation, and out of the cloister windows floated a loathsome, putrid blue-gray light. Out of the earth came eery mad chanting that crept away into the night. The mist that hovered above resolved itself into a long hand that swayed to and fro in the air above the slab and at last descended gracefully toward the low windows of the cloister. Down, down, it came, and at last it touched with sudden pressure upon the second of the three low sills just opposite the

slab. Immediately the slab was flung upward, like the rebound of a trapdoor. Then, from nowhere, came the black ones again, descending into the blackness beneath the opened walk. There were hundreds of them—it seemed as if the procession would never end.

Phillips had no knowledge of that time of the night he was disturbed; he knew only that it was a sudden sharp cry that brought him out of his sleep. He sat up and looked over at his companion's bed. Armsley was not there. He jumped up and began to search around in the half-light for his trousers. He had just got hold of them when the cry was repeated. It sounded very much like a cry for help, and it arose from near by, from within the abbey itself.

Phillips hastily clothed himself, took hold of the hammer in the small tool kit they had brought along—the only weapon that came to hand—and crept warily out into the corridor, for it was from there that the cry seemed to come. He stood for a moment listening. From along the corridor came a succession of faint sounds, as of someone walking slowly into the distance—some heavy thing, someone carrying a bulky object, or a mass of creatures moving in rhythmic unison.

Tightening his grip on the hammer, Phillips went resolutely forward. As he advanced, he saw in the moonlight filtering through the slits of windows that the inscribed slab had been moved; it lay to one side of the black gap in the walk. He paused. Could Arnsley have dreamed as he had? He shot a quick glance toward the window-sills; the second was depressed—and Arnsley could not have known except as the artist had dreamed! He was seized with a sudden, horrible dread; for a moment he stood as if grown to the spot. He was afraid to move; something seemed to warn him not to go farther. He felt a sudden, unaccountable urge to turn and flee, but he thought again of Arnsley and of the cries he had heared in the stillness. In the night his frightened mind conjured up before him the vision of the fisherman he had heard about.

He went tentatively forward, his hand tightly closed about the handle of the small hammer. He crept closer and closer to the opening. He was still horribly afraid, but he was possessed of an awful curiosity, stimulated by his fear, that drove him forward to the opening. Faintly now, he could still hear the weird rhythmic walking sound, but it came from afar, and Phillips wondered whether it could not be the far-off beating of the sea waves against the rocky coast. In his interest, he almost forgot Arnsley. Suddenly recalling his companion, the artist called loudly: "Arnsley!" and again, "Arnsley!" Phillips threw himself to the floor and bent his head to look into the black, yawning chasm below the corridor's stone floor.

What happened next remained very vague in Phillips' mind. He maintained that he saw nothing, but there was an awful, ghastly stench that met him full as he looked into the blackness. There came a sharp succession of faint screams, and a low, horrible moaning that sent the artist stumbling and blinded out onto the highway, where he fell prone in the welcome glare of an oncoming Daimler.

Phillips lay for weeks in a state of delirium. From scraps of mumblings that the artist gave issue to while delirious, investigators branched their work to the abbey on Lord Leveredge's estate. The inscribed slab was in its place, but by depression of a slab in the sill of one of the windows, the inscribed slab was forced upward. In a moldy crypt below, the barely recognizable body of Arnsley was found. There were peculiar marks all over the body, as if tiny suckers had attached themselves to its pores. He was devoid of blood, and most of the bones of his body were crushed. The coroner's inquest decided that he had met his death at the hands of persons or things unknown. The equipment found in the abbey, together with the artist's canvas, was returned to Phillips. Phillips hardly recognized the canvas as his work.

It was two months before the artist, still weak, was released from the hospital. Phillips immediately entrained from Manchester to Wallington, where he called upon Father Richards, from whom he hoped to gain some slight knowledge of the horror at the abbey. There was something about the painting, too, that Phillips had discovered after a close scrutiny.

Phillips found the priest quite willing to talk, and the artist let him ramble on for some little time before he came

to the canvas. He produced it suddenly, and showed it to the priest, whose chubby face plainly showed his utter astonishment.

"Why, my dear sir," he said in awe, casting a suspicious glance at the artist, "this is an almost perfect reproduction of a scene that you could never have seen. There is a reversal of the cloister walk and door; you have painted it as it was in the old temple, not as it is now-and there are a hundred odd details. The picture you have here is that of an old Briton-Romanized temple to a strange pagan deity-the God of Life, more often called the God of Blood by the worshipers and present-day archeologists. I have a picture of the god somewhere; you understand, a picture drawn from imagination. It makes me shudder. It's in color, and shows the god with his black-robed attendants. The god is like a huge black-green jelly, and seems equipped with minute suckers and tentacles, much like an octopus. It resembles a sea creature very much, giving off a bluegrav light, and flaring a bright green from its eyes.

"Since the abbey is not far from the coast, there are many archeologists who maintain that there was once an underground passage from the sea to the abbey, connecting, they say, to a crypt below the corridor. I don't know, of course. One thing puzzles me about the whole business; did the Christians know of this devilish worship or not?

"If not, who put that Latin inscription on that slab in

the corridor?"



Mr. Berbeck Had a Dream

IF you had asked the neighbors about them they would have agreed unanimously that the Berbecks were a bad lot, all three of them—the old lady, the son, and the daughter-in-law. Because of her one-time dubious association with the underworld, old Mrs. Berbeck was looked upon as a wicked old woman, her son a sniveling creature, and her

daughter-in-law shrewish, to put it mildly. And one or two of those neighbors, more astute than the rest, wondered occasionally how it was that the old lady, for all her association with the criminal classes, could not spot the crook in

her own family circle; meaning Peter Berbeck.

The facts of the matter were these: old Mrs. Berbeck, once indeed qualifying as a very wicked woman, was now nothing more than a somewhat querulous and largely harmless old lady suffering from a number of diseases any one of which might take her off at any time. Her son Peter was an office clerk and would probably never be anything else, a colorless man in his early forties, a definite type—wing collar, spectacles, strawy hair, small moustache and pouty mouth. His wife ran the house, though it belonged to the old lady. As a matter of fact, the two younger Berbecks were living on the old lady, even more than the elder Mrs. Berbeck suspected, and this was what the more astute of the neighbors hinted.

For Peter Berbeck, incapable as he looked, had some time before his mother's imminent death yielded to his wife's promptings that the old lady's bank balance be drawn upon. A simple matter of two bankbooks, one for the old lady's eyes—a forgery, obviously; the other for use, forged orders, and in a few years the younger Berbecks had run through a comfortable inheritance with nothing to show for it. The old lady, of course, almost all this time assumed she had several thousands at her fingertips, and was happy until her death, which came about much sooner than she might have expected.

The plan went smoothly enough until the old lady began to look at her son and daughter-in-law with questions in her eyes. There were some uneasy moments when she sent her son to the bank for rather large sums of money. Fortunately, they had not been so unwise as to draw everything out. There were more uneasy moments when the old lady sent for a cab once or twice and came back late at night from mysterious trips with something she had bought—parts of some kind of machinery, which she lugged down into the cellar and stored there. And when, presently, an odd-looking machine began to take shape under her hands, the

Peter Berbecks had no difficulty convincing themselves that the old lady was mad.

But the thing that finally upset the Peter Berbecks came about through the dirty, smudged letters that now occasionally came to the old lady. A burnt fragment of one of them one morning disclosed that old Mrs. Berbeck had paid what seemed to be a thousand dollars merely for the loan of some plates. This incensed her daughter-in-law, who thought that a stop ought to be put to such waste. Peter fluttered, mumbled something about duty, and shied clear.

Mrs. Peter Berbeck helped the old lady off this earthy plane by putting some arsenic in her coffee. A careless doctor obliged by pointing to two or three of the old lady's illnesses as causing her death. The period of mourning, naturally, was short. Even hypocrites find hypocrisy very irksome at times

What subsequently happened to Mr. and Mrs. Peter Berbeck is still largely a matter of conjecture—the facts behind the obvious evidence, that is. Several nights after the old lady's death, Peter Berbeck had a dream. He dreamed that his mother appeared to him, beckoned him from his bed to the cellar below, and showed him how to complete the setting up of the machine there. He dreamed, further, that he began to work the machine, and that, later, he found himself rummaging in the closet of his mother's room. He dreamed this dream successively, on several nights, and one night woke up on the cellar stairs, very tired, his clothes oil-stained, to find his wife standing beside him. It developed that she, too, had had an identical dream, and, indeed, her night-clothing was stained as was his.

And then came that final catastrophic dream—that there was an old shoe-box in his mother's closet filled to the brim with money that had never seen a bank. The following morning Peter told this dream in every detail to his wife, and she went directly to the closet and found the box with

money in it, just as Peter had dreamed.

After that, there was a brief period of hilarious living, and then suddenly the bubble burst. Nothing seemed to go right, and when Mr. and Mrs. Peter Berbeck were finally haled into court and put up for trial their period of riotous living was definitely at an end. Peter told his story, and his

wife told hers, but neither story seemed to be the right one, and Judge McIlrath of the Federal Court in Chicago frowned sternly before pronouncing sentence, and said, "It is almost inconceivable that seemingly educated persons could postulate such nonsense. The facts in this matter are plain. The evidence is without question, the crime deliberate. These preposterous stories are an affront to the dignity of this court, an insult to the intelligence of the jury."

Old Mrs. Berbeck would have enjoyed that, but she, poor lady, was quite dead, unless we agree with those openminded persons who believe that perhaps some of us never

really die.

Trying blindly to seek a way out of the dilemma in which he found himself, Peter Berbeck claimed that things began to happen shortly after his mother's death.

"What things?" demanded the prosecution.

"Well, I had a dream," said Peter. "One night I dreamed that my mother appeared to me and took me by the hand and led me down into the cellar. The machine was there."

"You admit that, then, do you?"

"Yes," said Peter, not knowing why he should not. "My mother had friends among the—well, among criminals—and

knew where she could get those things."

"I'm afraid that cannot be admitted as evidence," said the prosecution. "Your mother is dead. We can hardly accept statements of this kind. The machine was there. Please go on with your dream, if you feel that it may help

to explain the evidence against you."

"Well," resumed Peter. "I dreamed she led me down into the cellar and put my hands on the machine. I did as she told me. I put the machine together and seemed to work it. Then I was led back upstairs to bed. In the morning I saw that the machine had actually been put completely together."

"You would have this court believe the machine was not then together before that morning? Have you any outside

evidence to support that contention?"

Peter shook his head. "I found oil on my pajamas once or twice," he added thoughtfully.

"You suggest to this court that this actually took place? That you did all this in your sleep?"

"Yes."

"And you say you had this dream more than once?" "Yes, I did."

"But even if this court accepts such preposterous nonsense, can you think of any reason why your dead mother should be concerned in this matter?"

Peter Berbeck choked and said, "No." Obviously he could not say that his mother had very likely suspected and then found out about the pilfering of her bank balance, had then determined to wreak some sort of vengeance, had gone out and got the machine piecemeal into the house, and then trusted to luck (or did dreams come under some other head? And were they after all dreams?) to bring about their punishment. Was it not Shakespeare who once said that the whirliging of time brings about its own revenge?

Mrs. Peter Berbeck had told much the same kind of story. Nor could she explain by saying that perhaps the old lady had guessed about the arsenic in her coffee and tried to get through from another world. She had presence of mind enough to realize that the relation of the dreams had had a strongly prejudicial effect without the further suggestion of something supernatural. Like her husband, she was forced to keep silence and watch helplessly while this amazing web of evidence appeared against them.

Even the defense counsel thought that it would be best to leave old Mrs. Berbeck among the dead, where she properly belonged, despite a taxidriver who turned up to volunteer that he remembered having driven the old lady back and forth on one occasion and distinctly recalled her carrying large bundles that might have been pieces of a machine. And the tale of the burnt fragment of letter about plates was discounted at once. Dreams might have a place, but the Federal Court of Chicago was not that place.

When Peter Berbeck went on to tell about finding the box in his mother's closet also by the suggestion conveyed to him by his mother in a dream, the jury began to grow restless. Both defense and prosecution concentrated on the plates—where had the Berbecks hidden them? If they could be turned over to this court, it might not go so hard with the Berbecks. But both Peter and his wife denied any knowledge whatever of the plates, and a thorough search

of their house failed to reveal any sign of them. It was hardly to be expected that a certain smooth gentleman who had loaned the plates to old Mrs. Berbeck, and who had since retrieved them by the simple method of entering the Berbeck house by night through a cellar window and making off with them two nights before the Berbecks were placed under arrest, would come forward and tell his story. Certainly not. There is, after all, such a matter as preserving one's own skin even at the expense of others.

From the point-of-view of any outsider, the case was ludicrous indeed, and it was even more astounding that any court could be bothered to listen to even a curtailed version of the Berbeck's stories. But the Federal Court did—after all, it was a first offense—despite the clarity of the case against Peter Berbeck and his wife. The evidence was defi-

nite, imposing, and impregnable.

There was the payment on the car.
There was a payment to the grocer.
There was the payment to the milkman.

There were payments to the telephone and gas companies.

And finally that attempt to deposit the money at the bank.

There was nothing to be done. The court had never before listened to such preposterous explanations. These various payments now in evidence were conclusive. They had been made in counterfeit money, quite recently manufactured; there was a press for the printing of counterfeit money in the cellar, and the fingerprints of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Berbeck were all over it; and finally, there was the box of printed money still kept in what had been the old lady's closet. The failure of the accused to turn over the counterfeit plates would only make their penalty the more severe.

It was inconceivable that the court should be expected to give even momentary credence to the absurd contention of the accused that they had gone to the press in their sleep, that they had found the counterfeit money in the old lady's room after a dream, that they did not know it was counterfeit, that they did not now know and never had known where the plates were.

The court sentenced Peter Berbeck and his wife to ten

years as guests of the Federal Government for counterfeiting and passing counterfeit currency of the nation. Judge McIlrath's gavel had absolutely no effect upon the convulsive chuckle that rang through the courtroom when sentence was pronounced. Nor could its source subsequently be traced; there was no old woman in the courtroom, and the laughter was indisputably that of an old woman.

