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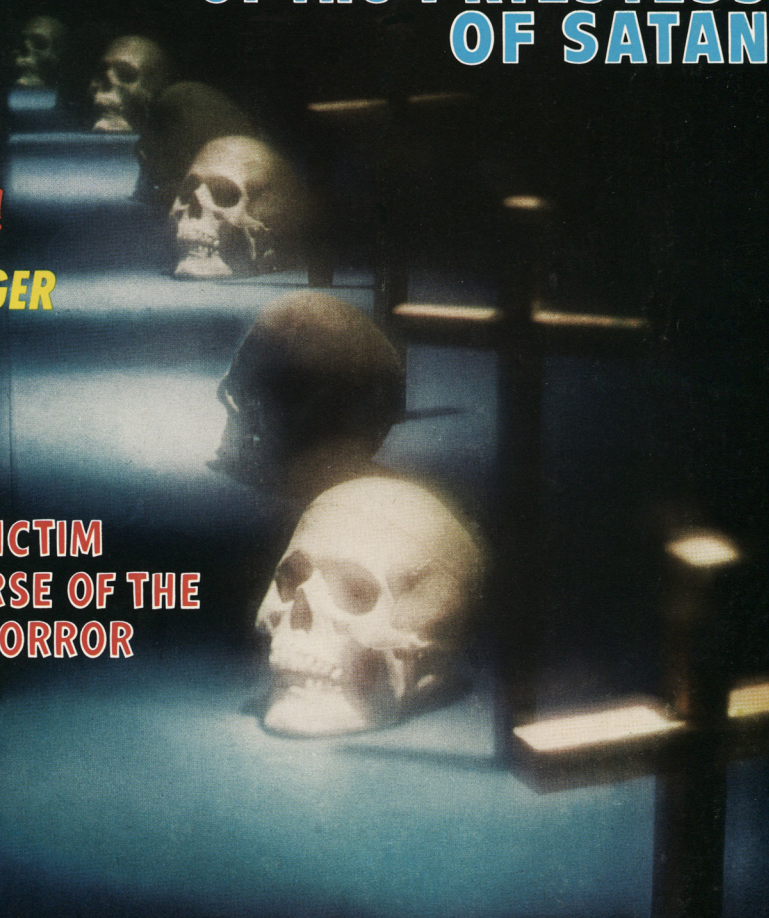
HORROR

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of the **PRIESTESS**
OF **SATAN**

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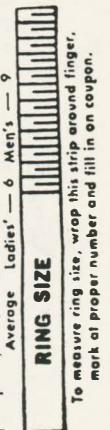
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HORROR

DECEMBER 1970

TRUE TALES OF THE UNKNOWN



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THE BLOOD-DRENCHED CORPSE of the PRIESTESS OF SATAN

*Unfaithful husband, avenging wife and obliging neighbor
team up to create a night of Hell-inspired terror!*



by WILLIAM DUNLAPPE

IT WAS Dorothy Colby's neighbor, Selena Thompson, who first brought up the idea. That was about a month after Dorothy first began to suspect that her husband, Hal, was playing around with another woman.

"Why not force him to stop?" Selena suggested when Dorothy confided in her.

"Force him? How can I do that?" Dorothy asked. "Hal's not the kind of guy who can be forced into—or out of anything. Besides, I haven't even got proof that he is."

"I wasn't talking about physical force," Selena explained.

"I'm afraid you've lost me," said Dorothy.

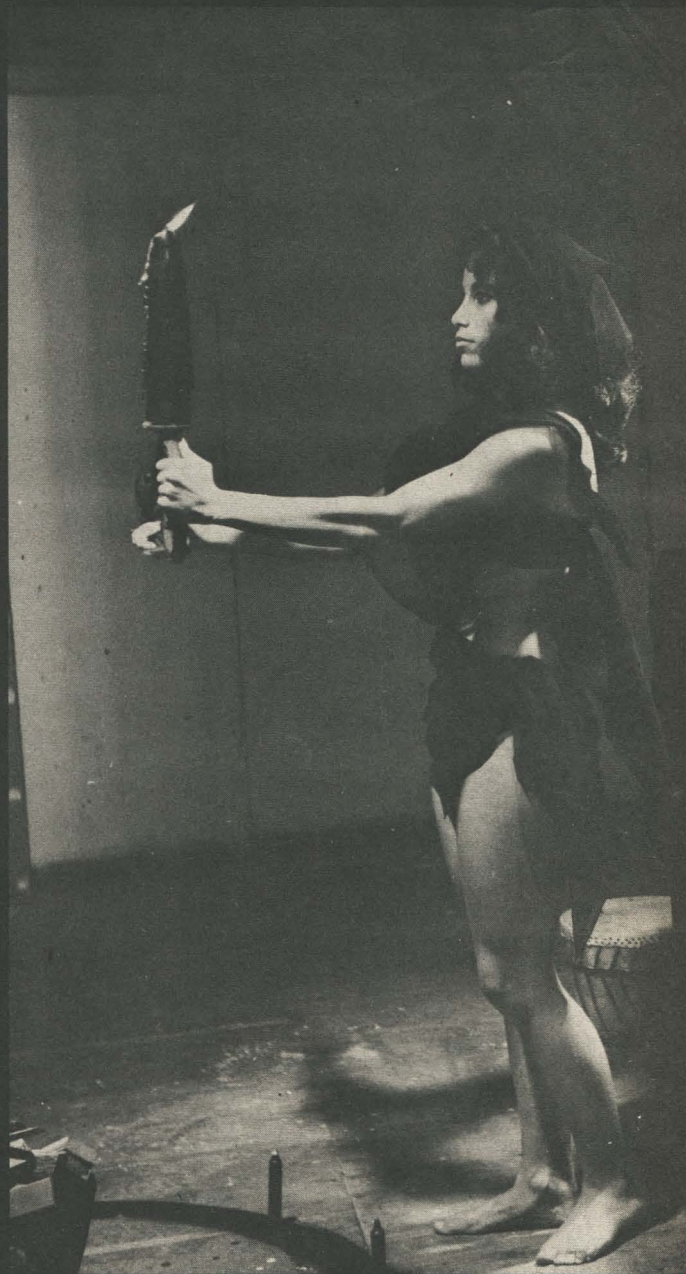
Selena laughed, a harsh, grating sort of laugh. "I'm talking about a greater force that most mere mortals are even aware exists."

Dorothy stared at her blankly.

"The power of the supernatural. I believe most folks call it black magic or witchcraft. But it's real. And it works. I know. I've used it and it's always brought me exactly what I've wanted. And if Hal isn't guilty, so much the better. It'll keep him from doing anything in the future. It works. I guarantee it."

"Witchcraft! Black Magic! That's all nonsense," Dorothy gasped. "Nobody's believed in that sort of thing since the Middle Ages."

Continued



As Selena tied her to a post, a look of triumph spread across her face.



Two men carried the covered object and carefully held it in front of her.

Selena smiled tolerantly. "Whether people believe in it or not, it's there. And there are those who know about it today, people who use it and profit from it. Don't laugh at things you know nothing about, Dorothy. You sound like those very ignoramuses of ancient times who sneered at science. Don't make the same error in reverse."

"I'm not. Really I'm not," Dorothy said placatingly. "It's just that I find the whole thing so difficult to accept."

"I understand," Selena replied. "It's all a new idea. But think about it. There's no rush. But before you do anything drastic about Hal, talk to me. At least give my way a chance."

Dorothy did think about it. She thought about it hard, as the days went on. Hal was getting colder and more distant, apparently by the hour. If Dorothy had any doubts that Hal was sleeping with a mistress, they were rapidly disappearing, even if she

hadn't gotten the final evidence of catching him dead to rights, in the act.

"Do you think it'll work? It sounds so silly," Dorothy said to Selena a few days later.

"It'll work. You can depend on it. Besides, what do you have to lose by trying?"

"Nothing, I suppose," Dorothy sighed. "All right. I'll try. But how does one go about it."

"Leave everything to me. You just be there. I'll make all the arrangements for this coming Sunday night. You are free Sunday, aren't you?" Dorothy nodded. "I can make it."

Selena added, "And don't forget to bring Hal."

Dorothy started. "I don't know. What'll I tell him?"

"Don't tell him anything," Selena said. "Just say you're coming to a party at my house. Don't worry. He'll come."

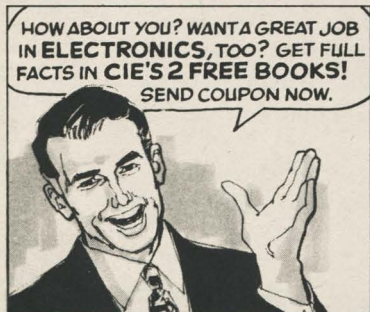
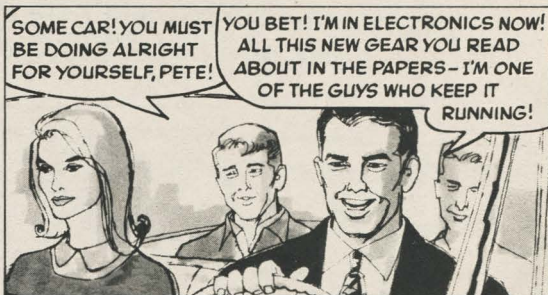
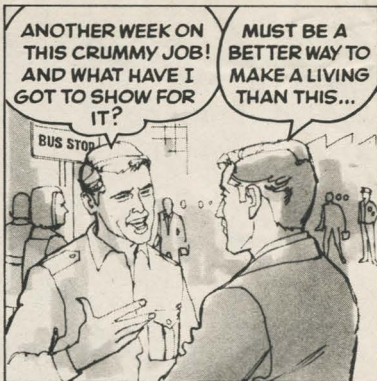
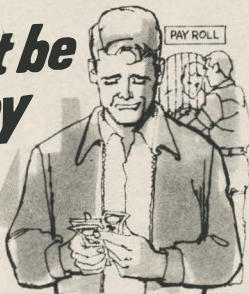
Selena was right. Hal was perfectly agreeable. Nor did he think it the least bit strange that Selena was holding a party on a Sunday night.

Following the instructions she had been given, Dorothy saw to it that she and Hal arrived promptly at 9 p.m. Selena herself answered the door and Dorothy almost jumped a foot when she saw her neighbor, dressed in a diaphanous gown that showed through as if it weren't there. Underneath, Selena was stark naked. Dorothy grimaced as she noticed her husband drinking the lush

(Continued on page 54)

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BONY FINGERS FROM THE GRAVE

*Our destiny is mapped out in odd curves and
twists of fate—but we can never escape it!*

by ROBERT LAWRENCE

ARNOLD leaned forward in the antique armchair as his brother Richard entered the room. "Has the old man kicked yet?" he asked.

"No," Richard scowled. "I was just up in his room. The doctor says he could last another few days—perhaps even a week or two." He sat down in another antique armchair beside his brother and pulled out a pack of cigarettes.

"A week or two," Arnold moaned, spitting out the words hatefully. "It would be just like that old geezer to keep us here in this creaky dump waiting for weeks for him to push off."

"This place really gives me the creeps," Richard agreed. "The floors squeak, the walls creak—there's so much noise in this flea trap, it could be haunted and we'd never know it!"

They both laughed at his little joke. "I guess it's worth it," Arnold said. "The old boy is supposed to have more than two million he's leaving to us."

"But you wait and see, he'll make us suffer for that money. Just as he made us suffer all our lives, just as he made Mom suffer. He was a money-mad miser all his life, Arnold, and if he could think of a way to take the money with him, you can bet he'd do it."

"I'd just like to get the whole thing over with—get him stashed away in the ground, take my share of the money, and split.

Continued



"Poor Father," Arnold murmured.
"He's dead and there's no one
who knows where the money is."



This old house has death written all over it and I don't care to stay here any longer."

"Boys, may I speak to you for a moment?" It was Dr. Grayson, colorless and stooped over, their father's personal physician for more than 40 years. He hobbled slowly into the room, and leaned over them. "I must leave now. The nurse is watching your father. I believe he's a little stronger today. Henry has a tremendous spirit and will to live. I wouldn't be surprised if he lasted another month, to tell you the truth." He stopped to cough for a few seconds, wheezing until tears came to his eyes. "But we must be careful, boys," he continued finally. "I have the oxygen tent very carefully set. Please see that it isn't disturbed. The nurse takes her break in about half an hour. It would be good if one of you went up there to watch him while she's away." He patted Arnold on the shoulder and turned to leave.

"Thank you, doctor. Thank you very much," Richard said.

The doctor coughed in reply, and disappeared from the room.

"What's that look on your face, Richard?" Arnold asked. "The doctor says the old man may live for another month and you're grinning like a gleeful cheshire cat. Have you gone stir crazy?"

"No, Arnold, my boy—not stir crazy. But I've come up with a way that we can stir from this house sooner than we thought."

"What are you talking about?"

"Well . . . you heard what Dr. Grayson said. The oxygen tent is set very carefully. And . . . the nurse takes a break in half an hour."

"So what?" Arnold cried angrily. "You're not going to murder the old man, are you?"

"Precisely," Richard said with

a slight smile. "And lower your voice. We don't want the nurse to get suspicious."

"You're out of your mind," Arnold said heatedly. "You can't just murder him. After all, he is our father."

"Some father," Richard muttered bitterly. "Besides, listen, how much longer has he got to live? Not much. So what difference is it going to make if we shorten his life by a few days? He can't get up from his bed. He can't earn any more money—and that's all he cares about. So what difference will it make if he dies a day or so before he was going to? It will make no difference to him, or anyone else—and we'll be able to take our money and get out of this creepy old dump."

Arnold shook his head. "I don't know, Richard, I just don't know." They sat in silence for a few minutes. Finally Arnold turned to his brother. "Okay," he said quietly. "I don't really know why I hesitated so long. I certainly wouldn't mind helping the old man to his grave. But just one thing—we've got to do this together. I don't want to be the only one responsible."

"Okay," Richard laughed, "we're a team."

"I'll only be gone for half an hour," the nurse, a white-haired lady in her 60's, told them. "I'm sure he'll be all right while I'm away, but if not, call me."

They nodded solemnly to her and entered the room. Light poured into the bedroom from a large skylight in the ceiling, making it the only bright, if not cheerful, room in the mansion. The old man's bed stood near a large window, the transparent oxygen tent draped over it.

"He's awake," Arnold said, grabbing his brother's sleeve.

"So what?" Richard asked, jerking his arm away. "He can't do anything to stop us, can he?"

"No, but he'll see us—he'll know."

"So what, Arnold? Get a grip on yourself," Richard barked, approaching his father's bedside. "Keep your mind on that two million we get to split up."

The old man was not only awake, he was fully conscious. He gave his sons a weak smile as they approached him. But his smile faded as he saw that their eyes went directly to his oxygen tent

control. Arnold took a look at his father. The once husky body had dwindled away. Beneath the oxygen tent he saw a faded, wrinkled, wasted old man. He tried to put all thoughts of his father out of his mind, tried to concentrate on the task at hand, but it was difficult.

"Here's the main control," Richard said. "If we can shut it off, it should only take a minute or so. Then we'll turn it back on. No one will ever know. They'll think his heart quit on him."

"Well, let's just do it fast and get out of here," Arnold said nervously. He fought to keep from looking at his father's face.

Richard turned the knob counter-clockwise. He turned it all the way shut. The old man was gesturing wildly, trying to get up from the bed, but he didn't have the strength. He pointed a thin, bony finger at his sons, an accusing finger. The two sons watched as their father began to gasp for air, his hands going up to his throat to loosen his bedclothes, his face turning red, gasping, gasping, gasping . . . and then he slumped backward onto his pillow, his mouth open, unmoving, still . . . dead.

"Richard, that last look on his face, just before he died, did you see it?"

"What are you babbling about? Get a hold of yourself, Arnold," Richard cried, turning the oxygen back on.

"The look on his face," Arnold repeated. "It wasn't frightened or angry, Richard. He looked pleased. Really he did. He looked pleased."

"Arnold, you always had a great imagination, but this really isn't the time for it. Now we've got to practice looking grieved. After all, our father just passed from this earth. Now let's see a look of mourning on your face, and stop this nonsense about the look on his face."

* * *

THE READING of the will was held in the main drawing room between faded wallpaper and dusty olive green curtains. Arnold and Richard sat in the first row, looking despondent, while the few friends and servants of their father sat in the rear of the room, some of them crying softly into already damp handkerchiefs.