The Lilac Bush

The day was hot for May, and Mrs. Jones came to the door of the house to look at her children playing about the lilac bush across the road. Mrs. Jones was a thin, gaunt woman, with stern gray eyes. Just now an ordinary house apron hung loosely about her, and her hair was somewhat unkempt, as farmers' wives' hair is likely to be. She sighed as she brushed her hand across her forehead, and, raising her eyes, she gazed long and earnestly at her children. They were standing quietly together. Ada was holding her younger brother's hand. Both were gazing in rapt attention at the lilac bush.

The lilac bush stood about seventy feet from the road on the top of Springfield Hill. It was a very large bush, and it almost covered one side of the old log building that was decaying just behind it. It stood in soggy land, and here and there in the thick tufts of grass, little pools of water could be seen. Adjoining it was a thing strip of woodland, and beyond that, green fields stretched away into the distance.

Mrs. Jones moved uneasily. "Ada!" she called stridently. But Ada apparently did not hear; nor did her brother. Both remained standing as before, with their backs to their mother. Mrs. Jones thought that something had got into the log ruins—a rabbit, perhaps, or a squirrel. Or maybe the children were playing a new game; that was more like it. She shrugged her shoulders and returned to her work.

At intervals she came to the door and looked out. The children were playing. But when she looked over at them an hour after, they stood again looking attentively at the lilac bush.

"Ada!" Mrs. Jones called.

This time the child turned slightly, as if under stress, and turned back as quickly. Mrs. Jones walked swiftly to the gate and crossed the road. A car with a California license shot by, and she stopped a moment to look after it. It was not often she saw them from so far away; still, vesterday one from Maine had come through, and a week ago, one from somewhere in Canada. Then she began picking her way carefully over the soggy land to where the children were standing. The children turned before she reached them. Hand in hand they watched her come on.

"Mamma," called Ada. "That's our bush, isn't it?" She pointed to the lilac bush.

"Of course," said Mrs. Jones, almost slipping from a clump of grass into a pool of water. "Of course. Your grandpa planted that bush when he was a boy and lived in the old cabin his dad built."

"Well, somebody was picking our lilacs. It looked like a

man, Mamma; I couldn't see."

"Man," said the boy, looking at her out of great blue eyes, opened wide. "Man," he repeated, nodding his head

vigorously. His chubby face was flushed.

Mrs. Jones eved her children, frowning. "What are you talking about? The sun's got you, I guess. You better come into the house and rest. You're tearing around here all day, and you need it. Come on."

The children obediently followed Mrs. Jones across the road and into the house. The boy was still very young, and he could just walk. Mrs. Johes noticed that Ada was getting

too stout for her age.

They sat in the kitchen and watched their mother work. After a time Ada sat at the window and looked over at the bush. Her brother came over and sat beside her. Mrs. Jones stood with her arms akimbo and watched them for a moment. Then she stepped lightly over to them and bent her head to look out with them. Ada looked up at her mother. "He's there again, Mamma. He's picking our lilacs." "Man," said the boy, pounding the window with a small pudgy fist.

"What's the matter with you, Ada?" asked Mrs. Jones.

"There's no one there."

"Yes, there is, Mamma. An old man with a cane. He's picking the lilacs, our lilacs. Stop him, Mamma. Why don't

you stop him?"

Mrs. Jones glanced curiously at Ada, and from her to the boy. She felt a sudden tightening at her heart. Then she went out of the door and started across the road. She picked her way over the soggy land as before and drew up at the lilac bush. There was no one there. The wind went through the hush with a curious rustling sound Mrs. Jones looked at the bush and down to the ground. There were no footprints but those of the children, and she looked puzzled. Behind her a car went past, and immediately after, another. Mrs. Jones reached up and pulled down one of the tall. thin branches. Among the leaves at the very top of the branch a broken twig stuck out. She looked at it in amazement. She had picked no lilacs for the last three days-and this twig was freshly broken, so freshly that she could discern the faintly glistening beads of sap that oozed from the broken wood. She glanced suddenly back at the house. The children sat as before, watching her. She pulled down another branch with an effort-she had to stand on tiptoe, and then she could barely reach it. From the top of this branch, too, a blossom had been freshly broken. She looked around her suspiciously. There was nothing that the children might have stood on-nor were the broken blossoms in evidence. She went back to the house, walking slowly.

At evening Mrs. Jones took the children and started down the road for the cows. On the way they had to pass one of the three cemeteries on Springfield Hill. There was a lurid flare of red in the western sky, as if someone had lighted great bonfires along the horizon. Mrs. Jones looked over the trees at the dying day, and back again. From down the road came the faintly acrid scent of last year's dry leaves

burning.

Suddenly she stopped dead. Out of the corner of her eye she caught an incongruous color in the cemetery. She shook Ada, taking hold of her shoulder.

"How many times have I told you not to go into the cemetery, Ada?"

"I didn't." Ada looked at her mother in childish as-

tonishment.

"Don't lie to me, Ada. Who put the lilacs on grandpa's grave if you didn't?" She shook her again.

"I didn't, Mamma." Ada was close to tears.

But Mrs. Jones was no longer looking at Ada. Her eyes were fastened on a lilac blossom, half buried in the earth on the grave and at the same moment she saw herself standing on tiptoe, striving to reach upward toward the broken twig. Almost roughly she pulled Ada with her as she moved on, a sudden paleness in her cheeks. She turned and called after the boy.

"Come on, boy. Come on."

"Man!" said the boy suddenly, throwing a stone with unexpected vigor in the direction of the lilac bush.

A Matter of Sight

PERHAPS you have been in Vienna?"

"Yes," I said slowly, "I have been in Vienna."
For a moment there was silence in the car. I took another good look at the man who had chosen to sit beside me rather than to take one of the many empty seats. He wore a well-trimmed Van Dyke beard, which was as black as the long wavy hair on his uncovered head. His nose was sharply aquiline. His eyes were hidden by very large, black glasses, attached to a somewhat blacker cord of an expensive make. He wore a long dark cape, buttoned tightly about the neck, where a black silk muffler stuck out. His left hand rested on the gold top of a very fine walking-stick which I would have given much to possess; the tapering fingers of his right were engaged in tapping a cigarette on the sill of the open window.

"Then you have seen the famous Hapsburg Palace?"

"Oh! yes," said I. "That is what most Americans go to Vienna for."

"Yes I suppose it is so. That and beer-very fine beer in Vienna. You have tasted it, of course? And eaten bologna, I'll wager."

"Both." I laughed.

"You liked the palace?"

"Very much. A sumptuous place. I just read somewhere that part of it was recently destroyed by fire."

"An unfortunate occurrence."

"Very. It's really a magnificent structure." "And did you promenade in the park?"

"Ouite right." I laughed again. "Routine for the Amer-

ican tourist."

"There are many things to see in the park."

"Stately trees."

He waved them away with the hand that held the cigarette. He frowned a little.

"Have you ever heard of second sight?"

"Second sight? Yes, certainly."

"And of Argazila and his fourth dimension?"

"Argazila?" I could not place the name. Argazila? . . .

What did this man have to sit beside me for!

"You do not know him? Few do. He was-he is-what is one to say? was, is, will be-they are all so alike out there." He flung his arm upward and outward. "He is a Persian; little known, I daresay, but of whose importance the world shall soon know. Now, he is nothing; only a few, a very few, know,"

I said nothing. There was nothing I could have said. "It is to the fourth dimension that I refer when I say that there is much to see in the park. Everything that was and will be is in the fourth dimension. You see?"

I nodded hopefully, but I certainly did not see.

"It is interesting to go through the park probing the fourth dimension. One can easily see Maria Theresa walking about with Francis as a little boy."

"Yes?" I decided to humor him. One does not often come across so rare a specimen of an intoxicated man. But he

really did not act it. His talk, though . . .

"In Paris I saw the French Revolution re-enacted. Let

me tell you that the real man behind that catastrophe, the man who spurred on Robespierre, Danton, Marat, and the others, was that famous charlatan known as Count Cagliostro."

"Yes?" said I again. I really could not think of anything else to say. What would you have said?

"Anyone would have enjoyed seeing Napoleon march

through Paris." For a few minutes he was silent.

"Look!" said I, pointing to a brakeman, signaling us with a red lantern. "Look at that man's face!" The train was slowly starting to move. "He could be reading a newspaper."

"Yes, he could very well be reading a newspaper. I like the way his mouth turns down at the corners; as if he were

reading something unpleasant."

For a moment the brakeman was outlined in the light of a side-tracked train. He looked so small. The stranger again started to speak; he did not appear to have looked at the brakeman, and yet...

"You have probably been in Pisa?"

"And have seen the tower? Yes," said I, "I have."

"I saw them building it." The man didn't sound drunk. Perhaps his mind . . . ? Sometimes, you know, you do find one or two; perfectly harmless-if humored.

"Yes?" I said again. It irritated me that I said it; one would think that I had absolutely no vocabulary. But in

such a position . . .

"I watched the succession of the Ptolemies from the death of Alexander the Great to the last of them. You should see Cleopatra. She isn't really so wonderful; I've seen a good many girls—there's one just ahead—that leave Cleopatra in the distance."

I wasn't going to say "yes" again; so I held my peace. So did he. Irritating, he could be. Perhaps if I said it in

French?

"Yes?" I said at last. I thought of all the blame that

rested on Argazila's shoulders.

"I saw the building of Rome; the destruction of Carthage. I saw Hannibal, Scipio, Massinissa, Caesar, Anthony—all of them. Nero interested me immensely; so did Caligula.

They actually did burn the Christians; great sport they made of it."

The annoying affirmative stood on the tip of my tongue. "Damn!" said I loudly. The girl in front looked around

with raised eyebrows.

"Odd that you shouldn't want to say 'yes,' " said the stranger. "Such an easy word." How did he know that I didn't want to say yes? He continued. "That question, too, is simple. Your thoughts make vivid telepathic impressions."

The train flew past a small village.

"What village was that?" asked the stranger casually.
"I couldn't say," I replied, somewhat nettled. "I find it difficult enough to keep in mind the main stations here and on the Continent. However, I'm sure we're very near Dover."

"That is where I get off."

"And I."

For a while the stranger was silent. About thirty miles from Dover he began again.

"You know, second sight wouldn't be possible if it were

not for the vibrations sent out by matter."

"Yes?"

"Yes, everything sends out vibrations. Future and past events send out vibrations—in the fourth dimension, of course."

"But how can you get into this fourth dimension?"

"Telepathy, my dear sir. One merely projects thought waves into the fourth dimension."

I wondered whether or not to turn this man over to the authorities; certainly he was demented! What else could account for his conversation. I have never heard a conversation of outré.

"Have you traveled much?" There was a disconcerting smile on his lips—almost as if I had secretly told him my thoughts.

"Oh, a bit. Mostly in Europe, however."

"Never been to China?"

"No."

"I went to China years ago. I studied the history of China in the fourth dimension from far beyond the Hsia Dynasty, about 2300 B.c., to the present day. The civilization of ancient China has never been equaled. Collectors

become very enthusiastic over orginal Ming Pottery; they should see Shan pottery. You would have liked to see Shih-Hwang-Ti engineer the building of the Great Wall of China."

A brakeman stuck his head into the car and shouted, "Dover!" The stranger jumped up before the train stopped and got out into the aisle. He tapped the toe of his shoe with his ebony cane.

"Yes," he said. "I liked China. I had a horrible expe-

rience there, by the way."

The brakeman stuck his head into the car and shouted again; I remembered that over here brakemen were called guards. The train began to slow down. I got up slowly and

reached for my portfolio.

"I was in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900," he began again. Both of us moved out onto the platform. In the semi-darkness the stranger turned to me. "The Chinese are most diabolical at times—especially in the way they torture their prisoners."

"Yes," said I for the last time.

"Yes. Look what they did to me!"

With a sudden jerk at the black cord he pulled the glasses from his face. For a moment he confronted me; then he jumped from the still moving train into the night. I fell back against the wall of the car, my grip tightened convulsively on the iron railing. I think I screamed; I do not quite remember.

For where his eyes should have been, there were two

black pits!

Mrs. Lannisfree

If it comes right down to it, there is not much that I know about either Mr. or Mrs. Lannisfree, even though I worked for him for almost a month. He was a stranger to me; that is, I left the city to go with him. The agency called me and asked whether I would mind working in the

country. Not farm work. Simply as a companion to a man who had been told to get some rest and did not want to spend alone the month or so before his wife came to join him. I needed money just then, too, and I took it. He was down at the agency, and wanted me to come down.

"I wanted an older man," he said when I walked in and was introduced to him. "Are you likely to get lonely?"

I said I didn't think so. It depended on where we were going.

"Into the lake country up along the coast."

"If I can get into the woods once in a while, I won't be lonesome," I said.

He thawed out a little, though he still seemed morose—a medium-sized man, with a firm jaw and hard eyes. You could see that he was used to having his way about things, and I felt that he resented having to go away, and yet, somehow, had to go. He explained that he was not very talkative, not at all good company, and yet needed someone around to take care of little things. It had to be a man, to preserve propriety, since his wife would join him as soon as she could get away. He had a cottage on a lake up north, and we would be rather isolated. But the month was June; there would be fishing, if I cared for it, and I would have enough time to myself to make up for his moods and his solitudes.

It was really more than a cottage. Perhaps it had started out like one, but the fact was that Mr. Lannisfree had added to it from time to time; so that now it resembled a rambling cabin. It was attractive, too, set in a little grove of oak and cedar not far from the lake—probably about two hundred feet. I had a room all to myself, but I saw that taking care of the place would mean more work than I had figured on, because there were a large living-room, a glassed-in porch on the south side, where he intended to work—if he worked at all—three bedrooms, and a kitchen besides the store-room and the open verandah. The cabin was far enough from the road so that dust was not as much of a problem as I had thought it might be. So I had to keep it clean,—he did the cooking,—look after the grounds, and just keep myself fairly close by in case Mr. Lannis-

free got into the mood for talk or anything else-like

chess, which he played and soon taught me to play.

He never told why he had been ordered to rest, but he certainly did not have to tell it; you could see that he was a nervous type, despite his big frame. He did not look like a lawyer, which he was; he looked more like a football-player, and it turned out that he used to play football in high school. But he was fifty or more now, though he looked younger. I got used to his nervous habits after a while, but at first he startled me. The first time I noticed anything was during the second game of chess we played—after I had learned enough about the game to play it without always being told what I could do and what I couldn't. I was thinking about a move, and finally made it; but he didn't move; so I looked at him, and there he sat, with his head bent to one side a little.

"Your move, Mr. Lannisfree," I said.
"Did you hear anything, Jack?" he asked.

"Why, no," I said. "Nothing, that is, except a loon out there on the lake."

"Oh, was that what it was?"

"Yes," I said.

Just then the loon called again and he never batted an eyelash; so I knew it was not the loon he thought he had heard.

"What was it like?" I asked.

"Nothing," he said curtly, and that was that.

The next thing I found out about him was that he liked to prowl around at night. It was not that I ever saw him, but I found evidence of it often enough. The worst of that was, as I soon discovered, he didn't remember that he did it, and more or less suspected me of doing it.

It was about a week after we came that he called me on it. He got up late that morning, and I overslept, too. He got out first, and next thing I knew I heard him calling me.

He sounded angry and anxious.

I got out of bed and went into the living-room. All the bedrooms opened off the living-room; they were small, but comfortable, with good beds—not just cots in them. He was standing just outside his door, and his face was a color that might have meant he was angry or sick or both.

"Did you do this, Jack?" he asked.

I saw what he meant. Someone had walked across the floor with wet feet, leaving a trail of blurred wet footprints; and the knob of his door was wet, too. I knew I hadn't been out in the night; so that left him walking in his sleep or going out to take a swim in the lake and not remembering it.

"I might have been walking in my sleep," I said.

"Do you swim in your sleep, too?" he asked.

"If you're asleep, you might not know it," I said.

"Clean it up," he said.

Then and there I discovered something very strange. The lake was a freshwater lake, of course, about ten miles from the Maine coast, but when I came with a rag to wipe up the wet spots and bent over them I noticed right away that it was sea-water. I was born in Gloucester, and the smell of the ocean is just like second-nature to me. I didn't say anything to Mr. Lannisfree, because I thought it might bother him. As it was, it bothered me. I couldn't figure it out, and for the first time I began to look forward to the

time when his wife came and I could go back.

He talked a good deal about his wife. It was "Mrs. Lannisfree this" and "Mrs. Lannisfree that" for long spells at a time. I got the picture of her pretty soon-an Irish-French girl, somewhat younger than he; about ten years or sowith dark blue eyes and black hair, worn long, down to her waist, he said. According to his lights, she was a very beautiful woman. Right now she was at work writing a book, and she could not take herself too far away from her references, or she would be at a loss for the finishing of the book. The Lannisfrees moved in a circle of writers and artists and well-known people of all kinds. I thought it was queer that, with all the way he had her on his mind, he didn't have a picture of her up, and I asked about it. But he smiled and said that no picture "could do her justice," but he had a watch-back snapshot of her and showed it to me. I agreed that she was beautiful, and also that the snapshot probably didn't do right by her.

"I'll be looking forward to seeing her," I said.

"I don't blame you; most men do. She's always been very popular."

The days went by slowly. It was one round of cleaning up and chess and fishing. Sometimes he played game after game; whole afternoons or evenings were taken up with chess. Sometimes it seemed that he didn't want to talk; he was moody, and would sit for a long time over legal papers on the glassed-in porch or the open verandah and just look out into the woods or over the lake. And then there were times when he sat or stood with his head cocked, just as if he were listening.

Sometimes I watched him, keeping myself hidden. It was strange. He would look around very furtively, as if he expected someone to show himself. Sometimes I walked right up to him, and every time he would give himself away somehow. It was, "Anybody been straying around this afternoon, Jack?" or "Do you hear someone walking?" I never did. I understood that this was his nervousness and

this was why he needed a rest.

It went on this way for a few days.

Something else went on that I could not figure out. That was the wet doorknobs and the wet footprints on the floor. Most of the time I managed to get up before he didearly enough to clean them up before he saw them. But once in a while he saw the marks where the carpet of the floor hadn't quite dried. He never said anything again; he just looked away as if nothing were there. I couldn't get that out of my mind. I wanted to ask-him about it, time after time, but something there was in his eyes, I couldn't do it. I wanted to know how it was if he went out and took a swim in the night in the lake he came in dripping seawater. For it was sea-water every time; I could feel the salt on my hands, I could taste it, and I did. There was never the doubt of it in my mind. But how he did it, I didn't know, though sometimes I sat for a long time trying to figure it out. There was a broad brook running down from the lake to the ocean; it grew into a small river before it emptied into the Atlantic, but of course the brook was fresh water, too.

I thought the best thing to do would be to catch him at it. So I laid my plans and I never slept one night—just sat up and listened. I never heard him go out, but I heard him come in. I heard him coming along the hall, quiet as

could be; and I planned to step out and surprise him, but just then I heard a strange voice.

"Roger," it said. "Roger!"

A woman's voice, calling to Mr. Lannisfree, and, judging by the sound of it, she was standing just outside his door. She was calling in a husky, urgent voice, as if she wanted him badly, and yet with a kind of command in it.

"Roger!" she called in that harsh whisper. "Roger!"

There was something about it to make a man grow cold. Sometimes it begged him, and sometimes it ordered, and sometimes it wept. It was a terrible thing. I thought that all the time Mr. Lannisfree was up here waiting for his wife he was carrying on with some other woman. That was what I thought. So I didn't go out of my room that night; I just listened and waited for him to answer; but he never did—he just lay there in his room and tossed and fretted and once or twice he moaned, as if he were having a bad dream.

In the morning those footprints were there again, and the wetness on his doorknob. I looked at all the tracks carefully, and one of them was not so blurred; it looked more like a woman's footprint. I got them all wiped up before he came out, and they were dried, too, before he showed up.

He looked bad that morning-just as if he hadn't slept

much.

"Did you hear anything last night, Jack?" he asked.

Naturally, I didn't want him to think I had heard anything, if there were something between him and some woman in the neighborhood. So I said no.

"You didn't call me?"

"Not unless it was in my sleep," I said. "They tell me sometimes I talk in my sleep—but I don't remember it."

"No, you don't usually."

I couldn't imagine what he would be able to see in another woman with a wife as beautiful as Mrs. Lannisfree, and I tried to imagine what he would do about that woman when she got there. I could figure out the footprints now, all right—even if I couldn't figure out the smell of the sea. The woman probably lived somewhere along the lake and swam over to our shore, and came on in. That would account

it out.

"Is there any body of salt-water around here any Mr. Lannisfree?" I asked.

"Not back from the coast."

"Sure?"

"I know this country. I could walk it blindfolded. Why?" "Because-" I felt foolish now. "Because that wetness on your doorknob and the marks on the floor are salt-water."

He got red, and then white. His jaw set tautly, "That's

damned nonsense," he said harshly.

I went into the kitchen and got the rag I had used to wipe it up. I brought it out and held it under his nose. "Smell that," I said.

He did. He glared at me in a kind of disgust and shook his head.

"It smells of sea-water," I said.

"It's your imagination, Jack. Put that thing away and let's hear no more about it."

I did what I was told. But that didn't alter anything. That rag was soaked with sea-water. When it dried out it showed a frost of salty white. I know sea-water to the taste and the feel and the smell. I was born in Gloucester, and a boyhood in Gloucester puts the tang of the salt sea air in a man's blood. You don't make a mistake like that. I don't say it can't be done; I just say I didn't make it. That was sea-water, or I've never tasted or felt or smelled sea-water.

But all that day Mr. Lannisfree was silent and moody. He did no work, and the only time he spoke to me after that was when I came up to him and found him sitting in front of his opened watch, gazing at that picture of his wife.

"I don't want you to say anything of this to Mrs. Lannisfree when she comes," he said. "Very well," I said. "I won't."

Well, that night ended it.

It was a clear, moonlit night, with some clouds winddriven across the heavens, and a wonderful pine smell in the air, not the kind of a night you want to go to bed early,

....v went to bed.

you sometimes get when you know something is going to happen. I was sure that woman would be coming back, and tonight I was going to open the door and talk to her. So I lay there wide awake. I heard the old ormulu clock on the fireplace mantel in the living-room strike twelve, and then one, and then two.

And then I heard the door open, the same as the night before, and I think, now that I've thought it all over, it was the same time. I heard those footsteps sort of whispering along the floor across the living-room from the outer door, and come to a pause before his door. And then I heard her voice again, the same as the night before.

"Roger!" she called. "Roger!"

I walked over to my own door and opened it. I looked out.

She was standing about ten feet away, with her back toward me. She was at Mr. Lannisfree's door all right. But I was surprised—more than I had expected to be. I thought she would be in a bathing suit, but she wasn't. She was in traveling-clothes—a kind of business-suit, such as women wear, and I could see from my doorway that she had had an accident, for it was sopping wet.

I stepped out into the hall and I said, "Why don't you

go in?"

She turned around slowly, and I felt cold all over. She didn't say anything, but just stood there looking at me. Then she took a step forward, and her face came into a patch of moonlight and I saw that it was Mrs. Lanisfree herself.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Lannisfree," I said.

"Where is Roger?"

"You know he's in there," I said.

"His door is locked?"
"My key will fit it."

"Thank you."

I got my key and gave it to her. Her hand was so cold, and I could almost hear her teeth chattering. When I gave

her the key I saw her eyes. They were not like the eyes in that snapshot Mr. Lannisfree had in the back of his watch; they did not seem to see me at all; they looked straight through me and seemed to be fixed on something and she never once seemed to swivel them around or anything, but just held her gaze straight in front of her, and she took that key and turned to the door, working at it with the key. And I was almost drowned in the smell of the sea, it was that strong; it even seemed to come in under my door after I was back in my own room once more.

And then I heard Mr. Lannisfree scream. Just once. It was terrible; I did not know he could be so surprised at his wife's sudden coming. He called out her name. "Myra!" Just

like that.

"I've come, Roger," she said.
Then there was a series of sounds, and I thought she was getting out of those wet clothes, but after a little while, I heard her walking out of that room, and out of the house. I opened my window and looked out; the moon was still shining brightly, but I couldn't see anything. I stepped out on the verandah, and then I saw her walking down through the woods toward the brook, away from the lake. She hadn't taken off her wet clothes at all, but just walked there straight away from the cabin, and I could see her in the moonlight just as plain as I can see you now, with the moonlight white on her face and hands, the way it should be.

I didn't sleep much the rest of that night, waiting for her to come back, and next morning the wet footprints were there again, and Mr. Lannisfree's doorknob was wet, and I cleaned it all up and waited for him to come. But he didn't come, and he didn't come, and then when I went into his room at last, after he didn't answer to my knocks, I found him just the way he was when the sheriff got there-dead in his bed, with that long black hair wound

around his neck to choke him to death!

That was just six hours after I saw Mrs. Lannisfree.

And that is why I don't believe it when they say that Mr. Lannisfree took his wife out off the coast of Maine that day almost a month ago and pushed her into the water and

of because he was jealous of that other man they s. Lannisfree liked, even if her body was recovered, ause I saw her just as plain as I see you now, with the moonlight white on her face and hands, walking through the woods toward the sea.

After You, Mr. Henderson

Mr. Lucas Henderson, older of the two male members of the brokerage firm of Henderson, Henderson & Henderson, smiled a beatific smile and entered the firm's offices at the unheard of hour of eight o'clock in the morning, with opening of the Exchange still two hours away. His cousin and fellow member of the firm, Ellerett Henderson, was there before him. He turned at the entrance of tall, gaunt Lucas and eyed him narrowly. Ellerett, being fat, could smile more broadly than his cousin, and he smiled.

It was not a smile of delight, but rather of relief mingled with a certain sad satisfaction. Lucas Henderson had just come from the bedside of crusty old Laetitia Henderson. guiding genius of the firm, and restraining hand upon its male members. And Lucas Henderson's smile told his cousin that their often irksome cousin Letty was dying at last.

"She's dying," said Lucas, removing his hat and topcoat, and adding unnecessarily. "I've just come from there."

"How long before she dies?"

"I think within an hour or so," said Lucas judiciously. Ellerett made a small sound of sympathy with his lips, elevated his eyebrows and made other motions with his facial muscles to indicate that this was very sad news and yet not unexpected for we must all expect to pass at last, dust being dust and returning to it at the end.

Lucas discarded sympathy and came at once to business. "Continental Investment," he announced.

Ellerett looked at him carefully. "As I understand your

plan," he said, "we are to dump our holdings, selling enough to force the stock to decline below our figure, and then buy to sell again at par."

"Simply said," said Lucas dryly. "Continental stands at

100 even. We bought a large block. . . . "

"Pray observe that the firm bought a large block for its individual members. You and I hold fifty percent of it. Letty forty, and the remaining ten percent is privately dis-

tributed."

"We have enough, and can count on getting control of Letty's share; so don't bother your head about that. As I was saying—we bought in at a special rate of 95. We will begin to sell at par. If we dump enough at once it will start wild guesses, some frantic buying. Then we will pass the word around that Henderson, Henderson & Henderson are selling. Unless I am sadly in error regarding the prestige of that name, Continental will slide to 80 and below. We will sell at less, and further depress the stock. There will be constant buying, constant selling. We continue to dump. When we have got it down to 60 or 50, we will buy it back again, and I shall be a very sadly mistaken old man if Continental does not promptly rise to 120 or more on the strength of our holdings."

Ellerett looked faintly dubious. "We'll be selling a little

short," he protested.

"Doubtless," said Lucas. "On good security, however— Letty's forty percent."

"Letty certainly wouldn't like it."

"Certainly not. Letty would call it disgracefully dishonest."

"So it is."

"Without a doubt. But I've wanted to have a flutter like this all my life and Letty's made it impossible. 'The reputation of our firm'—that sort of talk. No, Ellerett, you needn't join me in this, but I must have a free hand. I am out for a cleaning up to the tune of millions. There are six hundred thousand shares of Continental, of which we directly control three hundred thousand, and indirectly, two hundred thousand of Letty's. We cannot fail."

Ellerett's small eyes gleamed. "Of course I am with you,"

said he firmly.

"Good. I'll leave instructions for the dumping to start as soon as trading begins."

"And I'll pay my respects to cousin Letty," said Ellerett, "just to make sure you know what you're talking about."

Mr. Ellerett Henderson called his car and was driven to the musty brownstone house where Laetitia Henderson lay dying. He was admitted by an ancient servitor, lugubrious of mien, and shown at once to the old lady's bedroom.

Miss Laetitia had been an indomitable woman, but the approach of death had not in any great way lessened the sharpness of her manner. If Ellerett expected her hawk-like nose to have shrunk, or her snapping black eyes to have dimmed, or her sharp voice to have lost any of its harshness, he was disappointed. The old lady even anticipated his carefully prepared words of sympathy.