(Continued on page 44)

BLACK FOREST CLOCK Handcarved in Bavaria. Weight driven movement. \$1.84	ELECTRIC MASSAGE SET Special attachments for scalp, body \$1.50	8mm MOVIE CAMERA Electric pc. wired - no winding! Loads in seconds. \$5.50	JADE RING Hand set in delicate mounting. Men's styles also available. 79¢	DUTCH MOTORCYCLE Deluxe Springmaster model for sporty appeal. \$113.00	ELECTRIC GUITAR Rugged construction for true amplification. Great electronic sound. \$7.40	CASSETTE TAPE UNIT Snap in cartridge. Ready to play. From \$7.50	FLASH CAMERA 55¢ For indoors or out. Black and White or Color						
REAL SAPPHIRE RING Sterling Silver mounting. Men's styles also available. \$3.50	LAMP RADIO Combination Hi-Intensity Lamp and transistor radio. \$5.95	INTERPHONE SET Closed circuit telephones for home or office. \$2.40 for two	CALENDAR WATCH Swiss movement. Tells time and date. \$2.33	FIELD GLASSES 7 x 35 G.C.F. Clear and powerful. Center focusing. \$2.10	HAIR DRYER Feather weight. Whisper quiet. Great for men, too. \$1.50	FRENCH PERFUME Many delicate fragrances to choose from. 1/3 or 1/2 oz. bottles. 85¢	MEN'S BRIEFCASE Executive style with separate compartments. Light weight, easy action zipper. \$1.00						
30-POWER TELESCOPE & TRIPOD Sturdy Metal Construction. \$1.94	ELECTRIC RAZOR Product of Swiss Craftsmanship. Maker guarantees one full year. \$1.70	67 FANTASTIC VALUES! Buy Below Wholesale AT PRICES SHOWN HERE			RIVIERA BIKINI American girls go wild over European Bikinis. Exclusive styling from continental designers. \$1.75	FISHING KITS Sectional bamboo spinning and fly rod. Files, hooks and lures in wooden carrying case. \$3.30							
ELECTRIC CARVING SET Self contained power. Two stainless steel blades. \$1.50	MINK COAT Full length Mink coat from Scandinavia. \$285.				584 TENNIS RACKETS Laminated hard wood. Nylon string. Precision balanced. \$1.50	AMAZING SET OPERATES THROUGHOUT HOME, OFFICE, FARM WHOLESALE \$4.95	ADDING MACHINES Famous design for home and personal use. \$6	FLASHLIGHTS Bright reflector ideal for outdoor or recreational use. 10¢	OLD WORLD CLOCK Clear plastic dome guards! German craftsmans' shop. Great decorative item. \$5.00	TIGER EYE RING Genuine Sterling Silver mounting. \$1.85	CAR SPOT LIGHT For six or twelve volts. Extra long cord. Postal \$10. 50¢	TELEPHONE AMPLIFIER Transistorized. Hear phone conversation across room. \$3.10	BLACK FOREST WEATHERHOUSE Handcarved weather station. Predict bright, sunny or rainy days. 75¢
584 TENNIS RACKETS Laminated hard wood. Nylon string. Precision balanced. \$1.50	AMAZING SET OPERATES THROUGHOUT HOME, OFFICE, FARM WHOLESALE \$4.95	INTERCOM Famous design for home and personal use. \$6	FLASHLIGHTS Bright reflector ideal for outdoor or recreational use. 10¢	OLD WORLD CLOCK Clear plastic dome guards! German craftsmans' shop. Great decorative item. \$5.00	TIGER EYE RING Genuine Sterling Silver mounting. \$1.85	CAR SPOT LIGHT For six or twelve volts. Extra long cord. Postal \$10. 50¢	TELEPHONE AMPLIFIER Transistorized. Hear phone conversation across room. \$3.10	BLACK FOREST WEATHERHOUSE Handcarved weather station. Predict bright, sunny or rainy days. 75¢	BEADED HAND BAGS Four nylon bristle brushes. Battery operated. Up and down action. 95¢	BEADED HAND BAGS Delicate hand beading on satin bag. Many colors. 89¢	8mm Movie Projector Projector. Battery operated. Built-in screen. \$1.60		
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THE DOLLMAKER'S



REVENGE

The female is deadlier than the male—especially when she is a High Sorceress of Voodoo!

by THOMAS ARNES



WHEN EVELYN threatened to tell his wife about their love trysts, Harry knew he would have to kill her. Evelyn had been fun—especially between the sheets—but he had never intended to make her his full-time woman. Now she was planning to tell all to Margaret unless Harry asked her for a divorce. “Nothing doing,” Harry told her bluntly. He expected her to cry, but instead her face turned to rage.

“Damn you!” she shrieked, her black eyes boiling, her long black hair waving wildly behind her as she shook her head in anger. “You promised me you’d get a divorce! I’m not going on like this any longer.” She stood over him in front of the couch, her long fingernails outstretched like an angry cat, her face practically seething with sudden hatred. “I’ll tell Margaret, Harry!” she screamed. “I’ll tell her everything! I’ll ruin you, you—”

He knew at that moment that he’d have to kill her. The big question was: how? Harry had never committed a crime in his life, never even shoplifted. Needless to say, he had never considered murder before. “I must be crazy. Here I am actually contemplating violence,” he found himself thinking.

But he had no time to think. Evelyn stood glaring at him, her back arched like a cat about to pounce. “Harry, for the last time—will you ask her for a divorce?” Evelyn wasn’t giving him any time to consider.

“I can’t,” he said, looking around her luxurious apartment for a

weapon—any kind of weapon. If he could do the job fast, without having to think about it, maybe he could pull it off. Suddenly she leaped at him, her fingernails aimed right at his throat. The same hands that had caressed him moments before were now trying to strangle him. He gasped, and twisted his body off the couch, throwing her off-balance. Her nails missed their target. “Evelyn, stop!” he screamed, mistakenly thinking he could reason with her. She was like a wild animal unleashed after several weeks. She flung herself on top of him, clawing and pounding with her fists. He raised his arms to defend himself, to protect his face, but she kept pounding away.

Pushing her away, he climbed to his feet and staggered over to the dining room table. Her eyes red with rage, she came after him. A knife. Of course! He picked up a bread knife from the dining room table. She stopped when she saw it and took a step backward.

Now, Harry thought. I’ve got to finish her off now!

She looked around for a weapon of her own, but couldn’t find anything. “Harry!” she screamed. “Don’t!” the terror welling up in her eyes now, her voice shrill and frightened. “Harry! I didn’t mean it! I got carried away! HARRY!”

He lunged forward intending to drive the long blade right through her. She swerved to the left and he toppled to the floor beneath her feet. She kicked him once—twice—in the stomach,

Continued

tried to kick his face, but he grabbed her by the ankle and twisted it until she fell over. The knife had slipped out of his hand. He crawled away from her and tried to find it on the carpet. Her fingernails dug into his arm as he reached the knife, grasped it again, and raised it to finish her off.

He raised himself to his knees and lunged downward aiming the blade for her heart. Again she rolled away and he was thrown off-balance. "HARRY!" she screamed at the top of her lungs. "STOP! PLEASE STOP!" Her blouse had been torn off in the scuffle, her large breasts standing erect beneath her red, terrified face.

Harry regained his balance, steadied his arm, and lunged forward again. Suddenly, there was a knock on the door. "What's going on in there?" a male voice called. "What's all the scuffling?"

Harry froze. He had to get out of there. Whoever it was began pounding on the door, trying to break it down. He threw the knife at Evelyn. It bounced off her arm and onto the carpet. She grabbed at him, but he pulled himself up and headed toward the window and climbed out onto the fire escape. He heard the apartment door burst open as he hurriedly climbed down the two flights of stairs and made his way down the street.

As he walked to the corner people on the street stared at him curiously. His shirt was torn and splattered from where Evelyn's fingernails had dug into his skin. One eye was black and swollen from her punches.

"What a passionate chick," Harry said aloud, startling a passing couple on the street. "What a crazy, passionate chick!" He scowled, wiping perspiration and blood off his forehead. Of course it was her strange, violent nature that had attracted him to her in the first place. Harry remembered as he hailed a taxi. Evelyn had been brought up on her father's plantation in Haiti. And after her mother died, she was put into the care of an old native woman, who was reported to have been a high priestess in one of those mumbo-jumbo cults that seem to flourish among superstitious people everywhere. When she moved to the U.S. at the age of 18, she brought a lot of the island customs with her. She had had a hard time adjusting to the mechanized, computerized

ways of this country. And so she combined a kind of helplessness with the mystery of an ancient, primitive people, a mystery Harry found in her eyes each time he looked into them. "I can see all the way into eternity in them," he had told her once.

"You mean all the way into hell," she said slyly.

He didn't know what she meant. She was always saying crazy things like that. Harry just shrugged it off, thinking her a bit eccentric. Once she offered him some kind of potion and told him to give it to his boss. She said it would bring him a raise and a promotion. He had laughed at her, taking the little potion bag and tearing it open to find a fine white powder inside. "Flour?" he had asked, and she had looked insulted. "You should have left your potions back on the island," he told her. "In these parts, if we want a raise and a promotion, we either have to work for it or know someone." She had looked even more insulted when he said that. She grabbed back her potion bag and didn't talk to him for the rest of the evening.

It was because of this type of silliness that Harry knew he could never live with Evelyn. True, she was a lot more exciting in bed than Margaret, who hardly responded to his thrusts of passion, smiling quietly as he moved over her, waiting patiently until he reached a climax. Evelyn, by comparison, was like a wildcat, tearing at his back with her long red nails, shrieking and crying as he rammed her, reaching wild frenzies of ecstasy with each climax.

But sex wasn't everything, Harry believed. He needed Margaret's quiet good sense, her understanding and intelligence. *Her understanding?* How would she ever understand any of this? Evelyn was bound to tell her everything now. He didn't stand a chance of explaining—

"Hey, you signalled me, Mac. Are you going to get into the cab or not?"

Harry had been standing by the door to the cab, lost in his troubled thoughts. "Sorry," he said, opening the door.

"Hey, Mac, you been in a fight or something?"

"No, no I haven't," Harry said, wiping his forehead with his hand.

And then the pain began. It started slowly at the back of his

neck, but it got more and more intense with each passing second. "OW!" Harry cried, grabbing his head. "Ohhh," the pain was so intense he thought he would fall over.

"Hey, Mac, you better go home and sleep it off," the cabby yelled. He pulled the door shut in front of Harry and sped off.

Harry, holding his throbbing head, struggled back up onto the sidewalk and leaned against a building. "Man, this is more than a headache," he told himself. The pain started in back of his neck, went up through his head, and throbbled at his forehead. "Got to get home," he said aloud. "Got to get home." He lurched away from the building and realized he could barely walk. Passersby stared in disgust as they walked by, thinking he was drunk.

"Help me," he cried weakly. "Someone, please help." But no one stopped. The sun poured down, causing him to close his eyes. The pain was inescapable. He tried lying down on the sidewalk. It didn't help. He rubbed his forehead, rubbed the back of his neck. The throbbing continued—throb, throb, throb, with each pulsebeat it increased. "Help me! My brain is exploding!" he screamed. People walked in a wide arc to avoid him.

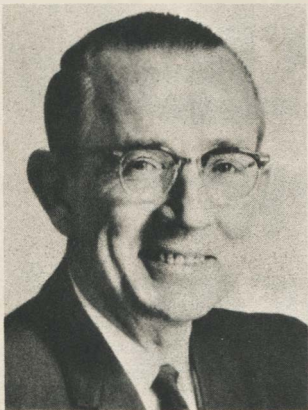
And then he remembered. Evelyn. He was only half a block from her apartment building. Surely she wouldn't turn him away when she saw him in such pain. Evelyn. She was his only hope. She could call a doctor. She wouldn't let him suffer like this—even if he had tried to kill her.

He leaned against the building and tried to muster his strength. But every time he thought he might be able to try walking, the pain seemed to get worse. Finally, ignoring the aching, grinding throbs, he pushed himself away from the building and forced himself to move toward Evelyn's apartment. Covering his eyes with his raised arm because it felt as if they were going to pop out, he staggered forward in the direction of her apartment.

"It's almost as if I am being directly punished for trying to kill her," he told himself. "Crime and punishment . . . crime and punishment . . . but, surely, things can't be that neatly arranged. OW!" The pain suddenly spread to his left leg. OH NO!"

(Continued from page 58)

OWNER-MANAGERS WANTED



We are looking for the kind of man who can set up a Duraclean business in his locality and then train other men to do the actual work in the field

As Owner-Manager you would line up the jobs, write up the orders, assign the work, handle the bookkeeping, banking and other office operations. Free 24 page book gives full particulars.

By Ford Marsh

WHAT OWNER-MANAGERS SAY ABOUT DURACLEAN

The big earnings reported here might well be called "exceptional." Yet, in another way there is nothing exceptional about them. That's because any man who is willing to work and who will follow instructions should be able to do as well under similar conditions.

\$17,680 Increase Owner-Manager Davis says in a letter. "Gross income \$17,680 this year." Many Duraclean men report even greater business expansion.

Averages \$1,000 a Month. And, Ron Bonomo, who started in spare time says business in eight will bring \$1,500 a month this year.

\$1,602 Profit on One Job. G. Byers tells about doing a job for a local institution. He says, "My charge for the one job was \$2,416.00. Total expenses \$814.00." This left Mr. Byer a gross profit of \$1,602.00.

\$361.00 for Ten Hours. A. J. Belhumeur wrote: "My service man and I cleaned an entire office building in a little over 10 hours. This job brought me \$361.00."

Grossed \$2012.00 One Month. Wilmer Suders of N.C. says: "My biggest single job amounted to \$752.00 and in one month I have grossed as high as \$2012.00."

Our files are filled with letters from Owner-Managers. We will gladly show them to anyone who comes to our office and is sincerely interested in becoming Owner-Manager of a local Duraclean business.

HOW AN OWNER MANAGER CAN SELL HIS DURACLEAN BUSINESS AT A BIG PROFIT

If a Duraclean Owner-Manager should be forced to give up his business on account of illness—or if he should wish to move to another town or sell for any other reason—we help him find a buyer. Here are some examples of how this service works.

An arm injury made it necessary for Al Svitek to sell after he had been in business for only 17 months. He sold to a prospect we found for him and Mr. Svitek collected 50% more than his original investment.

G. F. Monroe, after 12 months, sold his business for 10 times his cost.

Leo Lubel after 30 months, sold for \$7,116.00 over cost.

In the few instances where an Owner-Manager wants to sell, our job is to help him find a buyer.

Can you think of any other kind of business that offers this kind of service? As far as I know, Duraclean is one of the few companies that does.

If you are like most ambitious men, you have often looked forward to the day when you would be the owner of a profitable business. Two obstacles prevent most men from seeing such dreams come true—lack of capital and lack of experience.

Does this situation apply to you? If so, I'd like to explain how you can become the Owner-Manager of a Duraclean Business in your locality—starting with only a few hundred dollars capital and without the need for any experience in our kind of business.

I will show you how to start as a "one man business" and then build an organization with from two to five men or more working for you. The profit possibilities of such a business are almost beyond belief. As a one man operation you can expect to gross \$9.00 an hour for every hour you give to servicing your customers. As an Owner-Manager, you can gross \$6.00 an hour on every hour your employees work—after paying for materials and a good-hourly wage. For example, one Owner-Manager, Ed Kramers, has this to say "In my second year I now have two assistants, a new home and security for my family." Michael Lyons, another Owner-Manager wrote, "First year, \$40,000 gross income."

The Duraclean home service business has been tried and tested. The market for Duraclean Service is tremendous—and growing faster than we can appoint and train new men. The methods that lead to success have been clearly charted. When an ambitious man follows these methods, success is the logical result.

Some Franchise businesses require investments as high as \$50,000. With ours, you can get started for less than \$1000 and we finance the balance. Monthly payments are so small that the profits on less than one day's service can cover your payment for the entire month. Even with this

New 24-page Book gives detailed information. Mail coupon for your Free Copy.



This book gives you all the facts touched on only briefly here. It tells how you can get started—how and why your income grows—how we help finance you. Mail the coupon now for your copy of this revealing Book. It will come to you free and postage prepaid and no salesman will call.

small investment and operating as a one man business, your potential is \$250.00 net profit in a week. With two men rendering all of your service for you 35 hours a week, you should gross a profit of \$420.00. Allow for advertising and incidentals, a normal net would be \$336.00.

The most important part of Duraclean home service is cleaning rugs, carpets and upholstered furniture by a revolutionary modern process known as the "Absorption Method." You or your men do the work right in the customer's premises. No harsh scrubbing with motor-driven brushes. No soaking. Instead, an aerated foam loosens the dirt and holds it in suspension until removed. A test conducted by an impartial laboratory showed that the modern Absorption Method removed twice as much dirt as was removed by old fashioned machine scrubbing.

If you are tired of working for others or of jumping from one proposition to another—if you have a real yearning for independence in a business of your own—then send for "The Duraclean Route to Success." There is no obligation—no charge. No salesman will try to high pressure you. Send for the book now. Read it. Then if you want to take the next step toward independence, you can write to me and let me give you the same help I've given so many other ambitious men.

Ford Marsh
President

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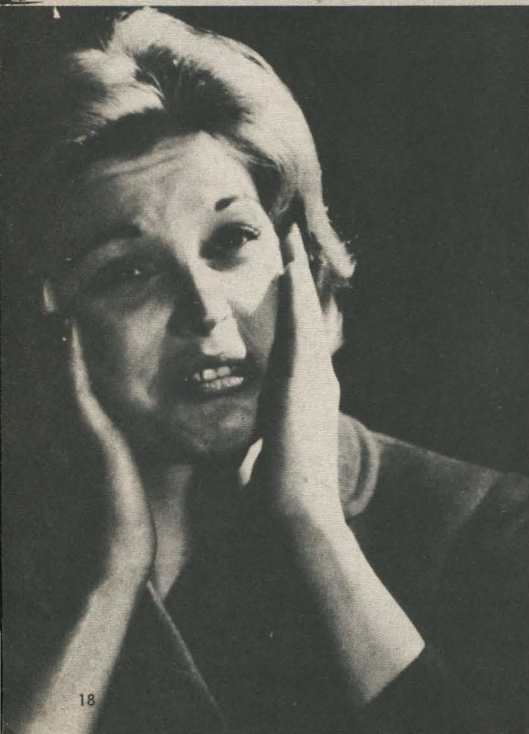
Dear Mr. Marsh: Please mail a copy of your Free Book that tells how I can become a Duraclean Owner-Manager in my locality. No charge to oblation. And no salesman is to call on me.

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TRAPPED IN THE VAMPIRE'S WEB OF ICY DEATH!

by HARLAN WILLIAMS

Half insane with fear, she went to the only man who would help her combat this nameless terror!



"DOCTOR, you're going to think me silly for even coming here," Mavis Arthur said, blushing slightly. She sat down on the doctor's worn leather sofa, pulling her long, slender legs under her. "I'm really sorry I came," she said, nervously toying with her golden hair.

"Let me be the judge of whether you should have come or not," Dr. Hardy said. "I've been a psychiatrist for nearly 30 years, and everyone who has ever come to me has been embarrassed at first." He pulled a chair up and sat down, a notebook and pen in his lap.

"But I'll bet no one has ever come to see you with a problem like mine," Mrs. Arthur said nervously.

"Tell me about it," the doctor said quietly. "I'll stop you if I've already heard it."

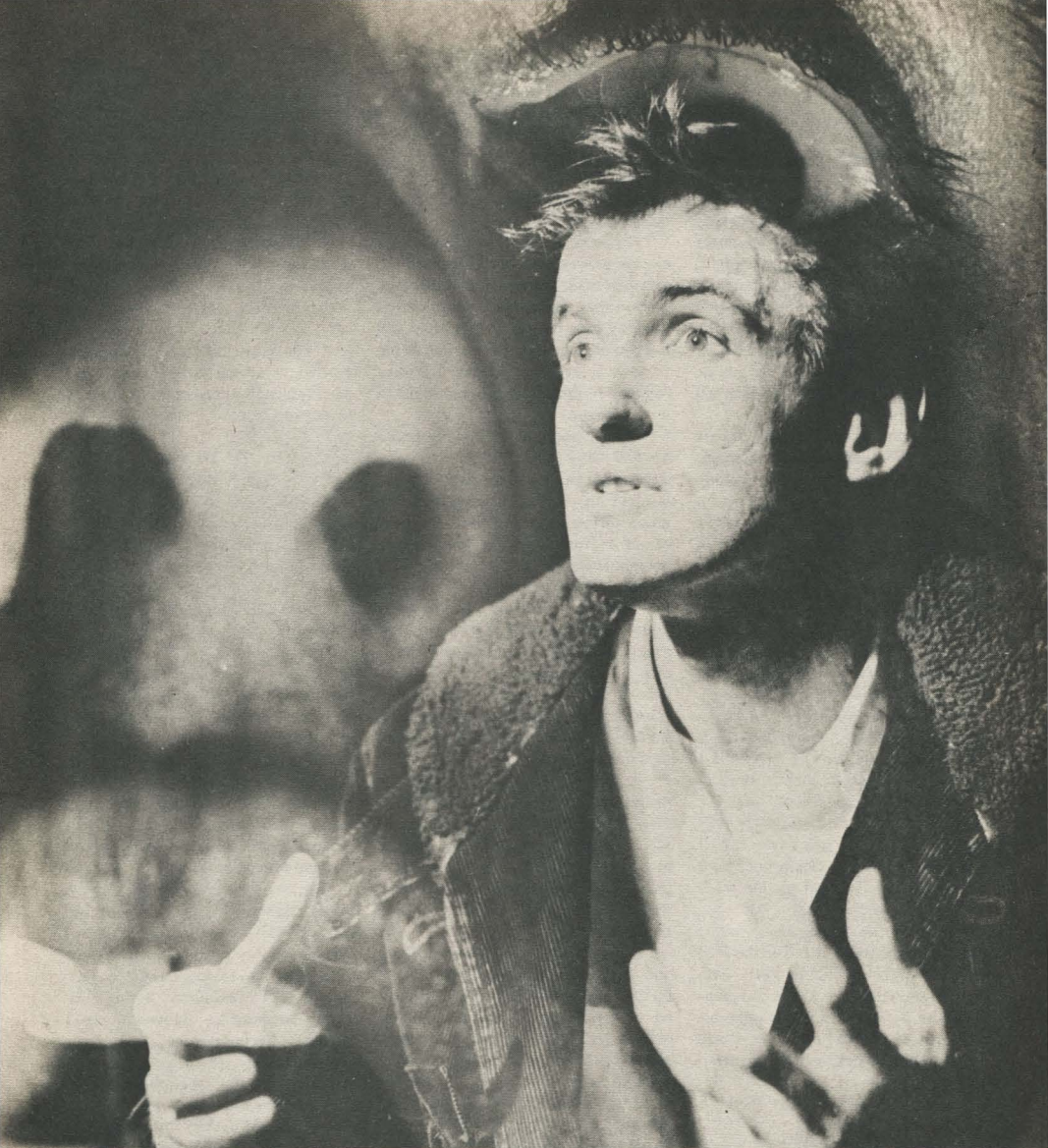
She laughed uncomfortably at his little joke. She couldn't help notice that he was staring at her legs. "My luck, I get a dirty old man for a psychiatrist," she said to herself.

"I believe you're new to this country, aren't you, Mrs. Arthur?" Dr. Hardy asked, his smile revealing strong white teeth.

"Yes, my husband and I have only been in Hungary for three weeks. That's what I came to talk to you about. My husband. I—I think he—"

"Try to relax, Mrs. Arthur. Why don't you lie down? You might find that more comfortable." He pulled his chair up closer to the sofa.

She lay down on the worn leather and smoothed her skirt down. "I married Roger little more than a month ago. I suppose I should have waited longer. I had only



known him for couple of weeks. But there was something over-powering about Roger. Something irresistible. When he asked me to marry him, I couldn't refuse, something forced me to say yes. There was a certain quality about his darkly handsome face, the deep piercing eyes, the seriousness of his manner that made me know our

futures were to be intertwined.

"But suddenly—I really can't say why—I started to become afraid. Afraid of Roger. It began right after the wedding. We left America and honeymooned in a small hotel on the left bank of Paris. It was so beautiful there. But Roger seemed somehow preoccupied and distant. As he car-

ried me across the threshold of our hotel room, a strange look came over his face, a dark and frightening look.

"At first I shrugged it off. I figured I was just another nervous bride. And of course I had reason to be nervous. I had known him for such a short time. But I couldn't help this feeling

Continued

I had—call it a premonition, if you like—that something strange was in the air, something evil.

"We had a lovely swim and then a wonderful dinner, and then we returned to our room. Again Roger seemed aloof and preoccupied. He kept staring out the window, looking up at the moon. It was only a quarter moon, but it was big and bright. I couldn't figure out why he preferred staring at the moon to coming to bed with me.

"Finally he joined me in bed. He had a strange smile on his face as he looked at me and took me in his arms. It was almost a leer.

"He began to kiss me and caress me, and then suddenly he stopped. 'What is this?' he cried, backing away.

"He was referring to the silver cross I always wear on a chain around my neck. It was given to me by my great aunt when I was three years old, and I have worn it every day of my life since then. I guess Roger noticed it because it was reflecting the moonlight that came through our window.

"I explained about the cross to him, but he seemed very disturbed. 'It's nice, very nice,' he said, but I could tell he wasn't being sincere. Roger and I had discussed religion before and, while he wasn't a very religious person, he had never voiced any objection to my being one. So I was completely startled by his reaction to my little cross.

"Anyway, we both soon forgot about it as we made love for the first time. That first week in Paris with Roger was without a doubt our happiest. But on the sixth day, Roger announced suddenly that we were moving here to this small Hungarian village.

"How long must we live there?" I remember asking him.

"For a while" was all he would say. I thought the whole thing a little strange, but I made up my mind that if that's what Roger wanted, I would cooperate as best I could.

"Much to my surprise, when we arrived here, Roger had already arranged for our residence—an ancient castle no less. The kind you read about but never believe exist. I was

surprised to find that the servant staff already seemed to know Roger very well, even though he had told me he never had lived in Hungary before. I knew something was fishy, but I just couldn't ask Roger to explain. I knew he would be hurt to know that I didn't trust him.

"It was nightfall by the time we got all our possessions moved in and the servants made our room comfortable. I remember the full yellow moon that hovered over the castle that night. I'll have to admit that I was excited being in such a large castle, and I looked forward to spending the first night in it with Roger.

"But he suddenly announced that he had to go out on business. He apologized again and again for having to leave me. He kept staring up at the moon through the huge bay windows of our bedroom. 'Roger, how can you have business at this time of night?' I asked him.

"Please. I must go! You just don't understand!" he cried, becoming very angry. I kissed him goodbye to show that I understood, even though I didn't, and he hurried out of the room, leaving me alone with the dark shadows and cold gloom of the castle that was my new home.

"A few seconds later I heard the fluttering of wings. It sounded like a giant bird. I rushed to the window to see if I could see it, but there was no bird outside, Doctor. It was a bat, a giant black bat fluttering away from the castle and into the deep woods that surround it.

"Frightened, I closed the windows and ran into bed, pulling the covers up over my head. I was a little ashamed of myself afterward. Why, these old castles must be filled with bats, I told myself. I decided I was just going to have to get used to them. But my mind was not at all at ease. One thing puzzled me: why hadn't I heard Roger leaving the castle?

"Greatly disturbed, I got dressed and went out into the dark hallway. A few candles offered the only light, giving the grey walls an eerie feeling of shadows upon shadows. A chill went down my back as I made my way down the hallway and into the frontroom.

"The master has gone out,

madame," the butler, who was straightening the front room, told me. There was something threatening in his voice, I thought, but I put it out of my mind.

"I know," I told him. 'Did he take the car?'

"He gave me an odd, suspicious look, his bald head glowing in the candlelight. 'No, madame, I don't believe he took the car.'

"Then how did he travel?" I asked.

"I'm really not sure, madame," he replied, returning to his work. Puzzled, I returned to my room and fell into a fitful sleep.

AS THE DAYS went by, I came to despise this village, Doctor. The people, I found were wrapped in superstition and could talk of nothing but bad omens and dark powers. At first I found their talk merely boring, but it came to take on frightening aspects to me—frightening because of Roger.

"Every night as long as there was a full moon in the sky, Roger would go out on business. 'Please don't question me about it,' he told me. 'Just trust me.'

"How could I trust him? Every night he disappeared without a word of explanation. And then every night I heard the flapping wings outside the castle window, the flapping wings of that giant black bat!

"I was frightened, Doctor Hardy. Badly frightened. I guess I took out my fear on Roger during the day. During the day he was a perfect bus-ban, kind and loving, but I became a real nag. I was bitter because he would not share his nights with me. I was bitter because he had brought me to this awful remote village with all the terrible superstitious, ignorant people. I was bitter because he was so distant and aloof. And I guess I showed it. Several times each day I found myself snapping at him, nagging him.

"He began to get fed up. We began to argue quite a bit. Then one night, something very strange happened. He looked out the window and noticed that a full moon was shining brightly overhead. 'Oh no, now he's going to leave for the night,' I told myself. But

(Continued on page 62)

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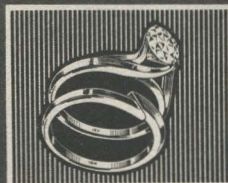
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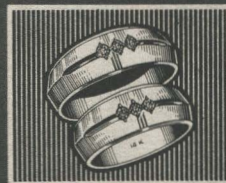
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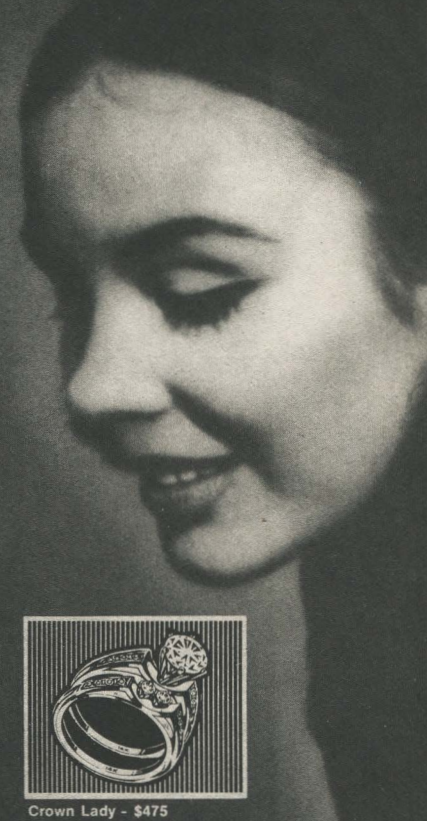
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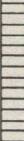
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IT TAKES TWO FOR TERROR

*Beth found herself
the unwilling lover
of a pair of fiends!*

by OBADIAH KEMPH

IT WAS hot, the most humid day of the year. Beth got off the subway and walked slowly down the street to work. "Fry an egg on the sidewalk?" she said to herself, "heck, you could roast a whole ox and have plenty of heat to spare. Thank goodness the Museum is air-conditioned."

Her pace quickened as she approached the Brooklyn Museum. She had only worked there for a little over two weeks, but still her title thrilled her—assistant to the associate curator. Unfortunately it was far more impressive in sound than in actual practice. Her job consisted mainly of long hours' worth of filing three-by-five index cards and cataloging recent acquisitions the Museum received through donations. Still it was something, and would lead to a higher job in curatorship. Friends used to wonder what a beautiful girl like Beth saw in spending her life in a museum, but she loved it. "So old and at the same time, new and exciting," she had said at the job interview. And she meant every word.

This was going to be an exciting day. The Museum had just gotten an ancient Egyptian mum-

my in superb condition from an anonymous donor. This was in itself a bit unusual, for most people gave to the Museum for tax purposes only and wanted it perfectly obvious whom the gift came from. But as her superior, Mr. Long, explained, "Maybe there still are people who love pure scholarship and want to help others learn—with no dollar signs attached." This sentiment suited Beth perfectly and she was glad she had such idealistic co-workers to deal with.

She approached the Museum and walked up the steps. Then greeting a few of the guards she was friendly with, Beth went into her tiny office.

A few minutes later, Mr. Long walked in. "Beth, we've got a really busy day ahead of us and I was wondering if you would mind working overtime for a while. I've got to see what to do about a careless custodian—we've had several complaints about him recently. That should take up most of the morning. Plus we're still a little behind in the filing, and now with our new mummy, I'd like to get caught up."

"I don't mind at all, Mr. Long," Beth smiled back. She could use the extra money. And besides, if they worked fast enough, Mr. Long had promised her that she could help him with the latest acquisition. The mummy had to be measured, checked for authenticity, partially unwrapped, and then carefully photographed. To top it all off, Dr. Helmut Shiller, one of the world's most famous Egyptologists, was in town for a convention of educators and had agreed to come over and offer his assistance.

By working faster and taking a shorter lunch break, they were ready at five o'clock to start with the mummy. It was strange for Beth to be in the Museum after closing hours. She had never realized how huge it was without crowds of people coming in to look at pictures and exhibitions. And even the smallest sounds were magnified by echoes, now that there weren't many objects to absorb the noise.

She went with the curator to meet Dr. Shiller in the main hall. At first she was a little awed by the famous man. But like most people of real talent, he was very humble and was far more interested in hearing what she had to say than in spouting off all his

Continued



The lost-driven creature carried her off in his rotting arms—to share an eternity of living death.