Ellerett bowed deferentially and sat down.

"I know very well you'll be relieved to have the reins taken away, but I must give you a bit of parting advice before I die. I told Lucas before, and I will tell you now—if you know what you're about (though you never did) you'll liquidate the firm immediately. Despite your illusions, neither of you has sense enough to preserve the standing of Henderson, Henderson & Henderson, and it's always been my principle that that standing must never decline. Our fathers made that name, and its reputation must not be stained.

"I should prefer to see control of our various major holdings pass to Princeton & Valisch. And I want to caution you particularly about Continental Investment. As you know, this is a federal subsidiary, and should anything happen to it, our government may be seriously embarrassed not only in this country but abroad. You will do me this last courtesy and give these matters your every consideration. You may be sure that I shall hold on as long as I can. That's all. You may go now, for it tires me a little to talk. Our firm's dealings will enable both you and Lucas to retire on a most comfortable and satisfactory income. Goodbye, Ellerett."

"Nonsense."

[&]quot;Goodbye, Letty," said Ellerett. "I'm sorry."

In the hall, Ellerett Henderson met his cousin's doctor.

He stopped him.

"I understand Miss Henderson has but an hour or so to live. She seemed quite animated just now, and I had expected to find her considerably weaker than she is."

"That indicates nothing," said the doctor. "She is suffering from acute pulmonary oedema, and will be dead within

an hour, or at most, within two hours."

Ellerett took out his watch and looked at it. "Before

trading begins," he murmured.

"Of course," put in the doctor hastily, "news of her death will be kept from the public until after the Exchange closes."

"Yes, certainly," said Ellerett, and took his departure. He came into the firm's office and said to Lucas, "It's all right. She's dying. I saw the doctor."

"I suppose she took the opportunity to tell you how in-

competent we are," said Lucas.

"Oh, certainly."

"Fortunately, I have every confidence in our ability," said Lucas.

"My only regret is that Letty can't be here to see us clean up," said Ellerett.

The cousins ceremoniously shook hands.

At ten o'clock that morning, a round dozen brokers began to sell Continental Investment. At ten-five the first break came when Continental wavered uncertainly and dropped to 98. At ten-thirty-five, Lucas Henderson, who had been hedging over the telephone for some time, let it be known that the firm of Henderson, Henderson & Henderson was dumping Continental, with the result that within ten minutes Continental had slumped to 78. At eleven o'clock Continental had slipped further to $72\frac{1}{2}$, at twelve-fifty it was down to 59.

The ticker was highly gratifying to the cousins Henderson.

"Will it go much lower?" wondered Ellerett.

"Not much. Buying is desultory, naturally. I've given orders to begin buying in at two o'clock. There must be close to five hundred thousand shares in the market now,

and there will be almost six hundred thousand by the time we begin buying."

"How far short do we go?"

"I think we are still safe at three hundred thousand short—Letty's two hundred thousand shares will make up two-thirds of that. She died just at ten, incidentally. And we can figure easily on buying up the remaining hundred thousand in the open market."

Ellerett smiled. "I think it might be safe for us to go out

to lunch."

"I think it might. We shall want to be back some time before the fun begins at two, however."

Immaculate in gloves, hat, canes and sphinx-like faces, the cousins Henderson went out to lunch with aloof detachment from the shouting of newsboys about the upset in Continental Investment and worried rumors of government concern. At one-twenty-five, Alfred Daggett, a fellow member of the Exchange, stopped at the Henderson's table. "So here you are," he said. "Calmly eating, too. What the

"So here you are," he said. "Calmly eating, too. What the devil have you fellows been doing in Continental? I never saw anything drop like that, but it went skyrocketing even

faster."

"Skyrocketing!" echoed the cousins Henderson simultaneously.

"Yes," said Daggett wearily, "it began to go up at one-two and hasn't stopped yet. Don't pretend you don't know any-

thing about it."

The cousins Henderson excused themselves with astonishing celerity, and moved so swiftly that they were back in the firm's office three minutes later. On the ticker, Continental stood at $109\frac{1}{2}$.

Lucas Henderson descended upon his telephone and called his brokers to ask whether they had bought at the beginning of the upturn. They had not. They had not bought a share. There was a succession of garbled answers about Miss Laetitia Henderson.

Together, Lucas and Ellerett Henderson bolted from the building to look down upon the floor of the Exchange.

Lucas saw first. He stiffened, swallowed, and said, "Ellerett, do you see what I see?"

Ellerett saw. A sturdy figure in grey satin, and odd

little bonnet on her head, her absurd black bag swinging from her arm, and both fists clenched above her head. It was Miss Laetitia Henderson, and she was shouting, "I am buying Continental."

On the board, Continental rose to 117.

Lucas turned swiftly and went back to the firm's office. He dialed the old Henderson home on Fifth Avenue, spoke once more to old Blackford, the butler, who assured him that Miss Laetitia Henderson had died at ten o'clock that morning, and was even now in the mortician's hands. Then Lucas called his late cousin's doctor and received additional confirmation.

Ellerett came in, opening his mouth as if to speak.

"We will not discuss it," said Lucas firmly. "Ît's like a bad dream."

"But it isn't a dream," protested Ellerett plaintively.
"Unfortunately, no. But we're coming into control of Letty's two hundred thousand shares. We may lose that extra hundred thousand sold short."

"That will almost clean us out."

"Hardly," said Lucas dryly.

Tht two of them strode over and looked at the ticker. It was two o'clock and Continental Investment stood firm at 160.

There was a tap on the door and Phineas Princeton of Princeton & Valisch walked in. His austere, pince-nezed and van-Dyked face expressed a very distinct disapproval.

"Good afternoon, Gentlemen," he said icily.
"Good afternoon," said the cousins Henderson.

"I'm afraid I have some very bad news for you," said Phineas Princeton. "I tried to get hold of you on the telephone repeatedly this morning, but you were apparently too busy to reply, and most of the time I could not get through. I am creditably informed that you have sold six hundred thousand shares of Continental Investment this morning and early afternoon, or approximately that figure—a reprehensible dumping, and, in fact, a figure representing three hundred thousand shares you do not own. In other words, I believe you sold short some three hundred thousand shares at the deplorably average figure of 74½."

"I fail to understand your connection, Mr. Princeton,"

said Lucas Henderson firmly. "Laetitia's holdings will pretty well cover us."

Phineas Princeton smiled frigidly. "Miss Laetitia telephoned us from her home at one o'clock to buy Continental for control of that stock. We have bought into absolute control. You are in our debt something approximating two million dollars. As to your cousin's holdings, I regret exceedingly to inform you that at a private meeting at her home last night Princeton & Valisch took over her two hundred thousand shares in accordance with her wish that we assume control of Henderson, Henderson & Henderson's principal holdings. At this moment, Princeton & Valisch own five hundred eighty-seven thousand shares of Continental Investment. We shall expect to have your check at your earliest convenience. Good day, Gentlemen."

The door closed behind him. On the ticker tape Continental Investment wavered between 162 and 163. For a long moment there was no sound between the cousins Henderson.

Then Lucas turned and looked at Ellerett.

"We're wiped out, Mr. Henderson," said Ellerett stolidly. "We're ruined!" said Lucas.

The door opened suddenly and Laetitia Henderson stood there like a cloud of smoke that could be seen through, her head with its old-fashioned poke-bonnet cocked a little to one side. She shook her head reprovingly and half-smiled.

"You can't raise two million even by liquidating, can

you?" she seemed to say.

Then she was gone, as if dissolved there and the door was closed again.

Lucas said, "Did you see her, Ellerett?"

Ellerett nodded. "I saw through her," he said, shaken.

"The way she saw through us."

Ellerett made a methodical motion of putting together some papers on his desk; he made no attempt to hide how upset he was at Laetitia's spectral appearance, to hide his knowledge of what their disastrous venture in Continental Investment meant.

"I think Letty was right," said Lucas thoughtfully. "It

is time for the firm to be liquidated."

He walked over to a window and looked down.

Ellerett came to his side.

"Seventeen stories," said Lucas, and raised the window. The cousins Henderson shook hands.

Ellerett made a little bow and said, "After you, Mr. Henderson."

The Lost Day

MR. JASPER CAMBERVEIGH was a methodical gentleman who rose each morning at seven o'clock, regardless of the weather; but that morning, for a reason unaccountable to him, he woke half an hour later.

That was the first disturbing fact.

The second was a curious little occurrence for which, likewise, Camberveigh could not account. When he gazed into his bathroom mirror the face which looked back at him was briefly, not his own. What was most odd about this was the fact that for a few moments he was not aware that it was not his own face, despite the plainly seen age of that visage—almost twice his fifty years. Then something happened to him, to the mirror, to his sense of balance; he almost fell; the image in the mirror became misty and its outlines gave place to the more familiar lineaments of his face; and in a few seconds he found himself gazing into his own troubled blue eyes and fingering his own firm jaw.

Even this disturbing dislocation was not yet the last of the mysterious events of that morning, for, when he went to turn on the radio for the usual B.B.C. newscast, the first thing he heard was this: "Saturday, May seventeenth. British bombers were over enemy territory again last night..."

Saturday, May seventeenth!

Camberveigh's first thought, being a scholarly person and a man of fixed habits, was that the announcer had made a mistake, but as the newscaster's voice droned on, speaking of the events of the preceding Friday, Camberveigh had to admit that it must indeed be Saturday morning. But what, then, had happened to Friday?

For Camberveigh had gone to bed on Thursday night, and by all the laws of time and space, this should be Friday morning!

He was gravely disturbed. If he had been in any way under the weather on Thursday, he was prepared to admit the spare possibility that he might have slept through Friday. But he had been in exceptionally good spirits and health on Thursday; he had made his customary rounds of the second-hand book stores-oh, yes, there was that old leather-bound book he must return to Max Anima in Soho-and he had gone to bed at his usual hour: eleven o'clock, a bedtime he had observed ever since the death of his wife five years ago. And he felt his usual self this morning, save for that curious experience in the bathroom-and, of course, waking half an hour later than usual. Half an hour! Great heaven, a whole day and a whole night later! And half an hour on top of that!

Camberveigh shaved and had breakfast, preoccupied. If indeed he had slept through Friday, he ought certainly to be hungrier than he was. But he was not hungrier than usual. Moreover, if he had not shaved on Friday, he ought to have had a greater growth of beard. Furthermore, there were curious misplacements of objects in his house which led him to the unavoidable conclusion that he had not slept through Friday. Obviously, then, he had been up and about at something. But search it as he might, his memory told him nothing, his memory presented an absolute blank.

And yet not quite absolute: there was deep within him an urgent conviction that there was something strange and ter-

rible he ought to know.

Camberveigh, however, had an habitual dislike for fantasy, and he refused to entertain vague fears, premonitions, hunches, and the like. Granting the fact that somehow his doings on Friday the sixteenth eluded his memory, he had today to do the things he should have done on Friday. That book Anima had loaned him must be returned to the old bookseller. And he must have a visit with his physician to ascertain whether this sudden lack of memory about the previous day might be a sympton of some serious physiological disorder. A stitch in time, he thought. Accordingly, still troubled about his flawed memory, Camberveigh sat down and had a look at the book. Anima had pressed it upon him, saying it was full of antiquities, and, indeed, so it was. He examined the binding and had an unpleasant conviction that it was bound in human skin. The book itself was written in Latin and was quite difficult to read, for the print had faded in many places. It was obviously, however, one of those curious items on demonology and allied occult matters, and he was a little puzzled to know why Anima should have insisted that he take it along, when Anima knew very well his interests lay primarily in the field of entomology and ornithology, both of which were quite distinctly removed from the occult.

He read a passage here and there, translating as he read. "To summon from the Pit Him Who Will Serve you can be done in this wise . . ." here followed an elaborate formula. He turned a few pages. "It is possible at the midnight hour to call up the spirits of the dead and hold communion with them in regard to events of the future. . . ." He turned a few more pages. "Thus it can be that through the medium of the accursed object, it is possible to send forth one's spirit self, the astral body, and dispossess another for a brief time, but only for so long as the object remain in his possession." He dipped into the book farther along. "Quentus had with him continually a large black dog, commonly held to be his familiar, a certain evil demon summoned from the Pit and put into his service. . . ."

Certainly it was interesting, Camberveigh thought, in a detached way; but it was not in his field, and he must regretfully return it and spend no further time on it. He had little enough time to devote to his studies as it was. He wrapped the book carefully, got dressed, took his umbrella—though it was an exceedingly mild day outside—and set out for his doctor's office, which was within walk-

ing distance of his home.

There was nothing whatever wrong with him.

"Perfectly fit," said his physician. "Your experience is certainly odd—but not at all unique. Such things have happened before and will happen again. Forget about it."

"But I have the feeling that there is something about

yesterday I ought to know."

"So would I, in the circumstances."

Somewhat reassured, Camberveigh went on his way. He descended to the Underground, and, while waiting for his train, bought a copy of the News of the World, British bombings, threats of German reprisals, Spanish toadving to the Axis, America toadying to Spain-disgusting! He turned to an inner page and saw that one of his acquaintances had come to his end in a violent manner. "Murder of Rochard Craig!" read the headline. "No further clue has thus been discovered in the search for the murderer who entered Rochard Craig's home sometime vesterday and killed Craig when discovered in the act of rifling Craig's bookshelves of rare old volumes which constituted the heart of the Craig collection. Craig was stabbed to death. Search is being made for the missing volumes but there is little hope . . . " Horrible! thought Camberveigh perfunctorily, and went on to read the usual column on birds in the country written by a retired bee-keeper in Sussex.

His train came and he took it to Soho, taking pleasure in the accounting of what the linnets and the cuckoos and a rare peregrine had been up to during the past week in Sussex. He caught the correspondent in what he was convinced was a minor error, and made a mental reservation to write and challenge him on the point, however trivial it was. The scientific amenities must be observed, fancy must not be confused with fact, the truth must be adhered to with

exactitude. That alone was the proper attitude.

He arrived at Anima's hole-in-a-corner book shop some time after the lunch hour, but, since he was habitually a lackadaisical luncher, he did not mind. The shop was, as usual, quite dark; it was set into a little alley, and even with the brightest sunlight, not too much light ever reached inside. So much Camberveigh had observed on his first visit to Anima's shop, which had been made only a little over a fortnight ago, and had been brought about by a chance meeting with the bookseller himself in an air-raid shelter. Anima seemed to prefer it that way.

He stood for some time waiting; perhaps the bookseller was at his luncheon, perhaps he had not heard the little bell tinkle. After waiting a few moments in vain, Camberveigh walked back among stacks of books and touched the bell with his umbrella. This time it brought Anima out of the back room.

A small, wizened man, not very strong, who came obsequiously and with narrowed eyes. "Ah, it is you," he said with an almost offensive familiarity. "You have brought my book back, eh?" His eyes fell upon the package Camberveigh carried, and—could it be?—lit up with a strange, eager sense of possession.

Abruptly Camberveigh heard himself saying, "Why, no, I'm sorry, Mr. Anima. I found it so interesting to read that I wanted to look it over a little longer. I thought you would

not care if I kept it at least over Sunday."

Anima was disappointed. He shot a sharp, inquisitive look at Camberveigh, but was apparently satisfied by what he saw in Camberveigh's face. He nodded curtly and said very well, Camberveigh might read it if he liked. "But not over Monday, mind! I must have the book back Monday. I need it. I am—studying in it."

Camberveigh left the shop in perplexity. What inexplicable motive had impelled him to keep the book. Why had he suddenly thought there was something shudderingly familiar about the old man whom he had viewed with the most aloof unconcern at every previous meeting? It was extraordinary—and yet, was it, indeed?

It came to him with a feeling of chilling shock that he had seen Anima's face since his last visit to the shop. The

feeling became conviction, free of all doubt.

Fleeting as it had been, it was Anima's face which had

looked at him out of his own mirror that morning!

On his way back to his rooms, he tried to rationalize his actions. But they were incapable of rationalization. Of a sudden there in that dark shop, when confronted by Anima's eagerness to repossess his curious book Camberveigh had been assaulted by an eerie determination to retain possession of it.

He had acted on impulse, something he had never done before. But now, as he sat there in the underground train, he was conscious of a great turmoil inside him, of a conflict of emotions rooted in some facet through to which he could not reach; once again it was wound up with what he ought to know about the previous day, but there was the conviction that he was close to knowing, that indeed he knew, if only he could understand. It was extraordinary, and it was extremely upsetting to a man as methodical as Camberveigh.

Really, he did not want to see any more of Anima's book. What imp of perversity was responsible for his action? He had had ample time to examine the volume, for which he began now to feel a faint distaste, an aversion which, like his sudden impulse of but a short while ago, he could not explain.

He took the book home with him and unwrapped it

again.

The binding was certainly of human skin. There was no telling how old it was, but it was not so much a genuine book as a compilation of various printed things gathered up by some long-dead collector, and bound in this hideous fashion. Camberveigh thought it might conceivably date back to the time when Black Masses and devil worship were flagrant in London, but he was a little hazy on his dates.

He turned from the book and set about answering morning's post. But he could not keep his attention to the mail; he kept thinking about the book, about Anima and his strange eagerness—first, to press it upon him; then to take it back. He thought about the incredible fascination the volume seemed to have for him at the same time that he

was conscious of its repellence.

Finally, he got up, because he could no longer continue to struggle within himself, and went over to the book and opened it, determined that he might as well be methodical about it and read in it until he was thoroughly tired of it. This he did. He read all about demons, witches, warlocks, caballistic rites, certain strange practices of Druids, ancient religions, spectres, astrals, hauntings; he read until nightfall, and then put the book aside.

At that hour, it was his custom, being a neat man, to clean his apartment. He set about doing this, and so came upon his grey suit dropped behind an overstuffed chair. One of his best suits, too! How did that come to be there? He picked it up, indignant. Surely he could not have done that even in a state of trance, if he had been in one on Friday! To add to his indignation, he saw when he had rescued it,

that not only was the suit badly wrinkled, but it was very dirty and dusty, as if he had carried something heavy against it; and finally, he saw that it was stained rather messily with something that had dried brown into the fabric and

looked rusty.

He brushed his coat, and finally carried it tentatively to the washbowl in the bathroom, where he wet one of the stains gingerly and scrubbed at it. The water came away a kind of odd brown-red—the water in the bowl began to look the way it did when he had washed out a blood-stained handkerchief after a bad cut a month ago. Camberveigh stood and looked down into the water. What was it he saw there? What depths of darkness and horror looked up at him from this curiously colored water. He looked at his suit and abruptly thrust it from him. Then he took it up again and gazed at it more intently. If the stains were blood-stains—what made those serried marks of dust and dirt? As if books had been carried there, pressed close to his body!

His mouth and throat went dry, and he began to tremble

a little.

What went through his mind was surely impossible! But now, inexorably, his very method began to make itself felt. He went back in memory to the visit he had paid Anima on Thursday; he reconstructed, word for word, their conversation.

"Do you know Rochard Craig?" Anima had asked.

"Yes."

"Ever been in his house?"

"Oh, yes."

"Know your way around then, eh? Seen his collection?"

"Yes, though I don't go in much for books."

"No, you bugs and bird people don't appreciate inani-

mate things."

So much of it came back with striking clarity. Anima had mentioned Rochard Craig; Anima's envy at mention of certain of Craig's books was unmistakable. What were they? His methodical mind presently gave him a title or two, whereupon he went at once to the papers and looked up those titles among the books listed as missing from Craig's collection. There were there, duly listed.

Camberveigh mixed himself a Scotch and soda and drank it fast.

Then he went back to that horror of a book still lying on the table where he had left it.

After some while of searching, he found the passage that had recurred to memory. Thus it can be that through the medium of the accursed object, it is possible to send forth one's spirit self, the astral body, and dispossess another for a brief time, but only for so long as the object remain in his possession. He read on in growing amazement. What was set down there was inconceivable, incredible, and yet....

Yet there were those blood-stains on his suit; there were marks as if he had carried away books; there were so many curious facts that they went beyond mere coincidence.

And the accursed object-surely the book!

Given him by Anima, who had somehow then taken possession of him. That was where his lost day had gone. Unbelievable as it might be, against all reason—yet it offered the only comprehensive explanation of what had happened to his Friday.

He read on, struggling to keep his natural scientific prejudice from getting in the way. Apparently there was but one risk run by the projector; until his "object" was returned to him, there existed by its very possession in the hands of another a bond between them; that would surely account for Anima's eagerness to regain his book. Yes, it was undeniable, it made a precise pattern, with every facet fitting neatly into place.

Camberveigh sat back, little beads of cold perspiration on his forehead. He lit a cigarette. He must think.

He knew enough about the laws of evidence to know that if the investigation of Rochard Craig's death—he, how foul! he revolted against himself at the thought that his hand might have brought it about—ever got to him, he would not have a Chinaman's chance. There was the condition of his suit, the blood could be analyzed easily; there were the books—no doubt whatever that Anima had them; he would certainly testify that Camberveigh had brought them in Friday, on the infamous lost day. And perhaps even

the weapon-! He got up on the instant and began an in-

tensive search.

In less than half an hour he discovered it: a little stiletto he had picked up long ago at a sale in Petrie's. It was awkwardly hidden behind a shelf of books. What evidence!

He took it out and washed it thoroughly.

The hour was now quite late; darkness had fallen. He paced his rooms for a while in deep thought, but eventually he returned to the book.

What was it he must do to do as Anima had done?

Still incredible he took the book, stretched out on his bed and began to follow the instructions put down in that labored Latin.

It seemed to him after a while that he slept . . . and that he dreamed. Of foggy streets, and the voice of London muted in the night, a London where nothing was material; and he passed through walls as if they were air, swiftly, swiftly, recognizing streets, lanes, buildings; and he was in Soho, going down that little alley, passing into that hole-in-a-corner shop with its musty books. And it seemed to him that he entered into the wizened, crabbed figure lying asleep there and took his body and destroyed it. And then again the fog and the night and London asleep, save for those dark-eyed, sleepless creatures who walked its streets by night, pitied by darkness, the forgotten and homeless. . . . After a long while he struggled awake, tired as if he had not slept at all.

But he had. He had awakened at promptly seven o'clock

on Sunday morning.

Ah, what a dream he had had! But—was it a dream? He was still fully clothed. He leaped from his bed and knocked down that book of Max Anima's. With a shudder of revulsion, he picked it up and carried it back out to the table.

It was not a dream. There was his suit, still, with those ghastly, incriminating stains. There was the stiletto, too. Worst of all, there was the book bound in human skin. Who could doubt that it was accursed?

Anger and frustrated rage and bitterness rose in him. It took him some time to quell these emotions, to bring to bear upon his problem the fundamental meticulousness of

habitual method. He reviewed his situation; it was not good. Surely it was beyond the bounds of possibility that no one had seen him in the vicinity of Craig's house; Anima in his physical self need not have feared being seen. Even if he, Camberveigh, had guessed, could he tell the police? He could picture the reception such a fantastic rigmarole would receive!

He snatched up the book again, took his suit, and descended to the basement, where he lit a fire in the furnace and carefully destroyed both objects. After he had completed this task, he removed the ashes, cooled the furnace, and ran the ashes down the drain. Then he took the stiletto, walked out, and dropped it into the Thames, which flowed past not far away.

After this he returned home, shaved methodically, and

got himself some breakfast, thinking.

If anyone had seen him on that lost Friday, by all the laws of average the police would soon be at his door. At least, the evidence was gone now. He had more than a fighting chance. He began instinctively to gird himself for battle. Actually, he was not guilty, but there was no way in which he could involve Anima, none whatever. In any case, he was beginning to have grave doubts about the whole matter. That damnable book had actually suggested that no psychic force could compel anyone to do something against his own nature, and the implications of that were monstrous!

He turned on the radio and dialed for the news. He was a little late. He missed the war bulletins and got the late London news. "Max Anima, eccentric bookseller famed for his skill in obtaining rare and unique out-of-print books, was found dead this morning in the rooms behind his bookshop. He had apparently committed suicide. The door of his rooms was locked on the inside...."

So that, he thought, was that!

At that moment there was a ponderous and authoritative knock on his door.

Now then, he thought, and went confidently forward to open the door.

An Inspector from Scotland Yard stood on the stoop. With a polite "Good morning," he walked in, quite sure of himself.

A Collector of Stones

MR. ELISHA MERRIHEW, a fat man with money and a pink complexion, was a collector of stones, and, like many collectors, he was not too ethical about the ways in which stones came into his possession. One might have conceived some faint, if unethical, sympathy for Mr. Merrihew if he had collected precious stones, but no, he was interested in the most common kind of garden variety, ranging all the way from field rocks to discarded paving blocks. He built things with them, one hobby leading to another; he had built a dwelling for himself—commodious, too—, a summer-house, a tea-house, and no less than four hundred and fifty-seven feet of path around his estate, which was well off the country away from too inquisitive neighbors.

He was still at building paths—this time a rambling by-way leading to his boat-house on the nearby lake—when he stopped his car one afternoon beside a wood and made a delightful discovery. Not very far from the road, just over a broken-down old fence, there lay four sizable stones, smooth, too, apart from the weather-wear they showed, and just exactly right for his walk. Since there was no one, and not a house within sight, Mr. Merrihew crossed the fence and appropriated them, lugging them one after the other to the back seat of his car—the trunk was not good enough for them—and driving off with them.

It was not until he had got all the way home in the summer dusk that he discovered that the stones had some sort of lettering on them. The light was no longer strong enough to see by; so he brought his flash-light into use, but this did not help much, after all, for the lettering, such as it had been, was very largely worn away. The stones appeared to have borne some kind of dates, but beyond that Mr. Merrihew could make out nothing. Nor could he discern anything further the following day, when he had a very

good time all by himself laying the four stones he had discovered so fortuitously in various places, just where they would do the most good, along the path to the lake. They shone faintly gray among the limestone flagging he had got together for most of the walk.

Mr. Merrihew was very proud of his newly-completed walk, and, as always when he was proud, he had to take the occasion to show off his most recent accomplishment by inviting some of his friends out to dinner. Like Mr. Merrihew, his friends were very largely conservative and middle-aged, not as far as birthdays went, but only as far as mental outlook was concerned. Since Mr. Merrihew never failed to put on a lavish meal, his friends never deserted him; they were complacent and duly enthusiastic about the new house, the summer-house, the tea-house, and the hundreds of feet of walk around the estate, and they were prepared to be fully as complacent and enthusiastic about Mr. Merrihew's most recent addition.

Their host, however, owing to the necessity of helping his man with dinner, could not himself display his latest achievement, but simply sent his guests sauntering down the walk to the lake and prepared to regale them at dinner with all the figures and facts pertaining to this most immediate indulgence of his hobby.

But somehow things did not go quite as Mr. Merrihew

had a right to expect.

For one thing, instead of the usual paean of praise Merrihew was accustomed to hear from Shane Rodder, who was the first of the little group of three to come in, he was greeted with a casual smile and a remark that, to put it mildly, was certainly uncalled for.

"What was that?" asked Merrihew a little sharply.

"You seem to have got quite a little more help around

the place," said Rodder.

Merrihew stiffened; he interpreted this as a direct reflection upon the newly-completed walk. "I laid all the stones by myself, with no help whatever—quite as usual," he answered.

"Oh, I didn't suggest that you had help."

"Then what did you mean?"

"The people."

"People?" echoed Merrihew. "As far as I know, Bascomb and I are alone here-apart from my guests for tonight."

At this moment Mrs. Rivercomb came in, and without pause delivered herself of a hearty opinion. "I must say, Lisha, you have a nice walk there—but why send us out before you've got the stones really down? I stubbed my toe twice and almost fell-but Pat caught me."

"Yes, that's right," said Pat, coming in behind her.

"Luckily a husband's still some help these days."

Merrihew controlled himself with effort. "When I left the walk it was in perfect shape," he said finally.
"I say someone was digging in some of the stones," said

Mrs. Rivercomb.

"Or out."

"Oh, nonsense-out!" said Rodder. "The grey ones, wasn't it?"

"You did notice!" exclaimed Mrs. Rivercomb.

Merrihew tried hard to keep from showing his now profound irritation. He knew very well that his walk had been perfect; even the usual taciturn and noncommittal Bascomb had complimented him on his work. Yet, if his guests were having him, they were doing so with an amazing amount of casual dignity. He wanted to yield to an impulse to give them a piece of his mind, but there was something so guileless in their attitude that he could not.