Beth fainted as the man-animal came toward her. He tried to speak but could only growl out his passion.

knowledge. And after five minutes, she was completely captivated by the old man's charm and gentle wit. He was a little wizened man with a high forehead and intelligent, twinkling blue eyes almost covered up by great shaggy eyebrows. And he smoked a long, grandfatherly-like pipe.

The three of them—Long, Dr. Shiller, and Beth—went down to the basement where the mummy was lying in a large crate. Taking two crowbars, the men slowly began taking apart the packing box. And inside, like a jewel resting in cotton batting, lay the outer sarcophagus. Dr. Shiller paused, and wiping the perspiration from his forehead, said, "There will be two more coffins before we hit the actual corpse. Each one will have to be handled carefully."

The second coffin was less elaborate than the first, but in much better condition. Taking sharp knives to cut through the ancient, resin-soaked linen that held the curved box together, they began opening it to expose the inner coffin.

Beth was very excited. Actually she had very little to do, besides handing out tools, but she felt very important. "This is just like opening up a treasure chest," she exclaimed. Long and Dr. Shiller looked up smiling. They too were remembering the first time they had assisted at something like this. "And you know," Dr. Shiller said gently, "each time will be as exciting for you as this one is."

Breathing heavily and working as carefully as possible, they opened the inner sarcophagus. For the first time in three thousand years, the shrouded corpse was exposed to light and air. In hushed whispers, the three peered down into the box. Getting his magnifying glass, Dr. Shiller began to translate the faded hieroglyphics that graced the mummy's shredded tunic. Beth took down his words in shorthand.

"Let's see," the archeologist said thoughtfully. "His name was Ka and he was head chamberlain at the palace. Ah ha, just as I expected. He lived during the height of the Middle Kingdom. A strange time . . . great revival in the occult."

He finished reading the short history and the two men hoisted the body up on a table. It was surprisingly light. "That's because most of the internal

organs were removed during the lengthy embalming period, Beth," Long explained. "And the corpse was completely dehydrated during the sixty days required by law to make a corpse into a preserved mummy. Beth, would you please get my flashlight over there?"

She walked over and picked it up, but on the way back, tripped over a piece of the packing crate and landed face down on the mummy's leg.

Long ran over to help her, but couldn't help noticing a look of terror that lasted for perhaps a fraction of a second before the kindly lines in Dr. Shiller's face resumed their proper shape.

"She's all right, Doctor," Long swiftly assured him. "Isn't that so, Beth?"

"Sure. There's nothing like a mummy sandwich to set you up straight," she said ruefully. "I'm sorry I was such a clod."

"No damage done," said Shiller distractedly. "Except . . . well, I won't alarm you with a lot of superstition."

But both Long and Beth pressed the old man to tell them what he had wanted to hold back.

"If both of you insist, I shall. I didn't translate aloud a certain passage because I didn't feel it had a place in scientific journals. But here it is. True, his name was Ka and he was head chamberlain. But what I didn't tell you was that he was in love with Pharaoh's daughter. The king had him executed for that offense because in Egypt the king and his family were considered to be gods. But Ka had a friend who was a sorcerer. And over his body, this friend placed the following curse: since he was denied love in this life time, Ka will come back to life with a maiden's kiss."

"Well, it's true I am a virgin," Beth felt herself turn bright scarlet. "But I think the rest is pure baloney."

"I quite agree," put in Long. "I've seen a great deal more of the world than both of you young people," the doctor said slowly, "and as Shakespeare said, 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.' But no mind. We still have a lot to do and it's nearly nine o'clock."

The three continued working, measuring, sorting, photographing, as the shadows grew gradually longer and the day began falling into night.

OUTSIDE THE Museum is Prospect Park. Bigger and less known than the more famous Central Park, it stretches for miles into secret copses of trees and scattered shrubs. It's an odd place. In fact some say that strange things live in the outlying areas—things to be spoken of in hushed voices and heads turned constantly away to ward off danger.

A man walked down a little-traveled path in the park. He paced quickly, almost running, as if by speed he were able to shake off a tragic destiny. He turned a corner and stopped a moment to lean against a tree. Panting, he put his hands to his face. And taking them away, he revealed to the incipient moonlight, the features of a young man, lineless, but bowed down by some terrible force. He gave a moan, then crocking his head in the hollow of his elbows, he wept loud, stinging tears. Stopping and lifting up his head, he began to walk slowly, pause, then run. No, not run—lope, canter, almost how one would expect a large dog to behave once freed of the city and allowed to yelp and race in a great meadow far from confinement. The man yipped, cantered, capered over a small grassy knoll. In his brain was the eternal conflict between the natures of man—divine and animal—and his thoughts were a confused fusion of a desire for meat, a knowledge of where he was heading, a compelling force for action.

He began to leap—huge bounding jumps far more animalistic than what the proper city sort of man is allowed to do. Then howl—head thrown back and yellow-blue eyes turned to the moon—he cried to the heavens in his anguish. And into the bushes as he approached a more populated section of the park. Quietly treading, leaving no trail or scent, he sniffed. Human beings! Now with little sounds of pleasure quivering in his throat, he approached the back of the building. Someone had carelessly left open a window in the basement. He squeezed through the tiny opening and stood in the shadows of the room-sized furnace. Human voices, people-smell. Saliva began drooling down his furry jowls. Intently, silently he listened to the semi-argument already in progress.

(Continued on page 38)

**EVIL STRANGER
IN THE
HOUSE OF DOOM!**



A knock on the front door—just a man who wantd a job, a man with a mission to accomplish on Earth!

by NORMAN NICKERSON

THE KNOCK on the door interrupted their dinner. Howard Morgan wiped his mouth slowly with his napkin and then went to see who was there. His wife sat silently at the dinner table, wondering who could be calling at dinner time. She was a small nervous woman, and she rapped her fingernails on the table as she waited.

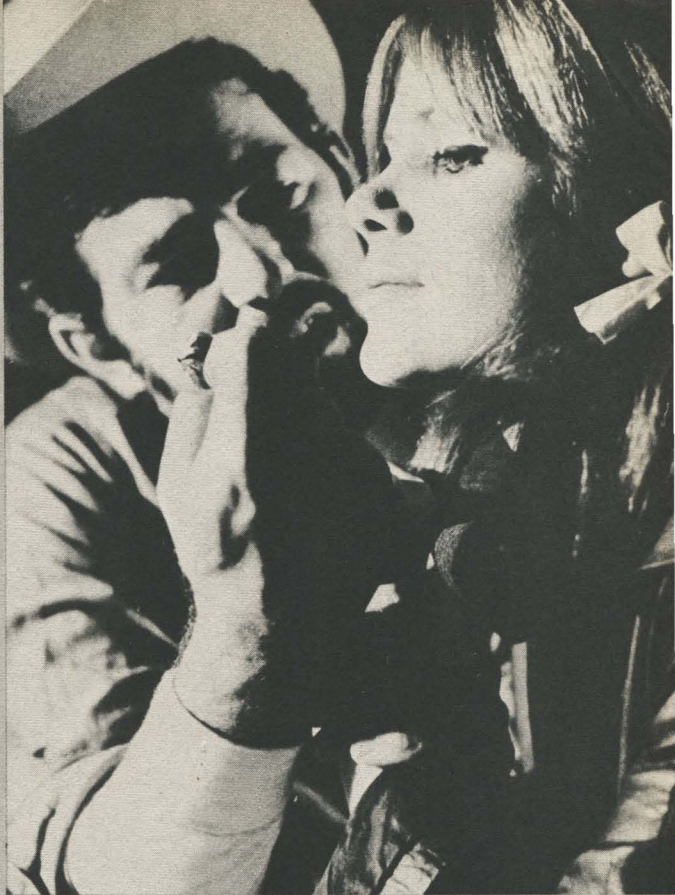
Howard opened the door, letting twilight enter their small farmhouse. It occurred to him that the days were getting shorter as winter approached. From the barn, he could hear the soft mooing of the cows, settling down for a night's sleep. The stranger at the door was dressed in black. He had a small black beard and dark eyebrows that seemed to glow. After the eyebrows, Howard noticed the eyes. They were red and looked hot, like burning coals.

"Yes, what do you want?" Howard asked uneasily. He didn't like the man's appearance.

"I'm answering your ad in the paper for a farm hand," the man said, his eyes seeming to wink darkly as he spoke.

"Ad in the paper?" Howard asked, startled. "I—we haven't put an ad in the paper yet. Our hired man only quit this morning."

The dark, bearded one reached beneath his black overcoat and produced a newspaper. It had been turned to the Help Wanted ads. "Isn't this your ad?" he ask-



"Eternal power, ecstasy, control"—his inviting words hypnotized her soul.

ed, thrusting the paper into Howard's face.

"I can't see in the dark," Howard said. And then reluctantly: "Perhaps you'd better come in. I didn't catch your name."

"My name's Natas," the man said quietly. His eyes glanced from side to side quickly as he entered the house.

Standing beneath the entranceway light, Howard read the Help Wanted ad that Natas had circled in red crayon:

Farm hand wanted for light farm chores. Room and board plus

\$35 a week. Apply 117 Route 61. Howard Morgan.

Howard finished reading the ad, but he stood staring at it for a few minutes after. "This is unbelievable," he said. "I was going to place this ad tomorrow." He called to his wife. She came into the room still holding her napkin. "Marge, did you place this ad in the paper?"

She glanced at it quickly, nervously running her eyes across the page. "No," she said, "you told me you were going to do it."

"Well, I can't help who placed

Continued



the ad," Natas said, trying not to sound impatient. "I saw it and I answered it. Is the job open?"

"Well—" Howard, still puzzled by the mysterious ad, didn't know quite what to say. "You don't look as if you've done much farm work," he said finally.

"Don't let these clothes fool you," the visitor said. "I've done more work on farms than any ten hired hands in these parts."

"Well . . . when can you start?" Howard asked, still not very enthusiastic.

"Immediately," was the reply. "Do I have the job?"

"I guess so," Howard said. "Bring your suitcase in and Marge will show you your room. Marge, this is Mr. Natas. He's our new hired hand."

Marge gave him a shy, uncomfortable smile. His eyes burned into her soul with just a glance. All the while she had the feeling he was staring at her, trying to tell her something with his eyes, something she didn't want to hear. She didn't like him, didn't like anything about him—but at the same time she felt drawn toward him, she felt a strange fascination toward him, just as one drawn to a

curiosity about death—there's a desire to know what it's like without actually coming close to it. All of these feelings ran through her mind and she shuddered, a cold sensation running down her back, as she led him up the stairs to the small room that would be his.

"The bathroom is down the hall," she said nervously, turning on a lamp for him. "There's a radio by the bed if you care to listen."

"I probably won't" he said, setting his small suitcase down on the bed. "I usually spend the nighttime hours in thought," his eyes growing wide as he talked, wide and fiery. "I just let my mind wander. Sometimes it wanders into the most astounding areas. It's a wondrous device, the mind. In imagination a person can do almost anything—and get away with it." He sniggered at this thought, his mouth opening as he laughed, revealing white, pointed teeth. "Do you ever let your mind wander, Mrs. Morgan?" he asked.

"I'm afraid I don't know what you mean," she said, nervously turning to leave. "I hope you'll be comfortable here, Mr. Natas. We usually get up around 5:30. I serve breakfast at six."

"Don't you ever let your mind sail high above this earth, high over the tree tops of this farm, into the vast domains of darkness where good and evil come together?" Natas asked, enraptured by his own words.

"Really, Mr. Natas, you should have been a poet," Mrs. Morgan said with a high nervous laugh. She was angry at her husband for hiring this man, this wild-eyed eccentric.

"You know, the mind flies higher than the body ever can," Natas said, opening his suitcase.

"And by the way please drop the 'mister.' Natas is the only name I go by."

"Goodnight then, Natas," Mrs. Morgan said. She closed the door behind her. Howard was still in the dining room, finishing his dinner. "Howard, why did you hire that man?"

"What's the matter, Marge? What's wrong with him?"

"He's insane, that's all. He kept talking to me about letting his mind fly into unknown regions."

Howard laughed. "Marge, every hired hand we've ever had has been eccentric. Everyone gets to be a little funny working on small farms like this. It's a lonely life and it takes its effect on a man. Don't pay him any attention. I'm sure he'll work out okay. If he doesn't, we'll just simply fire him. It's as easy as that."

Marge nodded, but she wasn't completely satisfied. That night, she lay awake, unable to sleep, seeing again and again, the new man's eyes, glowing red and fiery, beckoning to her, drawing her towards him even though she didn't want to go. All night long she saw the eyes before her, menacing and yet inviting.

MARGE WATCHED from the window as Natas pulled the tractor up to the barn, turned it off, and climbed off. He had been doing some job, she admitted to herself. He had only been working for them for three weeks, but already the farm looked completely different, the fence repaired, the barn painted, the fields ready for winter. Everything had been done quickly and correctly, as if by magic. Howard had been so pleased by Natas' work, he had given him a ten-dollar raise.

All the same, Marge still had her doubts about him. She couldn't stand the way he stared at her at the dinner table. And the insane remarks he was always making about dark kingdoms and strange domains of the mind. Howard, always willing to trust people, shrugged off the remarks as eccentricities, but Marge felt different. At times she believed Natas to be dangerous, but she always scolded herself for thinking so without sufficient reason.

Now, with Howard away for a week attending a Grange convention in Chicago, she felt even more apprehensive. The door opened and Natas entered, wiping the mud off his feet. "Looks like a storm brewing," he said in his deep voice that always sent chills down Marge's back, even when he was speaking of the most trivial matters.

"Are all the animals in?" she asked, already knowing the answer.

"Yes," he said, walking slowly into the living room and sitting down across from her. "Yes, we're all ready. If a storm comes, let it come."

They were silent for a few minutes, neither knowing what to say next. Natas' eyes never blinked, she noticed. How curious. And how strange that he kept them trained directly on her eyes, as if he were staring deep inside her into her very thoughts. She tried to concentrate on something other than his hot coal eyes. His beard. She tried looking at his beard, but her eyes kept going back to his eyes. She stood up and turned her back, but still she was drawn to his face, to his eyes. What was this strange power forcing her to look back into his eerie stare?

She turned to face him. "Natas,

I—" she couldn't speak. He had a strange expression on his face, inviting, ominous—almost inhuman. His black eyebrows glowed above the red eyes. "Natas, you mustn't—"

But she was being pulled toward him. Her entire body was responding to his eyes now. Somehow he had gotten her into his grasp; by some mysterious force she could not resist she was being pulled toward him. The eyes, the big impenetrable eyes, calling her, beckoning, drawing her, forcing her. "I'll come with you, Natas," her voice was saying. It was as if she had no control over it, no control over her body, over anything.

He drew her toward the bedroom, his eyes trained steadily on her. Closing the door, he reached out his long arms and encircled them around her. He felt so warm, she thought. "I am yours, Natas," her voice was saying. Why was she saying that? What was she doing in here with the hired man? She couldn't answer those questions. Her mind refused to focus on anything but the power that was drawing her towards him. "Take me, Natas. Please take me."

He undressed her slowly, pulling her dress up over her head, removing her blouse and bra to reveal small but well-shaped breasts, throbbing with passion, throbbing with desire for him. He slipped her panties down over her ankles, revealing her dark triangle of love. His hands were hot and dry on her body, so hot and dry they felt like steaming hot cardboard instead of flesh and bone.

"Take me, Natas. Possess me."

"You have never known the word 'possess' until now," he said,

(Continued on page 40)

ONE MORE VICTIM CURSE

by MICHAEL PRAETORIUS

"I DON'T believe it," she said resolutely. Her firmness, however, surprised her because actually she was terrified. A certain nameless dread accompanied the words written in the cramped, old-fashioned handwriting and Lucy was completely powerless to shake off a feeling of impending doom. "Here, Janet, put it back with the others."

The old beldame obeyed with her usual glum servility and Lucy was left alone in the gathering twilight of the East Room.

She fell into a reverie, almost against her wishes for she was in no mood to muse over what she had discovered. Ordinarily, the contents of an old journal would have been interesting, but not this time. "Old Alistair MacDowell would have been a lot better off if he were less interested in ghosts, goblins and things that go bump in the night, and had paid more attention to the running of his estate," she muttered, now thoroughly annoyed at herself for having been frightened at the old diary. "Besides, all this nonsense happened over seventy years ago when Janet was a girl. No," she corrected herself, trying to stifle a little giggle that welled up inside her. She couldn't imagine the dour old servant being young. "Well—less old, anyway."