Without a word, he put down the platter he was carrying and left the room. He went out of the house straight down the walk to the lake. It was a balmy night in August, and the breeze from the lake blew cool and fragrant with the smell of fresh water after a warm day. The lake walk was not in a straight line, but wound in and out among the clumps of lilac and syringa, under the trees and past a tumbledown shed which had once been a boat-house.

As he came round a lilac bush, Merrihew was astonished to see someone bending over his walk, quite as if at work there. He let out a hoarse bellow of anger and chargedonly to fall flat on his face, bruising his nose considerably, squarely in the middle of his walk. When he had recovered sufficiently to look around him, he saw that he was quite alone; no one else was near. He saw also that he had fallen over one of his large grey stones, which was certainly not in the position he had left it-not flat and level,

but standing up-end, crazily.

Merrihew looked at it for a long minute. Then he turned and looked down the walk toward the lake. He saw the other grey stones readily enough; each one of them was out of place. He got up and walked down to the other three stones. Each of them bore evidence of someone's having dug around in the sand in a patent attempt to either set up or move the stones.

Clearly the work of vandals—perhaps some envious neighbor.

Working furiously, he flattened each stone again; it was not quite level, but he could straighten each one in the morning. And then woe betide anyone who dared to meddle with his walk!

Somewhat disheveled, he went back to the house, where his guests had lent Bascomb a hand, with such good effect that dinner was now on the table, and they waited only for him.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Rivercomb at sight of him.

"What in the world happened to you, Lisha?"

"Vandals," he growled. He marched off to the bathroom to tidy himself up, and, coming back to take his place at table, turned inquisitively to Rodder. "Now, then—what about those people you saw?"

Rodder looked dubious. "I wouldn't say they looked much like vandals to me. A middle-aged man, a woman I took to be his wife, a young girl, and a young man, I'd say of about twenty or so. Looked like a family. I thought you'd got a new family in to help out."

"Where were they?"

"Oh, down along that walk. Not together, exactly—sort of lined up. They took off when I came along."

"Which direction?" barked Merrihew.

Rodder opened his lips to speak, but no words came for a long moment. He looked faintly ridiculous. "Well, now, that's a stunner," he said finally. "I don't believe I can tell you which direction they went. They were just there one moment and next, they had gone—into the bushes, I suppose. Probably felt they were out of place."

"They certainly were," said Merrihew. "I saw one of

them, too-just for an instant. The young man, I think." The conversation grew animated, but no less unclear. That someone had been meddling with Merrihew's walk was not to be doubted, even though the Rivercombs had seen nothing. Mrs. Rivercomb had twice almost fallen on the walk where the vandals had dug, and that was evidence enough in its own right. The motive for such vandalism was obscure indeed. Rodder's description of the little girl, whom he had seen most clearly, suggested no one Merrihew knew, nor did her quaint dress offer him any clue. The old man, said Rodder, had seemed to be wearing an old-fashioned broad-brimmed hat and a frock coat which had the look of being a century old-but of course, it was twilight or deepening dusk, and Rodder could not be too sure of what he had seen. Merrihew was not helped in his attempt to puzzle out the problem, but had to fall back upon the conviction that somehow, somewhere he must have incurred the envy or anger of someone who had chosen this means to avenge himself.

But—a family group? That was incredible. Even in his most aboveboard dealings, Merrihew had been careful to confine his affairs to one or at most two people at a time. The only family, as family, he had ever dealt with was the owner of a limestone quarry, and these people had never had any fault to find with Merrihew's rates of payment. Moreover, they were a husband, wife, and three sons, and not at

all like Rodder's slim description.

When at last his little party broke up, the subject of the walk to the lake was almost embarrassing. Merrihew was no closer to a solution of his mystery than he had been at the outset. He saw his guests off, and came back into the house, sorely puzzled. The more he thought about the events of the evening, with their faintly ludicrous aspect, the more involved he became.

He had already begun to undress, when he thought of making another inspection of the walk. Forthwith, he put on his bedroom slippers, got into his dressing-gown, and went quickly out of the house to the lake walk. He walked with extreme care and in silence, and when he came to that clump of lilacs beyond which he should catch sight of the first of those fine grey stones, he went along with all the stealth of a second-story man.

Even, so, he was hard put to it to suppress an angry oath at what he saw. There was that young fellow once more, pulling and tugging at the stone, and not far beyond him, a little girl, doing likewise. And now far beyond her, one after the other, a man and a woman—pulling, pushing, moving the stones, little by little. Indeed, the young fellow already had his stone well off the line of the walk, about three feet offside. All four of them worked as if with great effort, not a word passing among them, and, what was more curious still, not a sound.

Dim though the starlight was, it was not so dim that Merrihew had any doubt about their strangeness. He had never, to the best of his knowledge, seen any one of that odd, quaint group—and quaint they certainly were. He had never before happened upon so oddly-dressed a group of vandals. Their costumes clearly belonged to a time decades, almost a century ago. Merrihew had just enough of a smattering of psychiatry to be certain that these people were probably mildly obsessed in some form or other, victims of phobias, or queer compulsions. Moreoever, watching them, he remembered that in the previous night he had once or twice thought he had heard suspicious noises from the direction of the garage, where he had kept the stones overnight.

Well, there was nothing to do but face it. It was certain to be disagreeable—for them. Trumpeting loudly, Merrihew came around the lilac bushes, out of his concealment, and strode toward the vandals who dared tear up his walk.

"There's no need to run," he said, raising his voice so that all might hear him, "because I've been watching you for some time." And there he stopped, openmouthed, for though the row of displaced stones clearly attested to vandalism, the perpetrators of this wanton act had nevertheless managed to slip away. For only a moment Merrihew stood there; then his anger got the best of him. He ran this way and that, shouting, growing angrier by the moment, until Bascomb, roused by all the hullaballoo, showed up coming down the walk, carrying a stout poker.

"Look! Just look!" shouted Merrihew, gesticulating at the stones.

Bascomb clucked and shook his head.

"Well, don't stand there! Get a flashlight and hold it

while I put these back into place."

Merrihew raved incontinently all the while he repaired, as best he could, his walk, and then saw Bascomb back to bed with an ill-tempered peroration in regard to what ought to be done to vandals. Bascomb reponded in the only way he thought might be effective; he showed up discreetly with a double whiskey and soda and left it stand significantly at Merrihew's bedside.

Merrihew, however, was in no mood for sleep. The more he considered this invasion of his rights as a private citizen, the more angry he got. His thoughts rang with sententious variations of the fact that a man's home is his castle, and so on, and he worked himself up to such a pitch that he finally got out a shot-gun he had not used in an age, and spent half an hour oiling and cleaning it. Moreover, he fully intended to use it.

The hour was now approximately two o'clock in the morning. It was hardly likely that the vandals would make another sortie so late, but Merrihew remained uneasy. Nevertheless, he compromised so far with his anger as to get himself into bed, and there he lay fuming still, and trying at odd times to go to sleep. His attemps were not very successful; he kept imagining that he heard the clink of stone on stone; he fancied he heard dragging noises, just as if someone were making off with his treasures. And finally, he got up.

It was now four o'clock, and the dawn would be breaking before very long. He resigned himself to doing without sleep and got dressed. Then he took his shot-gun and went outside, gravitating naturally to the lake walk. Just in the remote case that the vandals had returned, he went with

great care.

He care on this occasion, was quite unnecessary.

There was no sign of any invader. But Merrihew's satisfaction at this was considerably ameliorated by what he next saw. He gave a bellow of rage and started forward. There was no need of haste, however; his four grey stones

were gone. They had been pried up and lifted out of his walk, and there was no sign of them within range of his

sight.

After satisfying himself of this, Merrihew rapidly decided that the vandals could not have got far with his stones. He doubled back across his lawns to his garage, got out his car, and roared out on to the highway. But now—which way to go? He had his choice of two directions—either to the city or away from it. He elected at once to drive away from it, reasoning that such individuals as he had seen were not likely to have come out of any city. Moreover, the direction he chose to drive went into the same remote country out of which he had got the stones in the first place.

He hardly had time to reflect upon the ridiculousness of his impulse before he caught sight of the vandals who had robbed him. There they were—all four of them—man, woman, boy, and girl—going down the middle of the road with the stones on their backs! It was incredible, but there it was; the headlights of his car picked them out plainly enough, though the stones were plainest, seeming to absorb and yet reflect the light, so that it was as if the vandals carrying them were the merest shadows beneath. He did not stop to wonder at all; there were his stones; there were the vandals who had stolen them. With a shout, he stepped on the gas and bore down on them, pounding his horn.

Down came the stones to the asphalt, directly in front of his car. Merrihew slammed on his brakes, reached for his shot-gun, and jumped from his car. "And now, you thieves!" he shouted.

But his vehemence was in vain. Once again his vandals had disappeared. Merrihew felt violently frustrated. He wanted to discharge buckshot at some one, preferably the old man who appeared to be the leader of that curious crew. But the road was silent and deserted, save for Merrihew, his car, and his stolen stones, which lay in an uneven row across the asphalt. The lights of his car combined with the first streaks of the dawn to cast an unearthly glow over the scene.

Resigning himself at last to the fact that there was no

one at whom he could shoot in vengeance or for the satisfaction of his honor, Merrihew impatiently loaded the stolen stones into the back seat of his car and climbed back in to turn around and take them back.

But at that moment something very untoward took place. Merrihew had just started the car and was prepared to turn, when he felt all around him a fluttering of hands. The car spurted forward, the wheel he had half turned was turned back, and away went the car with Merrihew at the wheel

but with Merrihew very much not in control.

He grew chill with unnatural fear. He felt hands like down. He felt bodies pressing against him, light as wind. He felt things probing the dashboard, the brakes, the wheel. In the wan light of earliest dawn he thought he saw faces—an old man's, a woman's, a boy's, a little girl's. He wanted to shout, but he could not; he sat as a mound of gooseflesh, feeling other hands but his guide the wheel, knowing with the instinct of a long-time driver that the guiding hands were unfamiliar with the wheel, the car. And other pressure but his foot was on the accelerator!

The car increased in speed. It tore down the road, turned an easy corner on two wheels, and leapt into a side road—with Merrihew petrified inside. In the glow of the head-lights suddenly Merrihew saw the forlorn woodland spot

where he had found the stones.

The car drove straight for it.

The car jumped the ditch, hurdled the fence, and drove directly into a tree with such force that Merrihew went up through the windshield, and the four grey stones flew up out of the car and landed all around him. In the grey light of the dawn, Merrihew saw through his darkening stupor four figures floating out of his car—all four of them light as thistledown, and with the dawn shining right through them; he saw them tugging and pulling at the stones, and, one after the other sinking down into the earth beneath them.

Merrihew's head had come up against a square stone marker with lettering on it. But it was not until he was some time out of the hospital that he got around to coming back and reading it. What it had to say was succinct and

adequately informative.

Dunlap Family Cemetery

Here Lieth Abner Dunlap, His Wife, Amanda, and Their Children, Eliza and Jonathan, Slain by Indians in the Year of Our Lord 1831. Woe Betide Him who Disturbs Them or Molests What is Theirs!..

Subsequent to his release from the hospital, Elisha Merrihew developed a curious aversion to stones. He abandoned them altogether and took up the collection of books, which for a hitherto unimaginative man, seemed much safer.



The Gold-Box

As HE got off the Underground in the vicinity of his home, Philip Caravel could scarcely conceal his self-satisfaction.

"Coo! And didn't 'e look like the mouse what swallowed the cheese!" said one of his late traveling companions to

another as the Underground rolled on its way.

Caravel, however, was out of hearing, and would not have minded if he had heard. It was a warm evening, just past dusk, with a misty rain falling and a yellow fog coming up over London. Autumn in the air, but Caravel walked along as if it were spring, jaunty of step and light of heart. He was very well pleased with himself, the way a man is when he has harbored apprehensions for a long time and finds them suddenly dispelled. He walked as if enclosed in a protective shell of familiarity—the London night with its odors and spicy perfumes here in the vicinity of the East India Docks, the mellow voices of river craft on the Thames, the rising chorus of fog horns, and a police-boat siren.

Even the sight of his dingy little house did not affect

his spirits.

It was cozy enough inside, furnished in good taste, if a little cramped. He put down his brief-case almost tenderly,

cast off his waterproof, and went directly to the telephone, where he gave a number and waited in smiling patience: a still young man, just beginning to grey a little at the temples, with a feral face and a feral mustache and long, thin fingers which tapped and drummed on the table.

The voice came. "Yes?"
"Professor Curtin?"

"Oh, it's you, Caravel."

"Can you come over?"

"Now?"

"It's urgent, rather. I've got something to show you."

"What have you been up to now?"

"I want to surprise you."

"Well, all right. But I was just in the middle of some interesting papers on the Ayar-Incas. You have no idea, my boy, to what an extent—"

A little impatiently Caravel said, "But the papers will

wait-and this will not."

Caravel turned away from the telephone, conscious of hunger. He went over toward the brief-case, but thought better of it. He went into his small pantry and made himself a sandwich with which and the evening paper he settled himself in the one comfortable chair the room contained.

Presently Professor Curtin came. He had the look of an absentminded character out of a Belcher or Cruikshank illustration. His tie was askew, he had forgotten to button his vest, and his bowler, which had needed dusting before he went out into the rain, now needed a thorough cleaning, beyond its owner's power to give. His eyes were myopic behind his rain-streaked spectacles, which he took off on the stoop and wiped as he walked into Caravel's brightly-lit study.

"I could tell you'd been up to something by the tone of your voice," he said to his host. "And I wondered how long you would get away with it. You know, there is a law of

averages."

"And of retribution and punishment, too," said Caravel ironically. "I've been down to Salisbury."

"Stonehenge?" asked Curtin, as he sat down.

"Just the museum this time."

The older man looked at the younger; for a short space,

neither of them said anything. Then Caravel drew the briefcase over, unstrapped it, and took something out. It was a small copper box, bound all around with bands of silver or silver-alloy. He put it down before his guest. "The God-Box!" exclaimed Curtin.

"I thought you would recognize it."

"But how on earth did you manage it? You're sure you weren't seen?"

"Absolutely."

"You planned it!"

"By all means. I studied the thing for weeks, and then I made as exact a copy as I could, without actually seeing the underside. With the copy in my brief-case, I went down, presented my credentials-after all, you know, I have been described even in the Times as a 'rising young Archaeologist'-and was permitted to examine it. The moment I was alone in the room, I simply exchanged the copy for the original, and here you have it. Would you like to open it?"