She rose gracefully from the antique writing desk and crossed over to the French windows. The view still impressed her, even though she'd been seeing it daily for nearly a year now. Stately cedars, a rolling lawn, and way off to the side, the houses of the laborers just beginning to be lighted against the oncoming night. It was a beautiful sight and she, Lucy Fisk, was mistress of it all. She let her mind idle carelessly through the events that were still fresh in her memory. True, she was a widow, her elderly husband having died shortly after their arrival in Scotland, but there was no reason for her to return to America—what for? Henry MacDowell had seen her working in a department store in New York and it was love at first sight. And even if the love was one-sided, she at least liked the old man. She missed him a little—sometimes—but was perfectly content to spend the rest of her days as mistress and owner of Kenmore Hall, alone, unescorted, and queen of her domain.

Lucy closed the curtains and turned to light the lamp that stood on a small, carved side table near the window. "Strange," she murmured. "I could have sworn I told Janet to put that book away." But there it was, a small, red morocco leather volume



that matched the rest of Alistair MacDowell's literary efforts. She picked up the book and went to the library to replace it. But at the threshold she paused, gave a gasp, and just as quickly regained control of herself. The rising full moon was casting strange shadows on the floor—in the form of a large "Y". That was exactly how Alistair had

FOR THE COFFIN'S OF HORROR

Long, gnarled hands moved ancient relics away and gently placed the fresh occupant into the old tomb.



described it! She got a lamp from the hall and sat down. "I'm going to get to the bottom of all this nonsense right now." Lucy angrily opened the volume. "Let's see, today is June 24th, Midsummer." She thumbed through the diary until she came to the right date. And reading aloud, she began:

Continued

The young and beautiful mistress of Kenmore Hall awoke with a start—just the wind. And she foolishly went back to sleep!



He gazed with unseeing eyes at his handiwork. The girl was just as beautiful in death as she was in life.



24 June 1898. Unusual occurrence today. One of the tenants heard the howling of a wolf, and as there haven't been wolves near Kenmore in nearly an hundred years, my curiosity was piqued. Upon further inquiry, discovered that the servants had also heard this noise and had claimed to have seen figure of a man walk across the lawn at night. I suddenly remembered an old tale I once heard as a child. Whenever a full moon falls on Midsummer and the light cast through the library window forms a "y", then ghosts come back to life. Found out that Kenmore was built over site of a witches' meeting ground and where the present library stands was once their altar. Must look further into it and ask Janet's grandmother for more information. For an illiterate woman it's strange how much she knows about the supernatural. Must keep my eyes on Janet. An odd child, docile but I fear slightly mad.

Lucy closed the book abruptly. "Well, he was right about one thing—Janet is as crazy as a loon. I'd fire her but she has nowhere else to go. She's one old bag who really gives me the creeps."

She got up and went down to the main dining room. And as usual, she ate alone, with only Janet in attendance. After the meal, she turned and asked the old woman: "Is it true? There's a full moon tonight and it is Midsummer. Will this place be haunted tonight?"

"I couldna say, mum." And Janet silently began clearing off the dishes.

LATER ON in her room Lucy began thinking of another episode the diary had hinted at. Alistair's older brother had married a beautiful girl who died under mysterious circumstances. According to talk in the servants' quarters, she was the lover of the head gardener. They were discovered one night, still coupled and both dead. The brother had escaped to the Continent and was never heard of again. Seven years

(Continued on page 48)

ADVENTURES IN

WITCHCRAFT

by WHITTIER FOWLES, Ph.D., Sc.D.



THE ORIGINS of sexuality in witchcraft are primarily of European tradition, but over the centuries this aspect of the occult has permeated most systems. There are three primary bases for this form of methodology. I—It is a carryover from the ancient Greek and Roman religious practices. II—it is a revolt against the Judeo-Christian religious tradition in which sex is looked upon as an evil and the use of sex in worship is regarded as an outright desecration. III—It is a universal symbolic act of creation and has a long history in "sympathetic magic".

Thus, early practitioners of witchcraft found sex ideally suited to their purposes since sex fitted the traditional belief in magic; it reverted to well-established forms of worship, especially in the rites of Pan, Juno, and Venus; and it gave a simple method to mock the established religion, since Devil worship would, by its very nature, be the opposite of God worship.

However mere historic tradition could not have long endured unless the participants in Satanic rites felt that sexuality gave them definite and provable results. Once they reached the conclusion that it did, the basic reasons for its initial incorporation became far less important. Sex was now used for its own sake, not for the sake of tradition or history.

It is of course totally impossible to categorize all the reasons or methods by which sex is used today. Each group of believers has developed its own theologies and order of rite. But serious students of witchcraft do find that certain generalities—no matter how changed and debased—hold true over a large portion of the occult world.

The passage of human sperm is an agency of great power. How it is used after passage would involve an entire textbook on practices. Secondly, female genital effluents are a second great power. This is an offshoot of oriental demonology. Thirdly, heterosexual acts carried on in commonly unaccepted ways, give high degrees of power, especially when one of the two parties is either a witch or a warlock. In this respect, oral acts are the most common, although almost every other variety of sex act, normal or perverted, has been used at one time or another.

In certain Satanic traditions—not universal by any means, but still of extremely ancient lineage—these forms of oral

sex, both hetero—homo— and lesbian, have been used to transfer power from witch to warlock to the new witch and warlock, the novice acting as the receptacle, the active witch or warlock taking the position of donor. This again derives from oriental tradition where the Chinese idea of Yin and Yang effluents as the prime power carriers go back into the hoary past of thousands and thousands of years. It was adopted by European Satanic and Demonological groupings in Classical Greek eras, and in limited areas, it survives to this day.

Sexuality is also used as a primary method by which the worshippers can receive the devil or his representative within their own bodies. In this aspect, the Satanic spirit, often in the form of an animal such as a dog, a cat, or a goat, mates with the human witch. Thereafter the witch deals out portions of the power received to the congregation through the means of a wholesale orgy. This was common in the middle ages, but as today's witchcraft societies often attempt to become socially acceptable, orgiastic forms of mass worship have gone into a decline.

To date, consulting my notes, I have already listed over 2800 different methods by which Satanists, Demonologists and witchcraft groups have used sex in their general practices. I am most anxious to add to my collection of information in the strictest confidence covering all details of rites, practices and procedures in which sex is used as the power base.

Letters from readers regarding my previous discussion of the control of souls indicate that some of you feel that not enough attention was paid to blood as an ingredient of soul domination.

(Continued on page 38)

FIRST TIME IN AMERICA! EUROPE'S MOST BEAUTIFUL BEST SELLING SEX MANUAL! "The Pictorial Guide To Sexual Intercourse"

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PLEASE NOTE: This book has an important purpose; to teach you how to derive the utmost pleasure, excitement, sensation, ecstasy and satisfaction from sexual intercourse. This satisfaction is necessary for your happiness and will give you confidence in your personal and business life. This book is definitely NOT written for persons seeking cheap thrills or those seeking to "ogle" at pictures of persons engaged in sexual intercourse!

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Letters

Dear Sir:

Do any of you people know anything about practical methods for getting uncursed? Let me tell you what happened. A fellow and I got into a fight in a bar a couple of months ago and I beat him up pretty bad. I don't know whether his wife has powers or not, but she was waiting around in front of my house the next morning when I went to work, and put a bad curse on me. Since that day, I've had nothing but trouble. I got laid off at work; my wife came down with hepatitis and used up my insurance by being in the hospital for a month and won't be well again for a long time; my middle boy got hit by a bat while catching and had a concussion from which he lost the sight in one eye; my house got burgled; and I tripped on a loose board and broke my right arm. Probably that's only a start. The worst trouble is that the people who put the curse on me have now moved away and I don't know where they live, so I can't get the woman to remove the curse. So what do I do? Can you give me any advice? I sure need it.

John X. O'Connor

Dear Sir:

A woman in our town keeps pet bats. A lot of people just say she's a nut, but I'm not so sure. She's

only around and about at night. I've never seen her in the daytime and neither has anybody else. Do you think she's a vampire? I've got no proof, but I think she is. At least it's possible. Are there any signs I can look for?

Blaise Devereux

Dear Sir:

I think you might be interested in a true story of an actual haunted house. This is strictly legitimate. Several societies have investigated it and nobody has been able to explain the manifestations in any way except that they are supernatural. This house was built in 1874. While the man who built it was away in Chicago—he was in Chicago, that was proved—his wife was raped and murdered in her bed. They never caught the man who did it, though it was rumored that it was a man who was having an affair with her. This was never proved, however. Anyway, from then on, every single month in the dark of the moon, this shadowy figure of a naked woman moves through the house uttering cries of pain. It only happens this one day of the month, but it's never failed to occur every month. Nobody's been hurt by the ghost, except one person who got so scared by the sight that he fell over the banister and broke his back. But he did that himself; the ghost didn't. As for the shadowy figure, I saw it once and it did look like a naked woman, though it wasn't very plain and some folks would say it was just a shapeless form, though most people agree with the naked woman story, but the moans and cries of pain are very real. I just thought that you might be interested, since this is 100% proof that the world of ghosts actually does exist.

Peter Caulfield

Dear Sir:

You only write gloomy stories about witches. I can assure you that witches have fun too. I'm a witch and I like to use my powers

to have fun and to play practical jokes. For example, I make up dolls, complete in all details of the guys I know. When I go to a party where these fellows will also be, I carry one or two with me. Then, during the fun, I secretly start stroking the doll's private parts and get a big kick out of seeing the reaction in the fellow who's doll I'm playing with. It's really wild. They get all embarrassed, but there's no way they can stop what's happening to them. That's just one kind of joke I play. There are lots of others. Why don't you write about a fun-loving, sexy witch? If you like I can give you lots of true material.

Harriet VanDooen

Dear Sir:

I thought your story "The Naked Slaves of the Master of Hell" was terrific. It really set me off. I think we need more stories like that one. I could picture how the guy felt who was giving it to those four babes in bondage. I think he went too far in killing three of them and almost killing the fourth one. Murder is all wrong. But a little honest torture never hurt anybody. I don't blame him for giving it to the girls good. That's the way he got his kicks. Women have to expect that. After all, it's a well known fact that women are specially built to take plenty of pain. The reason for this is so that men can treat them that way. It's simple logic.

Luke Muhnhoff

The EDITORS of ADVENTURES IN HORROR are happy to print your comments and any replies that you, our readers, wish to send in to us. Address all letters to:

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ADVENTURES IN THE OCCULT

(Continued from page 34)

Therefore I am now researching that aspect in my library and will report on blood in a future issue. There is certainly no question that this is one of the mightiest aspects of witchcraft in all societies, both in an historical sense and in the practices of today's world.

And if there are any other portions of the witchcraft practices that you readers are interested in, just let me know. I'll be happy to oblige you, wherever and whenever I can.

THE END

TWO FOR TERROR

(Continued from page 25)

"I KNOW, Doctor, but I'm not exactly un-informed in these matters too." Long was sure he was right. "The amulet we discovered between the fourth and last series of bandages is considerably older than the actual mummy. Maybe it was an heirloom that Ka insisted on having buried with him."

And Dr. Shiller was equally positive. "No, my boy. It seems hardly likely that Pharaoh would comply with the doomed man's wishes. I think you've got your dates mixed up."

Beth looked on, fascinated and a little worried. Mr. Long began twitching slightly his left eyebrow—something one of the sub-curators warned her about. Whenever he did that, he was very annoyed. She didn't want to see the two scholars arguing. Then she remembered—"Look," she said as soothingly as possible, "there's a new book that just came in. You were out to lunch, Mr. Long, and I forgot to tell you about it. It's supposedly the most detailed description of ancient Egyptian jewelry in the world. It'll take me a minute to run up to the office and get it. I have to go up anyway because I forgot my purse."

The two men paused in their friendly dispute and thanked her. She walked out briskly, glad to be of some real use, and headed toward the stairs leading to the main floor.

Then something grabbed her from behind. She screamed and tore herself from the hairy grip. Running, panting, Beth felt hot

breath—then suddenly cool air as her dress was ripped away. Shrieking again, she made it safely to the stairs, and hysterically scrambling up, found herself in the dimly-lighted recesses of the old Museum. Turning first one way then the other in her panic, she ran down a long corridor.

Long and Dr. Shiller immediately ran to her aid—but only saw something vaguely resembling a cross between a man and a large dog, bound hastily up the stairs. They heard Beth scream again—but it was far away and the echoes confused its direction. Together they searched frantically, calling, trying to figure out who—or what—caused the disturbance and what had happened to Beth.

THE MUMMY lay quietly on its slab of wood—until the last fleeting footsteps had died amid echoes. Then slowly, painfully, it moved a finger. Rotted bandages cracked, the resin became a mass of a million tiny roadways as the figure sat up. Swinging its ancient legs over the side of the table, it stood, grabbed the bench for support as long-used-to gravity took hold, then steadied itself in the glare of the naked lightbulb fixture.

Racing, moaning in fright, nearly naked from the grasp of the thing that had terrified her in the basement, Beth found herself in an unused section of the Museum. A door leading to the back entrance of the cellar storeroom! She had to get help, must warm the others.

"Mr. Long!" she cried as she cleared a way through dust and shadows, "please help . . . there's some sort of . . ."

But she never finished the sentence. There, standing in front of her, was Ka!

Too frightened to scream or cover her modesty, Beth backed up against the wall. Darkness, as she fainted into the arms of a long-dead thing!

Up in the main hall, the hairy intruder crouched against a pillar

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as he heard and smelled the approach of the two men. He knew perfectly well where the girl had disappeared and was now waiting. But some part of a human mind remained beneath the shaggy exterior. Male—female. Male good—female better! He waited until the men passed him and turning, half-erect, made his bent-spine way toward the basement.

He followed a trail of footprints on the dusty floor until he came to the room. A scent of ancient death exploded in his nostrils and for a moment he was confused. But he shook his head to clear it of the stench—and looked at the thing wrapped in bandages carrying the object of his desire.

Low, angry growl deep in his throat, mouth open, long razor-sharp fangs dripping with saliva, he charged the mummy, who by now had put Beth inside its coffin and stood back. He leapt with all his strength and the impact sent the living corpse flying over the work table.

Ka got to its feet and grasping one of the crowbars used to free it from the packing case, swung wildly at the manbeast. The metal struck home and the creature howled a cry of anguish as yellow-red blood began flowing freely from his mouth. Ka struck again and forced him to huddle in a corner.

But the wolf wasn't about to be vanquished so easily. He sprang up and with a super-mortal leap landed squarely on Ka's ancient chest. Then with bloody teeth, he started gnawing, chewing, biting the mummy with all the animalistic instincts crystal clear in his brain. Ka brought its bulky hands down and around the hairy neck of its enemy and began squeezing life out of the animal. Two figures—cloth-wrapped and hair-covered—rolled around on the floor, each in a death grip that would have easily murdered anything human, each a product of a perverse nature. Bandages flew off, blood splattered and mixed with dust.

Part of the mummy's upper torso was exposed. Dry, ancient leather. The man-wolf attacked his teeth to it but couldn't separate the strans of shriveled flesh from the bones. Down, up, both children of the Devil tumbled, wrestled, fought for the female each wanted to possess.

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ched. The wolf could no more kill the mummy than the Egyptian corpse could put an end to the man-animal. But they were pitted by destiny to fight forever—teeth tearing, choking, death-bound each, but neither would slay the other.

Meanwhile, Long and Dr. Shiller had run the entire length of the Museum in a vain search. Not a trace of Beth or the strange intruder could be found.

"Wait, Doctor!" Long exclaimed. "I've just stepped on something. Here—it's one of Beth's earrings. She must have circled back. Come on—the basement!"

The two men ran for the cellar. They heard sounds of a struggle—low growls, silent scuffling.

They stopped short at the threshold of the work room. In a second Dr. Shiller understood. In a shaking whisper, he said to Long: "These two things want Beth. And they're fighting for her."

"But what can we do? We don't have a gun."

"Guns won't help here. But we do have something each is afraid of. We must call in their mutual enemy."

Dr. Shiller's eyes fell on some cotton batting that was used to wrap the sarcophagus. Careful not to warn the combatants, he slowly sided over to where the waste was lying in a heap. He gathered some into the size of a football. Compacting it and taking a match from his pocket, he set the cotton ablaze.

By this time Long had guessed the old man's intent. He went the opposite way and picked up the still-unconscious Beth and carried her to safety in the hall. Then he ran back to assist the Doctor.

Shiller picked up a piece of packing crate and like a cricket batter, hit the burning debris. It landed between the two creatures.

Ka caught fire immediately—arms waving, silent agony as the stench of burning, shriveled flesh filled the room. It whirled about, trying to flay the flames but its fantastic gyrations only served to aid the oxidation process. A bonfire the size and shape of a human figure stalked, rolled, pleaded.

The wolf howled and backed away, whimpering in fear. Finally as Ka collapsed, the wolf bounded over the falling flames of his adversary and leaped out of the room. Long followed him but the

thing was too fast. In his animal mind he had the instinct to seek fresh air.