Professor Curtin paled and shrank back. "No."

Caravel laughed. "Superstitious?"

"Call it what you like. But anyway, its value as an ancient piece of its kind is diminished, once it's opened."

"I daresay it could be restored cleverly enough. You aren't afraid of the curse, are you? These things are all cursed, you know."

Professor Curtin looked distressed. "The thing I always ask myself is just what is inside? Dust, or what damnable invention of some past master of evil?"

"You should like a penny-dreadful, if you don't mind my

saving so."

"As you like it. The fact is, Caravel, these things are very old. And there are more facts we do not yet know about the Druids than there are that we know."

"There's no question about the druidic orgin of this

thing, then?"

"None whatever. It's a genuine 'god-box'-which is a generic name for any sort of contrivance, usually enclosed, into which has supposedly been locked any god, genie, imp, devil, force, and so on. There is therefore no telling what the old Druid priests put into them, actually, eschewing gods and devils and the like. Certainly something designed

to be dangerous, I should think, to keep the curious out with a vengeance. Turn it over, will you?"

Caravel did so.

Curtin adjusted his spectacles. "Yes, the legend is druidic."

"Will you translate?"

"Well, roughly—What is sealed herein is from outside, called Sho-Gath, not meant for human sight. Dreadful woe shall take him who breaks the Chant. It is delivered unto the guardian of the box."

"Daemoniac then, rather than a god?"

"At least not a benevolent deity." He sighed. "Now that you have it, what are you going to do with it?"

"Sell it, I suppose-like the other pieces."

"Some day you'll be caught."

Caravel smiled. "By the time they miss this, what with the copy I left, it will be impossible to determine who might have taken it, even if it is remembered that I had access to it, along with others."

"Whatever you do, though-I'd advise leaving it un-

touched."

Caravel turned the box over and over in his hand. It had a good weight, yet was not heavy. "Nothing very big can be inside this—and nothing too deadly, either. What do you suggest? Powdered Amanita virosa?"

"I'm not an expert on Druid customs insofar as they concern just what actually is put into one of these boxes."

"It's beautifully made, when you examine it. All manner of intricate carvings; I had the devil of a time trying to approximate them. Fortunately, though, most of them are somewhat crude—crude enough, at any rate, to deceive the guards or any other casual onlooker. How much do you think I should get for it?"

"From whom?"

"Lord Wittner usually buys for his private collection."
"At least a thousand guineas."

"Very comfortable."

"Still, the whole thing is indecently reprehensible."

Caravel laughed good-naturedly. "Isn't it? Except, of course, when you happen to want some little item badly yourself." He put the box down in the silence that fell, and

turned again to the older man. "What was that bit about

the 'guardian of the box'?"

"That meant simply that one of the priests—presumably at Stonehenge, where the box was found—was the especial guardian of this box."

"He didn't function very well when it was moved to the

museum, did he?"

"Oh, that is to prevent its being opened, or if opened, to rectify the damage done. Presumably he has power over whatever is in the box. These primitive religious beliefs follow quite consistent patterns. One thing though— Sho-Gath is not druidic; it's Altantean, as far as I can make out. Which makes it most curious."

"Yes?"

"Quite as if the thing had been inadvertently called up out

of the sea or from the vicinity of the sea."

"You speak of it as something of an entity, Professor. How in the devil could it be? Look at the size of that box—about three inches by five by three deep—and tell me what kind of an entity would fit into a cramped space like that?"

"Mere protoplasmic matter, my boy," said Curtin vaguely, and smiled a little helplessly.

"You're maundering," answered Caravel. "Will you have

a drink?"

They sat over a whiskey-and-soda and talked for an hour longer. Then Professor Curtin reminded his host of the Inca papers, talking with mounting enthusiasm of the findings chronicled therein, and took himself off. Caravel saw him to the door; it was raining steadily now, and the fog was even more thick.

He returned to his study and took up the box once more. A thousand guineas! He examined the bands under a strong light; there were minute seals scratched on the material, whatever it was; it had the tarnished look of old silver, and very probably it was old silver. He shook the box; there was nothing in it; for it had an empty sound. He rapped on it, selecting the unadorned bottom for his experiment; it gave forth a hollow sound. If anything had been put into it those centuries ago, it had long ago been re-

duced to dust. Some of his older fellow archaeologists, Caravel reflected, were more than just a little pixilated.

He went to bed and slept.

Late that night Caravel was awakened by a low, but insistent knocking on his door. He snapped on the bed-lamp and saw that the hour was just past two o'clock. He got up, since there was apparently no help for it, and went along the narrow little hall to the door, which had one triangular pane of glass in it. In the night, this looked darkly yellow to his sight, because the fog outside pressed so close. He went up to the glass and looked out.

An old man stood there, his head uncovered, a great black

shawl draped over his shoulders.

Mystified, Caravel opened the door.

"If you are looking for Dr. Blenner, his house is two

doors down," he said.

He saw with some horror that the man on his stoop must be very old; his skin was leathery and pressed in wrinkled tautness to his bones, so that his head was smaller than it should have been, and his grey, whispy hair thin and incredibly matted.

"I am not the doctor," he said again, stuttering a little

in his revulsion.

The shawl caught his eye; it was not a shawl; it was a long wrapping, like cerements.

The old man put out a clawlike hand.

"For God's sake, come in," stammered Caravel, gazing in fascinated horror at the leathery hand extended toward him, palm up.

"The box," said the old man at last, in a voice which creaked and rasped with the sound of an instrument which

had not been used for a long long time.

"I don't know what you mean," said Caravel coldly.
"The box," repeated the old man. "Give it back to me."

The voice was horrible. Caravel shuddered. He backed away from the door, said again that he did not know what the old man was talking about, and then closed the door. From outside rose the voice again, repellant, implacable, with the same quality of difficult speech, as if articulation had not taken place for a long time, and the words came like something alien and odd to the tongue.

"I will wait. I adjure you, by the Sign of Koth, do not open it."

So he had after all been observed, reflected Caravel. The thing to do now was to get the box out of the way before the old duffer went for the police. He thought of the reputation he had so carefully built up for a front. The box would not lend itself to easy concealment. He locked the door and went rapidly to the study, where he carefully drew down the curtains before he ventured to turn on a small table-lamp in the center of the room.

He got the box and pondered what to do with it. He looked all around him for a place in which to hide it, but he could think of no nook or cranny into which the meticulous police might not peer. If only he had gone directly to Lord Wittner and not troubled to gloat about his prize to Professor Curtin! But it was too late to think of that now, what with the old man waiting out there on the stoop. If he were still there.

The thought sent him cautiously back to the front door once more. He peered out. The fog swirled in yellow dreariness there. He ventured to unlatch the door and look around the door jambs. Nothing. Nothing but fog everywhere. The cries of harbor and river boats, of fog-horns and the multitude of sounds rising from the East India Docks assailed his ears, nothing more. He withdrew into his house again, latching the door once more. The absence of his visitor alarmed him still more. Suppose he had gone straightway to the police? He might even at this moment be talking to a bobby somewhere!

He hastened back to the study.

There was one thing he could do, perhaps more expeditiously than any other. The police would look for a box. They would not think immediately of looking for parts of a box. He could take it apart, and effectively conceal the various parts of it. His only problem would arise in doing it no damage, with an eye toward that thousand guineas he could get for it after he had put it back together again.

He worked cool-headedly, getting out his tools without delay, and sitting down under the table lamp. The bands must come off first, and then the mortised sides—for it appeared to be mortised. Since the bands appeared to be

fused together at their ends on the underside of the box, the simplest way to take them off would be to saw them at the point of fusion, trusting that the second fusion later would conceal his vandalism.

Without hesitation, Caravel sawed the bands in two and worked them off the box. With a fleeting curiosity, he lifted the cover. As he had thought, the box was empty; nothing

whatever presented itself to his gaze.

But wait—what was that dark spot, the size of a half-penny, in one corner? Rather, the size of a half-crown. No, larger—it was growing! It was a wisp, a puff, a thin swirl of smoke rising out of one corner of the box. Caravel dropped it as if it were hot to his fingers. It fell with the cover back and lay there. He lifted the lamp to cast some illumination over it. Black as pitch, smoke rolled out—a ball, a cloud, a fulminant pillar, convoluted and churning.

Caravel fell back, around the table; already the smoke filled a quarter of the room—a half—and then he saw rising out of its depths a pair of malignant, dreadful eyes, a ghastly travesty of a face, a grotesque, maddening horror of a thing transcending the boundaries of human experience! He screamed once, hoarsely; then his articulation was paralyzed. He leapt for the door, but the pillar of smoke, still swelling and growing, assaulting the walls, the ceiling, the floor, fell upon him with the fearful animation of something long unfed.

The bursting asunder of Philip Caravel's house was a minor sensation even for the staid *Times*. It was manifest that only an explosion could have done it. And only an explosion could have torn Caravel himself apart. The more sensational papers hinted darkly that not enough pieces had been found to complete the remains of Caravel which was finally interred. But of mystery, there was little, thanks to the metropolitan police. They held the key to the riddle. They had long been looking for dynamiters and anarchists in the region of the East India Docks, and it was too much to lay an explosion in that vicinity to pure chance. Simple deduction did it. Obviously Philip Caravel was leading a double life, and his archaeological research was a masquerade for his real nihilist activities. It was fortunate

that what must have been an experiment gone wrong re-

solved the matter with such dispatch.

The only jarring note in the proceedings was the hysterical statement of a streetwalker who had been pursuing her pitiful profession in the vicinity of the house when it had burst apart. She had seen no fire; the police said nothing of their own inability to discover evidence of fire, powder, or anything at all detonatable. But she had seen something else.

She had seen a very old man in a long "shawl or something like a sheet" go into the house and come out very shortly thereafter followed by something "big and black," which seemed to her in the fog to be "like a great big cloud

of smoke, 'igher than the 'ouse."

This had followed the old man docilely enough straight out to the sidewalk, and a little way up the street; then the old man had stopped and put something down on the pavement and shouted out some words she could not understand—"not English or French or Portugee"—which were languages she had picked up in her small life, whereupon the "big black thing" had gone into it "just like a funnel" and disappeared. Thereupon the old man picked up whatever it was he had laid down in the first place, put it under his arm, and shuffled off in the direction of southwest London.

This was the direction of Salisbury, a coincidence even greater than that offered by the metropolitan police. But they did not have the proper key to interpret it and hushed up the streetwalker. Professor Curtin, who did, lost himself for weeks in the Inca papers and wisely said nothing.

Saunder's Little Friend

For almost twenty years, Raneleigh Saunder had kept up a progressive feud with his one remaining relative, Aunt Agatha, who lived in a small house in Stepney to

which he repaired from time to time from his furnished room near the Inner Temple, where he had a law office. Their feud was primarily about money, which Raneleigh seldom had, and Aunt Agatha did; and which Raneleigh felt he ought to share, being the only surviving relative in the Saunder line. It was somewhat disconcerting, therefore, to receive a note by the hand of a messenger from his aunt's only servant informing him that Aunt Agatha was very ill, was, in fact, dying—though not so much so as to preclude the possibility of his fleeting regret that there would not be time perhaps for a parting shot at her parsimonious habits.

Nor was there. When he got to the house in Stepney, the blinds were drawn, and the house wore that patient, resigned air of death which instinctively caused him to assume a somewhat similar attitude of appropriate dolefulness. The old servant was alone, and was in the act of packing her things. Aunt Agatha had died and her body had been duly called for; by her own directions, she was to lie at the undertaker's only twenty-four hours, and then be buried. She had left a will, and there was no harm in telling Raneleigh what was in it; so the woman told him. He had been left his aunt's tidy little fortune, and only one condition attached to it; he was not to disturb her favorite room so much as displacing a chair—which was tantamount to telling him that he must keep out of it altogether.

Nevertheless, however goaded he was, he maintained that air of obsequiousness so common to his profession in need.

"Poor Aunt Agatha," he said. "Her death was very sudden, then?"

"Yes, quite," said the woman. "As you might say, struck all of a heap. She was at work makin' something when I heard her call out. So I went to her, and there she lay. I got her up and on the couch in there, and she told me a few things—like to send for you—and that was all. When I came from the boy I gave the note for you to, she was dead. So I sent for the undertaker, and he took her off just before you came."

"I understand you've been taken care of," he said, though he understood nothing of the sort and would have been hard put to it if she had asked him to pay her wages, little as they were.

"Yes, sir, thank you," she replied. She gave him a slip of paper, explaining, "This here's my address if you should need to know about anything in the house."

"There's really no need to hurry off so," he protested. "Miss Saunder's wishes, sir. I'm paid up, and I'm off,

just exactly as she wished it."

He went through the house, very much aware, with that mixture of regret and relief which is all too human, of the absence of the old lady's acidulous voice. Much as he had hated it, often as he had cringed under the lash of it, he missed it now that it was no longer here to be heard; indeed, he would not have minded hearing it a few times more, provided, of course, that he had had foreknowledge of her imminient end. He went through the house primarily to take a look at Aunt Agatha's room, and noticed with angry disgust that she would have chosen the best room in the house to leave behind untouched. It was the only room with a view, opening out upon a little walled garden, certainly not a common sight in this part of London; it was also the most agreeably lighted room, with oldfashioned windows in a kind of semi-circle at the far end of the room, just over the garden. And right there, at the windows, stood a table with what looked to have some kind of waxwork or cyla-modeling on it-at which his aunt had no doubt been at work when she was stricken. What a mess! Last wish or no last wish, he had no intention of obeying Aunt Agatha's directive-unless, of course, he mentally reserved, she had the matter secured in her will.

Aunt Agatha went to her grave in due course, and Raneleigh Saunder heard his Aunt Agatha's will read. It sounded very much like her; he could almost hear her tongue clack from time to time, though the illusion was spoiled by the droning voice of the ancient barrister who had had her will in safe-keeping. Raneleigh, who had manifestly some knowledge of legal matters himself, studied the will carefully and ascertained that no one would be likely to step forward and challenge his inheritance of her property if he chose ultimately to make such changes as he saw fit

in his aunt's room.

"I shall have to come round every little while and look at the room, I suppose," said the barrister, Mr. Cumberland. "Have you seen it since her death?"

"I'm sorry, but I've not had time to go over."

Saunder needed to know no more. He lost no time in going to his new house in Stepney; at least he could clear the table at the windows and put the room in something like order before Cumberland came to examine it. There would be nothing to show that it had not been the way he, Saunder, would like it at the time of his aunt's death.