The tiny window was still open. He reached it and squirmed through. Then cantering insidiously over the grass, he disappeared into the wilds of the park until even the sounds of his whimpering were lost in the fading night.

Ka continued to burn until nothing was left but a mound of foul-smelling ash. Dr. Shiller sifted through the pile until he found what he was looking for.

"This amulet," he said gravely to Long, who was reviving Beth, "controls everything we saw tonight." Then taking a hammer, he smashed it to bits.

"But what about that other thing," Beth murmured, still in a daze.

"Lycanthropy—wolf-man. It's one of those unexplained parts of natural science that have no place in the modern world. But they still persist. And frankly—I don't know what to make of it."

THE END

HOUSE OF DOOM

(Continued from page 29)

his face contorting into an evil, demonic grin. "Now you shall be possessed, fair lady."

She lay back on the bed, not bothering to pull down the bedspread. As he approached, the room turned black. The storm outside, she thought. But the blackness was too all-enveloping, too thick to be caused by the storm. She was drowning in blackness, unable to see, unable to feel anything. Then suddenly he was upon her. She couldn't see him. She could only feel the hot dryness of his body, the intense heat, the powdery dry skin. He entered her and she began to toss about wildly in the darkness. "So hot, so hot! I can't stand it!" she cried. The heat of his body, the heat of him inside of her was unbearable. "Help! Help! someone, please!" Twisting and tossing, wild heated contortions of pain. Would he never stop? It seemed like hours in the thick blackness, her body being violated by this—this—what?

She must have passed out. When she came to, the light had returned. Natas was standing fully dressed over her, an evil grin on his pale, yellow face, the eyes still piercing into hers. "Now, you are mine," he said, and

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she knew she had been taken by the devil.

THE NEXT DAY after he had made love to her again, after she had recovered from the heat of his body, he said to her, "The mind is always ready to enter the regions of darkness and sin. It is the light the human mind shies away from."

She stared at him in silence, still feeling the pulsating warmth through her possessed body. He continued: "You stand at the gateway of my kingdom, the kingdom of eternal passion. You have sampled the dark fruit. You stand ready to escape from your dreary farm, to leave your trivial life of dullness behind. But you are not yet truly mine."

She looked up into the demonic red eyes, feeling helpless and defeated. "What is left for me to do?" she asked. "How may I be truly yours?" She didn't want to say those words. They escaped from her mouth by some unknown source. She no longer had control of her thoughts or words.

"You must prove your worthiness of the black world of eternity," he said. "You must kill Howard."

Kill Howard? Kill Howard? The words repeated themselves in her head, ran through her mind like strange animals without a name, dotted her consciousness without being identified. What did the words mean? What was he asking her to do?

Thunder shook the small farmhouse. Torrents of rain beat against the window. The air turned cold, the wind howling across the desolate fields, beating against the shutters, pressing against the fragile windows.

"Mortals make such a big thing of love," Natas sneered. "To them it is the be-all and cure-all of existence. They prize it over everything, poor fools. They seldom if ever realize that evil supercedes all love, that the source of life as well as its highest achievements is evil, based in evil, born in evil, consummated in evil. Never, my dear, believe that love can conquer evil. Do you understand?"

"Never believe that love can conquer evil," she repeated, hypnotized by his voice, by his words, by his eyes, by the sounds of the thunderous storm outside.

"To enter the dark kingdom, you must kill Howard. Evil must triumph in your soul as it has in



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your body."

"As it has in my body," she repeated. "Evil has triumphed in my body."

"You have experienced the lust of Satan. Now experience the evil of his domain," Natas said. Thunder shook the house again.

"Evil," Marge repeated, drifting into a dazed sleep.

HOWARD YAWNED as he pulled the car up to the side of the house. The long convention had been followed by the lengthy drive home, and he was ready for a long rest. As he climbed out of the car, he smelled the fresh, moist air. "We needed a good rain," he said to himself. He took a quick survey of the farm as he walked to the front door. It looked good. "Must remember to compliment Natas," he said.

Marge wasn't at the door to greet him. He thought it strange. She always came running to the front porch when he only went in to town on a shopping errand. He opened the door and called to her. No reply.

"Marge, are you home?" Where else could she be? And what was the strange odor in the dining room—almost like sulphur.

"Here I am, Howard," he heard a woman's voice say. It sounded almost like Marge's voice, but it was lower, older. He turned to see her standing on the stairs to the second floor.

"Hi, Marge. I'm sorry it took me so long. The storm washed out a bridge down the road and—"

She was holding a pistol in her hand, the pistol he had given her to protect herself from prowlers. "Marge, what in God's name—"

The look on her face—the strange stare of her eyes—what had happened to his wife? And where was Natas? Was he responsible for this? Had he hypnotized her or something?

"Listen, Marge, stop a minute. This is sil—"

She stepped down the stairs, keeping the gun trained on him. Closer she came. Closer. Her eyes peered into his, evil eyes, conquered eyes. She walked right up to him and stuck the pistol into his chest.

"Okay, Marge," he said, completely baffled, completely uncomprehending. "Go ahead. Pull the trigger. Kill me. I don't know why or what made you decide. I thought we were happy. I thought we had a good life together. I don't know what's come over you.

But if it must end this way . . ." He was stalling for time, trying to think of a way to get the gun from her.

"Pull the trigger," a voice called from the stairway. Howard saw that it was Natas. "Don't wait. Pull the trigger."

Howard realized he was going to die. It would do no good to get the gun away from Marge. Natas would just complete the job for her. How had Natas convinced her to do this?

"Marge, I just want you to remember one thing," Howard said, the gun pressing into him. "I love you. I love you, Marge."

As he said the words, her expression changed. She smiled at him and pulled the gun back slightly. "I love you, Marge," he repeated. "I love you." The words seemed to be having a good effect.

"Pull the trigger now!" Natas called. "Pull it, Marge."

"I love you, Marge. I love you, Marge."

She dropped the pistol. "Quickly, Howard," she cried. "Run."

He grabbed her hand and they made a dash through the living room door. Without turning around to see if they were being followed, they ran out onto the fields, running through the wet mud, past the barn and out onto the back fields. "I love you, I love you," Howard kept repeating. Somehow his words had brought Marge back to her senses.

Suddenly they heard a huge explosion. They turned around to find their house in flames. Another explosion. The barn burst into flames. In a few seconds the entire farm was burning.

"He's taking his revenge," Marge said, holding Howard's hand tightly.

"Revenge?" Howard asked. "I don't understand."

"I proved him a liar," Marge said. "I exploded his theory just as he exploded our farm. He was wrong, Howard. That's all that matters. 'Natas' is 'Satan' backwards."

They watched as their home burned down to the ground. Somehow it didn't matter. "I proved him a liar," Marge kept repeating, and smiled. Their farm was burning, but Marge knew the day had been victorious.

"Once we start rebuilding, we'll need a new hired hand," Howard said, starting to laugh.

"This time you'd better let me

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place the ad," Marge said.

Howard nodded agreement as he watched the black smoke curl up to the heavens. THE END

BONY FINGERS

(Continued from page 12)

" . . . And to my sons Arnold and Richard, I leave the major portion of my estate. They are to take full possession and full title after following the simple instructions they will find in the top drawer of my desk. Until these instructions are carried out, the money shall rest in its hiding place—which cannot be divulged by any living human being, and shall become known only after they have carried out the instructions in my desk drawer . . ."

Arnold and Richard gave each other puzzled looks and sat nervously, eagerly awaiting completion of the will's reading.

After a while, everyone had left, the house creaking the only sounds remaining. "Just like the old buzzard to make us work for our money," Richard said. "It was a big enough hassle killing him. Now what do we have to do?"

The envelope in the desk drawer was yellowed and wrinkled. It had obviously been written many years before. Richard eagerly ripped it open and read the instructions:

"My dear boys, this may come as something of a surprise to you, but I'm sure the thought of sharing my millions will help you get over the shock. Many years ago, a man sold me a miraculous secret—something known only to a few living souls. The secret cost me a pretty penny, but I haven't been eager to test it because it required that I first die. But now that I am dead, I believe it is time to see whether the secret was worth the fortune I paid for it. Here are your instructions, for indeed I need your help, just as you need mine to get your money. Before I am dead a week, you are to dig up my body and bring it to the basement office. There you are to remove the contents of an envelope, which you will find in the breast pocket of the suit I am buried in. You are to take the powder you will find in this envelope and mix it with a solution I have already prepared and kept in a jar in the basement refrigerator. Then you are to pour the solution down my throat. I

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know this must sound bizarre and grotesque to you my sons, but by doing it, you shall receive the reward you so richly deserve."

"Wow," Arnold said. "The old man must have been totally insane!"

"The reward we so richly deserve," Richard said hungrily. "It's crazy, all right, but who cares?"

"I care," Arnold said. "I don't want to dig him up. I don't want to have to look at him again. I don't want anything to—"

Richard grabbed his brother by the arm. "Okay, get out then. If that's the way you feel, why don't you just leave?" They looked at each other. "But of course you won't," Richard said. "Because you're just as greedy as I am. So shut up and let's follow the old man's instructions."

THE MOON offered the only light as they walked out to the family cemetery carrying shovels. The wind seemed to pick up as soon as they got out to it, and somewhere off in the distance a dog howled for its master. They both shuddered as the cold air pressed against their bodies.

"The earth is still soft," Richard said, taking the first shovel load. "It won't take us long."

Arnold didn't say anything. He knew there was nothing he could say to discourage his brother from following his father's instructions. His shovel dug down into the soft dirt, and the two of them continued shoveling until they struck the oak casket.

"Just a few more minutes and we'll have him," Richard said, a strange, almost eerie excitement in his voice. "I don't imagine he'll look too pretty, but we won't mind, will we?"

Arnold didn't answer. He just kept shoveling. The dog continued to wail in the murky distance and if the noise disturbed them both, they didn't mention it.

The coffin was heavy. "Damn him, he would have an oak casket," Richard muttered, straining every muscle in his body as he dragged it out of the grave. "Give me a hand with this. We'll take it right to the basement." Arnold grabbed the other end, lifted it to his shoulder, and they carried it through the dark night back to the house in which

the old man had spent his life.

"Let's pry it open," Richard said eagerly.

"You do it," Arnold said. "I can't bear to look."

"We're a team, remember?" Richard taunted him.

Reluctantly Arnold joined his brother, and the two of them pried open the casket. As the lid swung open, it revealed what looked like a pale grey imitation of their father. "Looks like he's already starting to rot," Richard said, and then he laughed. "The most rotten always rot fast," he said. Arnold didn't join in the laughter. He was staring at the blotchy grey skin of the corpse, already flaking in some places, the pale corpse, drained of all fluids, dry and powdery and still.

"I've got the envelope," Richard said, reaching into the dead man's coat pocket. "Go get the solution in the refrigerator."

Arnold left, only too anxious to get away from the sight of his father's decaying corpse. The house creaked and he jumped, frightened, his heart pounding in his chest, his mouth dry. He removed the solution from the refrigerator, almost dropping the quart jar in his haste and nervousness.

"Careful!" Richard snapped. He emptied a white powder from the envelope into the quart jar. It fizzed and foamed and then settled into a green, thick liquid. "Now what do we do?" he asked.

"The instructions say to pour it down his throat," Arnold said, feeling waves of nausea come over his body. "Richard, I don't know if I can go ahead with this. I think I'm going to be sick."

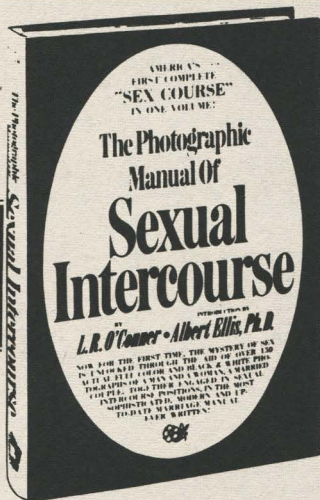
"Shut up!" Richard tried to control the quiver in his voice. "We've come this far, you lily-livered idiot! You're not going to spoil it for me! Now pry the old man's mouth open!"

Arnold hesitated, then realized he had no choice. Holding his breath, trying to pretend he was somewhere else doing something else, he went over to the corpse. Reluctantly he reached out his hand and touched the old man's mouth. It felt cold and dry. His lips were blue.

"Go ahead, Arnold, pry it open," Richard yelled.

Arnold reached out and started to pry open the mouth. It opened more easily than he thought it would, revealing gums that had turned green. Several teeth fell out as the lifeless mouth came

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open. The tongue had shriveled into a brown, prune-like ball.

"Here goes," Richard said, tipping the jar forward into the decaying mouth. The green liquid poured slowly, taking several minutes for the jar to empty. All the while Arnold, his hand trembling, held the powdery dry jaw and watched the liquid roll down the shriveled throat.

"The old man must have believed this would bring him back to life," Richard chuckled, watching the last of the liquid go down. "What a fool he turned out to be. What a sucker. Some guy took him good!"

"I just don't see how this is going to get us our money," Arnold whined, stepping back from the corpse.

"You heard what the old fool said. This will get us the reward we so richly deserve." Richard stepped back too. "There must be further instructions somewhere," he said. "Probably another envelope."

"No, Father must have thought he'd come back to life long enough to tell us where the money is," Arnold said.

The eyes of the corpse blinked open. The blue mouth twitched.

"OHMIGOD!" Arnold screamed.

The eyes blinked again. One arm began to lift itself, then the other. Both brothers stood in amazement, their eyes rivetted to the corpse which was pulling itself out of the casket, losing patches of skin in the effort.

"So here we meet again, boys," a whispery voice that sounded more like the wind than a human voice. "So here we meet again."

"Father, uh..." Arnold didn't know what to say, couldn't speak.

"Father, we brought you back to life!" Richard screamed frantically.

The corpse jerked awkwardly toward them, knocking over the quart jar, stepping over the pieces, whole areas of flesh falling off its face and hands as it moved forward. "My boys..." the corpse whispered. "My boys..." walking closer and closer.

"My boys..."

Arnold and Richard stood glued to the floor. They couldn't move, they couldn't believe their eyes. "Father, we—"

"My boys..." came the hoarse whisper, dry as leaves, "my boys... YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE KILLED YOUR FATHER!" The

corpse grabbed each of them with a stinking arm—an arm not weak and decayed—but like steel, strong as a vice. The old man's corpse grabbed them around the neck, clamped their heads into a vice-like hold, and squeezed with the force of ten live men.

Choking and gasping for air, the brothers struggled to free themselves, but the revived corpse was too strong for them. Struggling to breathe, they twisted and moaned, but they could not get away. Within seconds, they had suffocated, much as their father had but a few days earlier. As soon as they stopped struggling, the corpse let their still bodies fall to the basement floor.

"The rewards they so richly deserve..." the whispery voice said, and the corpse collapsed to the floor alongside the two brothers, a pleased look on its grey face.

THE END

COFFIN'S CURSE

(Continued from page 33)

later, according to law, Alistair had inherited the property and had begun his journal.

"I think the whole family was crazy and thank God Henry didn't get me pregnant. That's just about all I need now—a half-batty kid running around who claims to see ghosts in the night and wolves howling off in the distance. Janet is nut enough for this household, thank you. Although goodness knows I'm far from against you-know-whatting. In fact that stable boy I hired last week is sort of cute. Oh well," she yawned, "there's plenty of time for that in the future."

She drifted off into a pleasantly-erotic sleep, dreaming of the young man, while all of Kenmore Hall settled down to rest.

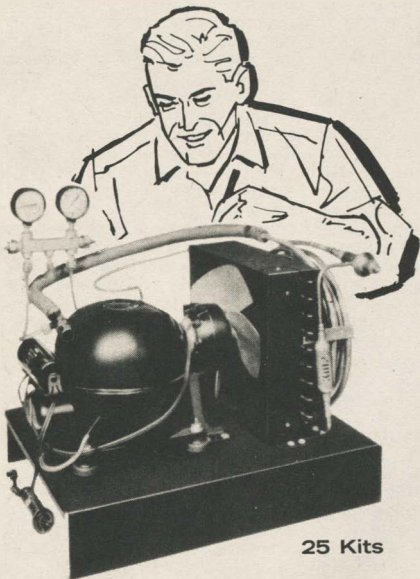
All, that is, except for Janet. What was she doing out there in the garden with a candle? Looking for night crawlers? Perhaps, perhaps. Or going to visit a sick tenant? Highly commendable but very unlikely for the farmers were more than half-frightened of her—called her a witch and a devil worshipper. And as far as they were concerned, any nursing done by Janet would surely lead to the grave and not away from it. But still Janet was out in the garden and there was that candle. She carefully shielded it from the

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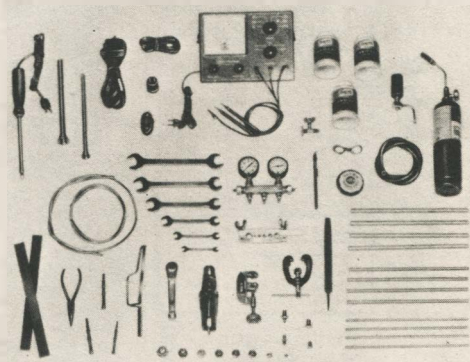
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fresh breeze that sprang out from nowhere. And wind billowing her skirts, she headed back to the house, her errand apparently over.

Lucy woke up hours later, her brow covered with cold sweat and her heart hammering. "Dear God, what was that?" She clutched the bedclothes to her shaking breasts and listened intently. Silence. Then broken by a light tapping on the window pane. Later a scratch as if a branch were gently being scraped across the glass by the wind. Or a finger nail lightly caressing cold transparency to see what was glass and what was open space. Again, pause, and again. All was quiet and once more Lucy heard the faint sound. It was just behind the heavy brocade curtain. She rose from the bed, the hard floor reminding her that this was no dream, and quickly drew back the curtain—nothing! "Just the wind," she sighed gratefully. "I've been reading too many of those diaries. Tomorrow I'll have them burned. Silly things—as if I weren't already surrounded by the past enough as it is. And I think I'll get one of these clever young men from Edinburgh to do over a few rooms. Put a little life into this place." Lucy closed the curtain and marched back to bed. She fell asleep immediately.

In the library things were quiet too. Paintings of various sombre ancestors continued to stare off into space; all the doors and windows were sensibly locked; and the ancient pianoforte had its old-fashioned cover of embroidered flowers tucked primly into place. In fact there was just one object to mar the perfect nocturnal tranquility of the room, only a single element slightly out of place. Maybe moonbeams dancing in the dark recesses of the library, but perhaps also the figure of a man standing, watching, waiting, staring intently at the moon-cast sign on the dark oaken floor.

The shadow moved—it was of a man—but nothing like anything ever seen in this century. It walked. Siftly at first, with a halo of cobwebs about his head, the spectre made his way toward the door leading to the hall. Then with a slight pressure of a time-cracked hand, he turned the knob and opened the door. The hallway was in utter darkness—no frivolous moonbeams ever entered to destroy the solemnity of its

echoing silence—but the man-figure glided as if he were well-used to traveling in complete blackness. Then up the main stairs, more quickly now but still with a stately cadence that implied power over time and the fleeting moments of earthly life, he climbed. At the landing he paused, turned about, reassuring himself that all was as it should be, then resumed his ascent.

Then down the long passage on the second floor. Footsteps thudding in airless space. A mirthless laugh and then another giggle escaped from the dusty throat as his hands glided, touched, caressed well-known objects—pictures, chairs, suits of armor—and brought him to rest beside a closed door. The door. He reached up, embracing time-worn moulding, then brought his arms down to the knob. And like an old woman painfully curtseying, the door opened.

"DEAR JESUS—no!" Lucy snapped into consciousness with a start. Each beat of her pounding heart brought her to the brink of fainting, but she fought off grateful oblivion as strongly as she clutched on to sanity. She screamed but the figure in the doorway stood immobile, gave another chuckle deep in his throat, and approached the bed.

Lucy jumped up but tangled in the bedclothes and fell heavily to the floor. Sobbing brokenly now, she struggled frantically to free herself from the binding cloth. The sound of ripping muslin and she was able to get up. Slowly easing herself around the bed until she was clear of it and next to the windows, she covered against the brocade curtains. "Somebody—please help me!" she wailed, but something in the room seemed to absorb the sounds of her own terror. She screamed again but the pounding in her ears drowned it out. She pushed the hair out of her eyes with a shaking hand. Carefully now Lucy circled around until she felt the carved sides of the armorie jut into her back. The figure still came forward—it was trying to speak. He stopped and shuddering from the effort he was making, the apparition managed to rasp out: "Love." With a frantic bolt Lucy ran past him and into the comparative freedom of the hall. Long brown hair fling, she raced, her naked footsteps serving as an airy counterpoint to the heavy

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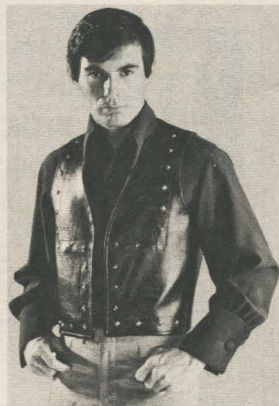
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treads of the spectre following her.

She turned a corner—Christ! Her nightgown caught on a spear belonging to a suit of ancient armor standing in the passageway. Frantically she pulled, but the thin wisp of cloth refused to budge. Then turning her head, she saw the approaching shadow disturb the purity of the moonlighted wall. Sobbing, she stripped herself, then taking the antique, pointed staff, she walked backwards—intending to face her tormentor. The ripped nightgown hung limply—tournament token of a slain knight and his unfaithful lady.

The spectre turned the corner and Lucy backed away quickly. Their eyes met. Dull, unseeing pitted against alive, tear-stained—pleading silently but going on long-deaf ears.

She turned to run—then the stairs! She had forgotten about them. With a despairing shriek, she pitched over the abyss. Each marble step crushing her body until in a frenzy of movement she dimly felt cold steel under her breast. Then in a fraction of a second—eternal darkness as she experienced the ultimate agony of death.

Now her eyes were dull, unseeing; and the others, though alive no longer, were tear-stained. "Love," croaked the rusty voice again.

And the door opened at the foot of the stairs. Janet with her candle. She looked at Lucy's nude corpse, then up at the phantasm, and nodded silently. Taking a naked, bruised foot in each hand, she dragged the still-warm corpse through the years, out into the garden and beyond where the cedars grew, where it would rest.

Half ruined by time and helped on by the gradual extinction of an ancient line, crouched the mausoleum. Janet reached into her apron and took out a ring of keys. Wordlessly she inserted the correct one and opened the complaining door. Then with the spent strength of a tottering old woman, she pulled the body in behind her.

Prying open the casket, Janet moved the few bones and shreds of stinking cloth, all that remained of the first occupant, and tenderly gave it a new tenant. Then with a slight beck of a wrinkled finger, she bade the figure approach. It glided to where she had pointed.

"Ye hae killed another, auld

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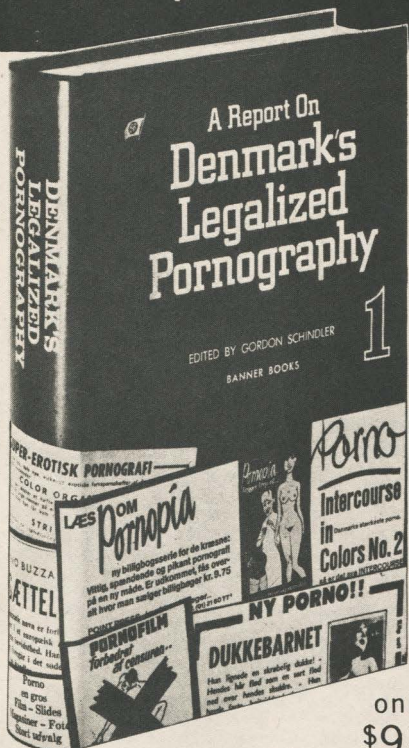
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Alistair MacDowell, just like ye did yer brother's wife. I canna stop ye as I couldna help the poor lassie here. I hae no power. I be an auld woman but I still hae strength to do what has to be done."

She permitted the spectre to stare unseeingly at the body of the girl. Then she began. Raising herself to her full height, she said the ancient, frightening words: "In nomine domine te exorcizo. Fugant omnes animae noctis pro luce coelesti tua. In the name of God I exorcise thee. May all the spirits of the night flee before Thy heavenly light."

She said the incantation twice more and at each repetition, the ghost shrank back until he settled into his own dark coffin next to Lucy's. Janet closed both the lids and wept.

She is the mistress of Kenmore now. And the tenants still continue to be afraid of her—a witch, a worshipper of devils. Sometimes her light can be seen in the garden, watching, waiting for something. And sometimes she plays the old pianoforte in the library, dances down the steps with ancient grace and waits patiently for the next return of her master.

THE END

PRIESTESS OF SATAN

(Continued from page 8)

curves of their neighbor, Dorothy set her lips and said nothing, although she mentally cursed Selena for luring her into this situation.

But Dorothy had no chance to protest. Her husband, lured as if by a magnet, was already propelling her through the door, following Selena into the living room, where their hostess indicated that Hal should take a seat. "We'll only be a minute," Selena told him, "while I show Dorothy where to put her things."

"We're set up in one of the upstairs bedrooms," Selena said as soon as she had Dorothy out of earshot. "You go into my room and change. Don't worry about Hal. From the look in his eye, I can keep him occupied till you're ready. And don't be a ninny. If he makes a pass at me, it'll at least occupy his attention till we're ready for the ceremony. Besides," she laughed, "let him get in one last feel before he's immobilized forever. And oh yes," she added, "just wear the white robe—nothing else. You have to

be completely and absolutely naked underneath. As you probably know, in ceremonies of this kind both the witch and the donor—you're the donor—are required to be absolutely in the nude. Just come back to the living room and let me know when you're ready. Then we can proceed. And don't get excited if you see him with me. It doesn't mean anything. Believe me, I'm not trying to double-cross you. OK?"

"OK," Dorothy sighed. "I suppose it'll be all right."

Dorothy had to suppress a shudder as the smooth white cloth touched her bare flesh. There was something slimy and evil about it, a warm damp that seemed to permeate right through her body. But she steeled herself and forced herself to wrap it around her and tighten the white, thick belt at her waist.

When she got downstairs again, however, her knuckles turned white as she ground her nails into

fight birth defects

JOIN

MARCH OF DIMES

her palm at what she saw. There was her husband, Hal, in a tight embrace with Selena, lips together in a passionate kiss;

Dorothy gave a slight cough. Selena turned toward her smiling, while Hal looked annoyed at the interruption. He sat back, breaking a little from the witch.

"Don't you think we should get started," Dorothy said.

"Of course," replied Selena. "Oh Hal, we have something to show you upstairs. I think you'll find it quite interesting."

Hal looked at her quizzically, but Selena stretched lazily, like an oversized cat, then carefully and obviously moving Hal's hand from her body, she stood up. "Come along now," she said.

DOROTHY GASPED as she reached the room upstairs. Other than a single spotlight, illuminating an obscenely shaped post, it was bathed in shadows. Several indistinct figures were seated in a circle around the post, heads bowed in apparent prayer.

As the threesome came to the door, two of the figures jumped up and faced them. Dorothy recognized Selena's husband, Walter, and another man from the neighborhood. They walked toward her, purposefully.

"Just relax. They're your escorts," Selena whispered.

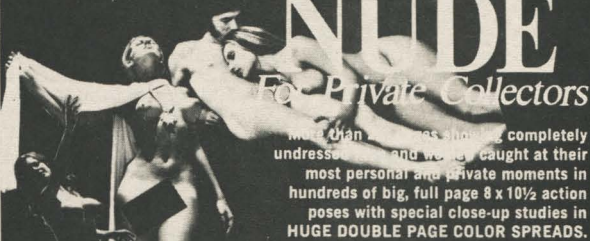
Dorothy nodded, as the men fell into step beside her, seized her arms and led her toward the post in the center of the room, where they backed her against it. Then suddenly, Dorothy felt a rope being passed around her waist. Before she could interfere, she was bound securely, her arms free, but nevertheless a prisoner.

The men stepped back. And then, from somewhere distant, the music started, a low, ululating wail that filled the room from every direction. It pierced the ears, drowning out all other sounds, all other thoughts in an overpowering sense of abject misery.

The spotlight dimmed. The shadows faded together. Dorothy could no longer tell which were human figures, which were inanimate objects, as the entire room seemed to take on a personality of its own, endowing every awful line and curve with life, life that leapt and grinned and threatened.

The light went out. The blackness was overpowering, in-

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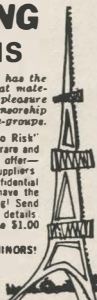
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ky, complete, a thick black blanket that smothered the senses, filled the nose and lungs and sent the brain reeling.

She smelled a whiff of smoke. It was an odd smell, sickly sweet, yet oily, a wretched perfume that stuck in her nostrils, invaded her throat and made her want to gag. It grew stronger, and nearer, as a deep red hue appeared in the distance, approaching her, nearer and nearer, till she practically wanted to scream from the terror of it all.

And then, just as the tension built almost to the point of no control, she could see. Selena was approaching, a Selena such as she had never seen before, naked, her breasts bouncing as she writhed in sick and perverted motions, her naked hips thrusting their deep patch of black up toward her in a horror of obscene bumps. Selena's hair was wild—uncombed, hanging loose, yet coiled like snakes, a whole garden full of snakes growing like monsters from her skull.

In her hands was a tray that she carried as if it were loaded with gold or precious stones. Around the corners of the tray were candles. And in the center a huge object, covered with a purple cloth.

Slowly, step by step, Selena wriggled closer to her, now holding the tray high above her head. Selena's breasts were thrust forward, her nipples erect and hard, jutting like brown cones set in a circle of deep dun earth that gleamed against the dead whiteness of the huge and bouncing hulks of spongy flesh. Closer and closer they came, these inch-long nipples, thrusting toward Dorothy, who shrank back against the post, in a forlorn effort to avoid the touch.

It was useless. She felt those rock-hard nipples grind against her, seeking out her own, like twin magnets that could not be denied. Dorothy shuddered, as her own breasts, almost of their own volition, stretched out to meet those of her tormentor. She felt them harden as her own soft nipples seemed glued against Selena's.

For an instant, she felt one of Selena's hands glide between her own milky thighs and come to rest on the moistness that was gathering there. And then Selena drew her hand away, reached up to steady the tray she bore, and brought it down, just below the

level of Dorothy's eyes. Hands reached out, how many Dorothy couldn't even begin to count, grasped the purple shroud and yanked it free.

Dorothy moaned in disgust. The huge, putrescent flesh of a goat, odiferous, vile, yet terrifyingly obvious, rested there, like a gloating symbol of all pervading sexuality.

Selena spread her legs in a gesture of disgusting revelation. Then she raised the tray on high.

"Oh symbol of Satan," she intoned, "this is your temple, your home. We your slaves are here before you, ready to obey your slightest whim. Fill our hearts with evil, our souls with fury and our bodies with lust. Come and enter us that it shall be you and you alone who shall take possession of our bodies. What we do, you shall do; what you desire, we shall do. We offer you the soul of this, your novice and recruit. We offer you her body. We offer you her flesh. We offer you her blood. We offer you her desires. We offer you her will. Take them, they are yours."

And then, as a pair of hands snatched away the tray, Selena stretched out her hands and ripped the gown from Dorothy's body. It didn't seem possible, but the robe appeared to pass freely through the rope that bound her body.

The lights blazed on, full and dazzling. Dorothy saw that everyone in the room was nude, even her husband, Hal. She tried to see their faces. She recognized at least a dozen people, friends, neighbors, acquaintances. But her eyes were riveted below their waists, where all of them, men and women alike showed signs of passionate arousal.

The figures rose and formed a circle around her, each with one hand behind the back, the other reaching out toward her.

The music swelled into a slow but steady drumbeat that started below the wailing flutes, then gradually got stronger and stronger.

The circle tightened, as they stepped toward her, closer and closer. And then they were upon her, twelve of them, six men, six women. She was the thirteenth. The circle closed tight. The hands touched her, stroking, kneading, exploring, entering her every intimate part, never stopping, never leaving, fluttering endlessly.

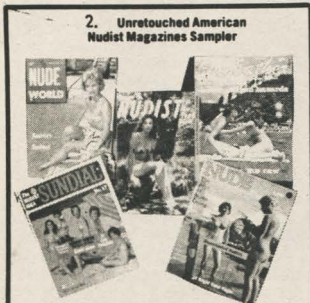
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ped with a terrific crash of symbols. The circle stopped. Dorothy saw the menace in their eyes, but her throat was parched and dry. No sound came to her lips.

The hands behind their backs shot clear, and before her eyes, a dozen flashing stilettoes gleamed, danced in the fiery light. For an instant they paused, suspended in mid air. Then they flicked lightly at her body, nicking, cutting, slicing.

Blood trickled forth, gathering in tiny red bubbles, then slowly started to flow across her skin.

The faces of the throng were wreathed in demoniacal fury. They grinned evilly, then one by one they struck at her, like so many snakes, their mouths touching her skin, each fastening on a wound and sucking in the blood. It dripped and drooled across their faces.

Dorothy felt her head becoming light and weak. The room was reeling and jumping before her eyes. In spite of herself, Dorothy felt the excitement building toward a climax.