The table at the windows, however, arrested him.

It was covered with objects decidedly alien to his preconceived notions of his aunt's character. Clearly, the old lady had been modeling in clay. Some kind of figure lay partially completed near an ancient Latin tome, directions in which his aunt had apparently been following. The book, he determined at a hasty glance, was quite clearly a kind of work which he might expect to be utilized chiefly by crystal-gazers, professional magicians, and sleight-of-hand artists, to say nothing of those highly dubious old ladies who set up shop in tents at fairs and carnivals and pretended to tell fortunes and interpret dreams.

Just the same, the clay figure fascinated him.

He could not explain that fascination. Even though Cumberland had plainly indicated that he was in no hurry to come around and look the place over, Saunder did not want to waste any time in putting the room to rights; therefore, the fascination so instantly exercised by this incomplete clay figure was something for which it was not possible to account. It was so strong, in fact, that he found himself sitting down to it and actually taking it up, fingering it.

Oddly enough, the clay seemed still fresh; it was malleable under his fingers. He pressed and prodded it experimentally. Quite against his reason, he took up a crude ball of clay and added it to the incomplete figure, pushing at it and shaping it, not at all certain that he was adding to his aunt's conception, though he had an uneasy conviction that he was following whatever concept had been in her mind, and, a little later, he had the most extraordinary belief that he should not have touched the

clay figure at all, that he should have followed the instructions Aunt Agatha had left him to the letter.

He worked with increasing swiftness, though he was now no longer conscious of Cumberland's impending visit. Under his fingers the figure began to shape up and assume an identity, though he could not put a name to it. When he looked at it at last, he was properly horrified. It was a repulsive thing—a cross between something not quite human, and something completely out of this world, but on the anthropoid side of creation, with a brushy tail and long, gangling, almost serpentine arms, and possessed, moreover, of a wickedly toothy mouth, inordinately wide, an ugly, flat head, one Cyclopean eye, and unusually large, elfin ears.

Saunder gazed at it incredulously for a long minute, his disgust mounting; then he dropped it to the table and fled precipitately, out of the room and down the narrow hall, ending up, unaccountably, in the kitchen, where he paused and pulled himself together.

"What an extraordinary thing!" he exclaimed.

It was almost as if the house had put a spell upon him! He shook himself, much in the manner of an animal, hawked once or twice, as if to be reassured by the noise,

and then went back to the room with the view.

There he began methodically putting it in order, arranging things in the way he felt he might like to see them, which was not, after all, too far out of the pattern his aunt had left—except for the table at the windows. This definitely had to come out of that place, and a comfortable chair put here instead, one which would enable him to enjoy the view when he chose to take his leisure—and this, thank Aunt Agatha for dying!—he could now do just about as often as he pleased. He left the table until last, however, so that his very real repugnance should have ample opportunity to subside.

But at last he returned to it.

His repugnance vanished before the discovery that the figure was nowhere in evidence. Apparently, in his haste to escape the aura of malevolence he had fancied he felt about it, he had dropped it and it had broken among the balls and crumbs of clay still lying there. He was too re-

lieved to make any really careful examination of the tabletop, but just swept everything together into the little chest his aunt had used for storage, put the chest away, folded up the table, and moved in a chair—and his rearrangement was complete. Now let Cumberland come!

That night in the house in Stepney was not his first. It was, however, the first night he was to experience that extraordinary sensation of being not quite alone. It was, in fact, the beginning of a series of quite inexplicable events. That night by itself was extraordinary enough. He woke shortly after midnight, convinced that something has passed over his face. As he lay awake in the darkness, his room just faintly illumined by a street-lamp not too far away, he fancied that he heard something rustling about not far from his bed, the sound diminishing toward the door, which stood open to the hall—only a small sound, so that in a short time he was able to rationalize it and pigeonhole the entire episode as the work of mice. He resolved to obtain some traps and end this kind of nocturnal disturbance once and for all.

On the following day, he found it necessary to go to the Inner Temple. As he was coming up King's Bench Walk, a colleague in robes on his way to court, hailed him jovially.

They exchanged greetings.

"And who's your little friend?" asked Mentone.

At this point they came up to each other. "Eh? What friend?" asked Saunder, somewhat irritably.

"By Jove! I could have sworn you had a dog or a cat or a squirrel or something trailing you along. Pattern of sun and shadows, no doubt."

"Or old age," thought Saunder, grimacing and going on. Poor Saunder! This was unfortunately only the beginning. When he went into a restaurant that noon, he was astounded to be accosted by the head waiter who informed him with the air of proper severity so readily assumed by head-waiters who must go home every evening to be brow-beaten by wives, mothers, mothers-in-law, and/or landladies, that animals were not permitted inside.

"What animals!" exclaimed Saunder angrily.

"Sir, you had an animal—a creature," said the head-waiter stoutly.

"Have a care, sir! I am in law. You accuse me of bringing an animal into the restaurant. I own none. Produce it, if

you please."

The head-waiter looked haughtily around, but in a moment his hauteur crumpled, and a kind of exasperated desperation took its place. He mumbled something about "it's" having got away "under a table," and finally excused himself and took himself off muttering sullenly under his breath that Saunder did indeed have an animal trailing him into the restaurant.

Throughout Saunder's meal, he saw the head-waiter watching him with studied intentness, and once he saw him making his way purposefully over toward his table, only to stop half way there, bewildered, and turn around again. "What a peculiar fellow!" thought Saunder. "He ought to be committed." He made a mental note to look into the matter, time permitting, with that comfortable sense of security which arises in the knowledge that time would never permit that sort of excursion.

Thenceforth, Saunder was badgered at virtually every oc-

casion.

Wherever he went, he was accosted by enquiries about his "pet," or his "little friend," or that "stray dog" which was following him around; he was tormented by wits who made jokes at the expense of creatures which were manifestly born wholly within that strange, unreal world of delirium tremens—which, for a reasonably abstemious man, was very trying; and, worst of all, he got so that he actually began to share the unbelievable fancies which seemed to obsess all his friends and acquaintances with such fiendish persistance and such remarkable unanimity. He reached that point in his existence approximately eight days after his meeting with Mentone at the Inner Temple.

It was in the evening, just as a yellow fog was beginning to haunt the streets near his home, that he thought he saw something following him on the rim of a street-lamp's glow. He turned at once, somewhat more quickly than he might otherwise have moved, had he not been goaded almost beyond endurance by the singular conspiracy

against him manifested by the torment imposed upon him by his acquaintances. There was nothing, of course. Yet he could have sworn that he had seen something. Since there was nothing, however, it was clearly the result of all the jibes and insults he had taken acting upon his imagination.

Unfortunately, ever since that first night he had heard the mice in his bedroom, he had kept on hearing them. Though he had set traps in every conceivable place, he had not caught one. Nor had there shown any evidence of anything at all getting at the bait he had set out. More than just hearing the mice, he had felt them about his neck once or twice, and this was doubly disagreeable because, instead of something soft and warm and furry, they had been strangely cold and somewhat moist and not at all furry.

Saunder, who was not overly endowed with imagination, nevertheless was not so stupid as to decide at the end of ten days that his Aunt Agatha had left him a very dubious legacy indeed. He was loath to give up his house, but he had already begun to shun his acquaintances, even to the extent of avoiding his club; yet he could not forever endure the sport of those he met on familiar terms, nor could he long stand the peculiar hallucinations which afflicted him from time to time—among which those of seeing pursuing

animals were not the least disturbing.

Quite by chance, he unearthed his aunt's clay-work chest one morning and discovered that someone had evidently been tampering with it. The clasp he had very distinctly pushed shut stood open. He took the chest up and lifted

the cover, somewhat apprehensively.

Inside lay the ancient book of lore and legend which his aunt had used. With a prickling of his scalp, he saw that something more lay there—certainly something more than he remembered having put there. The clay, which he had put into the chest in loose crumbs and crude balls, had somehow shaped itself into a vague semblance of a human being. He stared at it for some time, incredulous. He thought at first that the clay had somehow rolled together, but no, the clay was compact, quite as if it had been molded.

Somewhat gingerly, he brought the chest closer to his

eyes, so that he might the better examine the strange, unaccountable sculpture. All over the tiny figure were such marks as might have been made by very small fingers and hands. A little shaken, he put the chest down and took out the book.

He opened it at random, read a little, and tried again. After dipping into it here and there, he was more mystified than ever. The book was a compendium of all manner of superstitions, lore, legend, omens, and the like; there was apparently also ancient Druidic runes, curious recipes (calling for the "blood of a new-born babe," of all things!), and similar outlandish things. Saunder was not sure, but he suspected that quite possibly this ancient tome was proscribed by canon law.

A further examination indicated that it had been bought at Mr. Chandos's shop in Soho, and, after mulling over the chest and its contents, it was to this shop that Saunder

ultimately repaired, late that afternoon.

Mr. Chandos was, just as Saunder had suspected he might be, an Oriental, very probably from India, though Saunder was not sufficiently versed in the nationalities to be sure. He was very old, and not particularly communicative, though he was affable enough.

Yes, he had sold to an elderly lady such a book as Saunder

described.

"I am unable to understand the purpose of the book," said Saunder, discarding his initial plan to make a frontal attack by representing himself as a barrister on the track of law-breaking.

Mr. Chandos shrugged. The book was nothing, he explained. Only a harmless collection. "Curiosa," he said.

"Yes, indeed, it is curious," admitted Saunder. "But what would an elderly lady such as my late aunt be doing with

clay figures in connection with it?"

Mr. Chandos's eyes twinkled. He hissed politely. Perhaps the lady was attempting to make a wax image for the purpose of bewitching someone. Mr. Chandos explained. The clay very probably contained some portion of the body of her intended victim, and was intended to be destroyed in some manner. Such destruction would then inevitably—if one were to believe in such a rigmarole—result in the

death of the victim. Mr. Chandos shrugged eloquently, as much as to say that, of course, if one were so medieval as to believe in this sort of thing, there was no good in

saying more.

Saunder was therefore nimbly put off, half-informed. Nevertheless, he had his suspicions. He had long suspected that Aunt Agatha would not have minded in the least if he had shuffled off this mortal coil before her; indeed, she had even included such a provision in her will, indicating that if he predeceased her, her small fortune was to go to a home for homeless animals.

As he went out, Saunder was unpleasantly stopped short by Mr. Chandos's calling after him not to leave his "pet" behind

Saunder swallowed determinedly and came back to the much-cluttered counter. Would you be so kind as to des-

cribe my pet?" he asked.

Mr. Chandos looked at him for a moment with intent blandness. "A small creature—like a monkey, with long arms, pointed ears, and a brushy tail. The head, I think, is flat."

Saunder turned on his heel and went out. He went

home growing more upset with every step.

He sat for some time that evening turning Mr. Chandos's description of his pet over and over in mind. There was no possible way of escaping recognition of the fact that Mr. Chandos's description precisely fitted that repulsive clay image he had so strangely fashioned when he had sat down at his aunt's table before the windows!

But such a thing manifestly could not be. Saunder had progressed beyond the point of turning to his law books for confirmation of his beliefs, but he had not yet got to that stage at which he could readily accept something beyond the pale of both the probable and the possible. That a clay image could somehow be imbued with life at his hands was inconceivable—particularly such a ghastly travesty as the thing which had so repelled him.

Just the same, Saunder did not propose to take any chances. He began systematically to watch for things out of the corners of his eyes. The result of this was that he had

more hallucinations than ever.

Or were they hallucinations?

Saunder wondered. Saunder lost weight. More than once, Saunder reminded himself that he ought to have heeded his aunt's admonitions regarding the room with the view.

He bethought himself finally of the "mice" he had heard, and of that feeling of "mice" at his neck which was so much more like the feeling of a clay image than like that of mice.

Accordingly he lost sleep. In the confusion of his thoughts, he reasoned that somehow, inexplicably, his Aunt Agatha had set a trap for him. He had fallen into it, according to plan. He had not the faintest idea of what might happen next, but, knowing how the old lady had been in her bad moments, he could not view his future with much hope.

Three nights after his visit to Mr. Chandos's strange shop in Soho, Saunder heard the scampering sound he had previously associated with mice. He had been lying on his bed, trying vainly to sleep, and, hearing those padding footsteps scuttling past, he got up at once, lit the lamp, and held it high.

Nothing in sight. Nothing to be heard.

But wait—the sound continued, not from within the room.

Saunder stepped into the hall. He paused. The sound came from nearby. He went along the hall, down the stairs. The sound diminished, rose up, diminished again. He traced it, finally, to the room with the view—Aunt Agatha's room, which he had better never have entered.

Now, resolute and angrily determined despite the chill apprehension he felt, Saunder stood in the middle of the room and listened. There were still coals in the fireplace; he threw on more fuel, so that the flames danced brightly to add their light to that of his lamp.

The sound of tiny hands or feet, of a dragging brush, continued unabated from somewhere within the room. He began to turn over chairs in a feverish heat to find the clay image, not forgetting to close the door so that whatever was in the room with him could not escape.

In the midst of his search, he thought of the chest. He went directly to it, and with each step he took it seemed to him that the scraping and patting sounds grew more pronounced. He picked up the chest, observing that the hasp had once again become undone. Swallowing hard, he lifted the cover.

And there it was—that ghastly clay thing his own hands had fashioned under a compulsion certainly not his own—crouched there in the recess of that chest animated by an unholy force, working rapidly over another image wrought

out of what remained of that clay!

Saunder stood for one shocked moment looking at something his senses recognized but his mind denied. He saw that horrible creature's animation, he recognized the figure being shaped so unbelievably by those awkward clay hands at the end of those gangling clay arms as that of a man—then, with a cry of revulsion, he seized both the clay things in the chest and hurled them into the flames on the hearth.

It was unfortunate that Saunder did not take the time to examine the figure of the man more closely; he might then have recognized that it was, however crude, an image

of himself.

The flames licked up and enveloped the clay figures.

Saunder dropped the chest and clawed at his throat. He fell back against the table and collapsed on the floor, completely oblivious of the lamp he knocked over. He felt for one cataclysmic moment as if all the coals on the hearth had come alive inside him.

The house was partially destroyed before what was left of Saunder was dragged out of it. At that, commented the coroner at the inquest, he had not been too badly burned. It was, however, entirely extraordinary that he should have

burned so badly on the inside.

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