And then, with an explosion, like nothing she had ever known before, Dorothy reached ecstasy.

Selena's blood streaked face raised to confront her. Selena's arm snaked out. It grasped the rope that bound her, and with a single jerk she pulled it loose.

Dorothy, weak from the loss of blood stepped forward. She wobbled, she staggered, she weaved—and then she fell.

With a cruel glance of mockery, Selena watched her start to topple. Then, with a cold-blooded savagery, the witch woman lifted her knife and held it straight before her, watching, smiling, gloating as Dorothy's torso collapsed upon it.

The steel dug deeper, hard, straight, true, burying itself to the hilt in the soft spot above her left breast.

Dorothy gave a shriek, a cry of pain, terror and despair as the utter hopelessness combined with sudden insight and knowledge.

From somewhere in the outer reaches of the nothingness of space, the spirit of Satan appeared and gathered up her soul.

Dorothy collapsed, dead, her life's blood gushing upward and out in a carnal spray of crimson hell. And next to her, Selena and Hal, writhed and gurgled in pleasure as they coupled like pigs in the life's blood of a lost soul.

THE END

DOLLMAKER'S REVENGE

(Continued from page 16)

He collapsed to the sidewalk, unable to stand on it.

"Look out, mister," someone cried, stepping out of his way.

"Why don't you do your drinking at home, buddy?" a big guy carrying a briefcase shouted at him angrily.

Harry grasped his leg, rubbing it desperately in his hands. But to no avail. The throbbing in his head was nothing to the pain he now felt in his leg. But why only one leg? And what could possibly be causing all the pain?

Harry could have asked a million questions, but he put them all out of his mind. He had only one ambition: to get back to Evelyn's.

"Evelyn, Evelyn." He repeated the name over and over, thinking that somehow it might cause him to see her faster.

His leg and head bursting with pain, he dragged himself across the hot sidewalk. The concrete tore his hands as he pulled his useless body forward. Just a few more yards to the building. Just another yard. Just a foot. Into the building now on his hands and knees. Luckily there was no one in the lobby. Using every last bit of strength he possessed, he made his way slowly to the self-service elevator and pushed number 3. It seemed as if it would take forever, but finally the doors closed, and the elevator moved upward.

On the third floor, the doors opened and Harry crawled out. Evelyn's apartment was at the end of the corridor. Slowly he made his way down the carpeted hallway, his head lowered in pain, his leg a throbbing dead weight, trailing behind him.

He was a few feet from her apartment when the door opened. "Why, Harry," she laughed, looking down at him, "what a pleasant surprise!" Had she been expecting him all along? Impossible, Harry thought.

"Help," Harry cried in a hoarse whisper. "I—need—help."

"Of course you do," Evelyn laughed. "You need a lot of help, don't you, Harry? You need a lot of help from your good old friend Evelyn, don't you?"

Why was she laughing? Why was she talking so strangely? He had never seen her like this. Her eyes pierced his, but they were

laughing eyes not angry. Her skin looked white and pale, her mouth curved in a red, mocking smirk. Harry couldn't understand her attitude at all. "I—need—help," he struggled to get the words out. "The—pain—it's—killing—me."

"Killing you, Harry?" Evelyn cried, smiling broadly. "Yes, it is killing you, isn't it? I think you hit the nail right on the head." She laughed again, a dry ominous laugh. "Well, come in, Harry. Old Evelyn will help you out. You know you can count on me."

Her voice sounded strange to him. He knew he couldn't trust her, but what choice did he have? She turned and walked into her living room as he crawled along behind her. He leaned his head back against the couch, dizzy from his exertion, his head spinning in pain. She turned to face him, her eyes filled with disdain and—superiority. And he saw that she was holding something in her hand.

"Oh, you see it?" she said. "Well, take a good look at it, Harry. You might find it educational."

She held her hand in front of his face and he saw that she was holding a small doll—a doll that had his features. "That—that's me!" he cried, not believing his throbbing eyes. "What are you—why are you—what is—" His brain was so befuddled by the sight, so racked with pain that he could not complete his sentence.

"Look, Harry," she said, pushing the doll right into his face, taunting him with it. "Look at what's sticking into this doll."

He looked. There were two pins in the back of the neck through the head. The other was struck through the left leg.

"Yes, you came to the right place, all right, Harry," she said, pulling the doll away from his outstretched hand. "You came right to the source of all your trouble." She gave him a grin. Her teeth clamped tight like a vise.

"What—are—you—going—to do?" Harry struggled to get the words out.

"I want you to witness something terrible, Harry," she said, walking over to the closet. "I knew you'd come back and so I have my little surprise all ready for you to see. I don't think you're going to like it much, though, I'm sorry to say." She reached into the closet and pulled out another

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doll.
"It's Margaret!" Harry cried, a stab of pain running through his brain.

"Well, I'm glad to see your eyesight is still pretty good," Evelyn said cheerfully. "You're right again. It is Margaret. And do you know what we're going to do to Margaret, Harry?"

"NO!" Harry cried, trying to lift himself up. But the pain in his leg was too overwhelming. "NO! PLEASE! NOT MARGARET!"
"Come on, Harry—try and save her! Try and save your precious wife!" Evelyn taunted, holding the doll up in front of him. Harry grabbed at it, but he could not reach it.

"Watch, Harry. Watch your precious Margaret die." Evelyn lifted the breadknife off the dining room table—the same breadknife he had tried to kill her with. She lifted it in one hand, held the doll in the other, and began slicing off the doll's right leg.

"NO!" Harry cried. "PLEASE!" But she was too wrapped up in her activity to pay him any attention.

"Do you know what Margaret is feeling at this moment, Harry?" Evelyn laughed. "Try and imagine." She held the doll up in the air so he could have a better view, and she began slicing off the right arm. "First the right one, then the left one," she said in a singsong voice.

Harry watched in terrified silence. He was helpless to save Margaret. Poor Margaret, who right this minute was dying a gruesome, painful death—all because of him!

"Now comes the head," Evelyn cried gleefully. Harry turned away. He could not bear to watch as Evelyn sliced off the doll's head. He knew what was happening to his beautiful wife at the very moment Evelyn did it.

"All finished," Evelyn said happily, tossing the doll aside. "I hope you enjoyed that, Harry," she said.

Harry could not bear to look at her. He turned his head toward the couch and then he saw it—the doll—his doll. Evelyn had left it on the couch when she went to the closet for the Margaret doll. Making one last desperate lunge for his life, Harry reached up and grabbed the doll. Quickly, in one motion, he pulled out the two pins. Immediately, the pain subsided.

"You give me that doll!"

Evelyn screamed, her eyes filling with the fury he had seen earlier. But she was too late. He had already freed himself from her grasp of pain.

"Margaret!" he cried, standing up, and pushing Evelyn out of the way. Maybe there was still time to help her! Maybe he could do something! Maybe she was okay!

He had to find out. He ran out of the apartment, slamming the door violently behind him. Evelyn didn't bother to follow. She sat on the rug where Harry had pushed her, smiling as she looked at the scattered pieces of the Margaret doll.

HARRY got home about twenty minutes later. Gasping for breath, desperate to see his wife, he pushed open the door and ran up the stairs three at a time. His blessed beautiful Margaret was sitting on the couch calmly watching television.

"Maggie—thank God you're all right! I know this is going to sound crazy as hell, but I was sure you'd been killed. Listen, honey, I know I've been pretty rotten to you these last few weeks, but I'm going to make it all up to you. Honest. I'm going to be the best husband in the world!"

Margaret continued watching the screen.

"Hey, you're not mad at me, are you? Look, I promise to be with you forever. I'll never leave you again. I'm going to change. Margaret, Margaret, won't you even listen to me?"

He crossed over to where she was sitting. He reached over to touch her—

"My God!"

He watched in rapt fascination as her head fell off. Next her arms separated themselves from her body and hung limply, caught in the folds of her sweater. Legs, torso—thin wire passed through butler.

He began to laugh. Quietly at first, then loud, rasping screams of hysteria.

"Oh no!" he managed to gasp out between spasms, "no, this isn't happening!"

He picked up the head with eyes still calmly staring forward and swung it, dancing, jumping around the room.

He reached for an arm, tossed it and caught it. Blood covered his face as the arm landed in his hands.

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won't we, Margaret?"

Harry stopped dancing, put down the gristly remains. He cupped his face in both his hands and began to cry. He walked over to the phone and dialed "O."

"Please," he whispered, his heart drained of all emotion, "there's been a . . . Oh Christ!"

He dropped the receiver as the pains started again. Evelyn had made another doll. THE END

WEB OF ICY DEATH

(Continued from page 20)

no, he didn't make move to go. He sat down across from me in the bedroom chair and watched me as I undressed for bed.

"How lovely you are tonight, my dear," he said. I was shocked. It was one of the few nice things he had said to me in days. I pulled down my slip and my panties and stood nude before him. 'Come to bed, Roger,' I said.

"But suddenly I saw that his face had changed. It seemed as if the dark eyebrows had become even blacker, the piercing eyes became even more deep and mysterious, and his mouth—Doctor, his mouth was filled with long fang-like teeth. I could swear that—"

"Mrs. Arthur, are you positive about this?" Dr. Hardy asked.

"Why, yes, Doctor, I'm—well, I think I'm sure. Our bedroom is very dark and—"

"Well, go on with your story, Mrs. Arthur. What happened next?"

"He came toward me. He had a disgusting leer on his face. I didn't know what he had in mind. I couldn't believe it would be anything evil. This was my Roger, my husband. Surely, he didn't intend to harm me. But in the darkness, I knew I saw fangs in his open, leering mouth. He was coming closer, his arms reaching out toward me. What did he want?"

"Automatically, my hand went up and grabbed the silver cross around my neck. I always reach for it when I'm frightened or nervous. I held it between my fingers, and as he approached, it caught his eye. He stopped. He looked confused, disappointed. He began to back away. 'I must go out now,' he said, his voice chilling in its strangeness. He turned and rushed out of the room. I fell to the floor weeping

from fright.

"Doctor Hardy, can it be? Can it be possible that my husband is a vampire?"

THE DOCTOR finished his note-taking, put down his pencil, and looked up at Mrs. Arthur. He paused thoughtfully, carefully preparing what he was about to say. "Mrs. Arthur, I have had many cases similar to yours. It appears to me that you have transferred your fear of marriage and married life to something more concrete. It is difficult for you to admit to yourself that you are afraid to be married, afraid to be a woman. So you create this fiction in your mind. You create a vampire, turn your husband into a vampire so that you have something concrete to fear. By convincing yourself that it is your husband that you should be afraid of, you don't have to concentrate on your real problem, on the real thing that frightens you."

"But, Doctor—I saw the fangs. I saw the bat. I saw the look on his face."

"Mrs. Arthur, you admitted yourself that your bedroom is very dark. Do you really think it possible that you could have seen the expression on your husband's face in that dim light? Isn't it more likely that you've made everything up about your husband's being a vampire?"

"But he came toward me, Doctor."

"You had invited him to. Your words to him were, 'Come to bed, Roger.' He was merely following your wishes."

"But what about his business trips? What about his constant business trips at night?"

"Your husband is a very important man in this village, Mrs. Arthur. I don't know why he has kept this fact from you, but he owns practically the entire village. I can understand why he might have to go out on business very often, and at unusual hours."

"Doctor Hardy, I would love to believe you. Nothing would make me happier than to believe that my husband is not a vampire, that I have created all that to hide my own fears of marriage. But, Doctor, I forgot to tell you one thing. This morning when I awoke, I felt my neck for the little silver cross—and it was gone! It must have been removed in my sleep! Now, Doctor, do you still

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believe I've made everything up?"

DOCTOR HARDY removed his eyeglasses and slowly rubbed his eyes. The office darkened as the sun began to disappear behind the trees. He got up from his chair and walked over to his massive desk. He picked up a match and started toward the gas jets on the wall.

Mrs. Arthur sat in silence, watching him as he lighted each lamp. What a strange man, she thought to herself. What is he doing in this dreadful village? The people here are surely too superstitious to respect a psychiatrist. He said he'd been practicing for nearly 30 years, but he doesn't look like he could be that old.

"The moon is rising," Dr. Hardy said, his back toward her, lighting the last lamp. The entire room seemed to flicker with the wavering gas jets, shadows crackled on the walls, twisting and bending with the lamp flames.

"I guess I've over-extended my visit," Mrs. Arthur said, beginning to rise. "I wouldn't have stayed so long. It's just that I'm frightened. I'm so frightened, Doctor, I actually dread returning to the castle." She sat back on the couch.

"It's going to be a full moon too," the doctor said, ignoring her and staring out the window.

"Doctor Hardy, I don't believe you heard a word I said."

When the doctor turned from the window, his face seemed to have changed. In the dimly-lighted room, Mrs. Arthur began to see strange transformations in the man.

She nervously tried to suppress a giggle but failed. "Doctor, you won't believe this, but I've now transferred my fears to you. I know it's ridiculous, but you appear to be a—"

The doctor approached quickly, his arms extended, ready to grab her, ready to hold her, while his teeth, now grown long and fang-like in the moonlight, would bite into the soft flesh of her neck. And while his lips would suck the blood from her warm, rich veins.

She backed away, her hand instinctively going up around her neck. The silver cross! It wasn't there. With sinking heart she remembered it had been lost. She got up from the couch and started running toward the door.

Doctor Hardy with a super-

human leap vaulted over his desk and blocked her escape route. He came closer. Mrs. Arthur could hear his animal-like breathing, could see the flame of blood-desire in his eyes—his mouth practically frothing as he drew nearer and near, never removing his eyes from her tender neck.

"Of course the cross isn't there," he muttered. "Your husband told me he had gotten rid of it." His eyes grew bigger than in life, glowing, commanding. In an unearthly voice he ordered: "Come forward. I have need of you."

In a dream she obeyed. As she walked toward him, she heard music—strange, ancient, of things long un-dead—of centuries of horror that exploded all around her.

She approached. Sharp pain as razor teeth gashed into soft flesh. Then ecstasy as blood was drained drop by drop. Almost senseless, she slipped to the floor. The fall seemed to take hours, as a feather drifts slowly to earth or a rock to the silent depths of the sea. Lying prone, she felt her skirt being removed, her petticoat, her panties. Then the physical presence of a man—but with a pleasure no mere man could give.

She felt the ultimate orgasm approach as the doctor, mounted and inside her, thrust with taunt hips and brought his fangs once again into her throat. The depth of explosion rocked her being; the passion of it sent her screaming into darkness and beyond into hell.

THE MORNING DAWNED fresh and clear. Doctor Hardy roused himself beside the cold corpse next to him. He had to hurry. There was little time left for him to make it to the steamship on schedule. It was his turn to go to America and of course Arthur would play the doctor's part. The old blood of Hungary drained and tainted by his and Arthur's ancestors, was weak and impure. But America was a new, rich land with strong, healthy inhabitants. He and Arthur had discussed moving there permanently. Perhaps some day they would, but right now they enjoyed drawing out the terror of their victims. And besides here in the Old Country, they were respected. But maybe in another fifty years or so they would relocate—after this blasted World War was over. **THE END**



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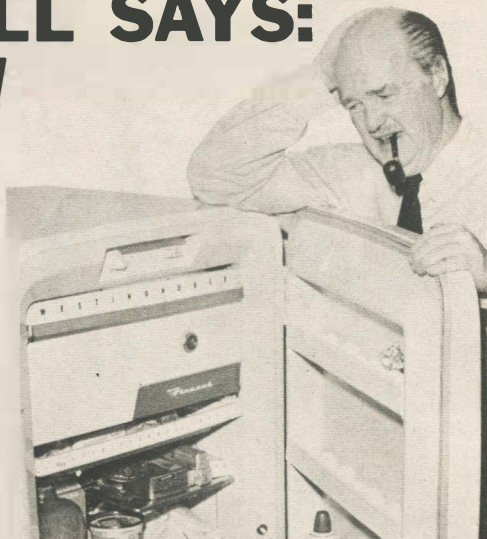
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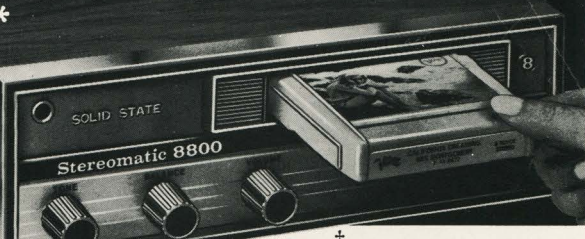
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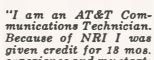
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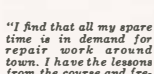
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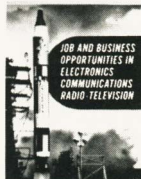


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